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Déplacement forcé, intégration socioculturelle et continuité de soi chez les réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans en France

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**"Forcibly displaced people are just like everyone else, like you and me.
They led ordinary lives before becoming displaced,
and their biggest dream is to be ordinary again."**

— Adapted from UNHCR

This thesis is dedicated to all Afghan refugees and asylum seekers around the world who,

despite being uprooted from their homeland,

continue to persevere with dignity,

rebuild their lives with resilience,

and inspire hope through their stories of courage,

endurance, and unyielding humanity

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Abstract

This thesis examines the psychological and sociocultural integration of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in France through an exploratory sequential mixed methods design. While existing research has largely emphasized structural indicators of integration such as employment, housing, or legal status, comparatively little attention has been paid to the psychological and identity-related dimensions of adaptation (Donini et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2008; Theisen-Womersley, 2021). Addressing this gap, this thesis investigates how perceived forcedness of displacement, migration-related perils, discrimination, and trauma influence refugees' psychological wellbeing, self-continuity, and sociocultural integration.

The qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews with 14 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers residing in Paris and Toulouse. Guided by the PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020), the concept of self-continuity (Sedikides et al., 2023), and the Social Identity Model of Traumatic Identity Change (Muldoon et al., 2020), the analysis identified heterogeneous adaptation pathways. Narratives revealed fragile forms of adjustment marked by marginalization and disrupted self-continuity, alongside more balanced bicultural forms of integration (Berry, 1997, 2005). Participants highlighted the disruptive effects of trauma, insecure asylum procedures, and exclusion, but also noted the protective role of linking past and present identities. They further pointed to post-arrival stressors such as housing precarity and language barriers, while demonstrating agency and resilience through aspirations and social networks.

Following the qualitative findings, the quantitative phase was designed to test and generalize these insights on a broader sample. A survey of 101 Afghan refugees measured perceived forcedness, migration-related perils, discrimination, sociocultural integration, social identity processes, and self-continuity. While mediation hypotheses were not supported, exploratory latent profile analysis identified four distinct adaptation patterns, ranging from

fragile assimilation and marginalization to more resilient and bicultural forms of integration. These profiles closely mirrored the qualitative findings, underscoring both vulnerability and resilience in Afghan refugee and asylum seekers' integration.

By combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, this thesis demonstrates that integration is neither linear nor uniform but a multidimensional negotiation between loss, continuity, and belonging. The findings advance understanding of the psychological foundations of refugee integration and highlight the central role of self-continuity in navigating forced displacement and rebuilding identity in exile.

Keywords: psychology of migration, Afghan refugees, sociocultural integration, social identity, self-continuity.

Résumé

Résumé

Cette thèse examine l'intégration psychologique et socioculturelle des réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans en France à travers un design mixte séquentiel exploratoire. Alors que la recherche existante a largement mis l'accent sur les indicateurs structurels de l'intégration tels que l'emploi, le logement ou le statut légal, relativement peu d'attention a été portée aux dimensions psychologiques et identitaires de l'adaptation (Donini et al., 2016 ; Ryan et al., 2008 ; Theisen-Womersley, 2021). Pour combler cette lacune, cette thèse analyse comment la perception de la contrainte migratoire, les périls liés à la migration, la discrimination et les traumatismes influencent le bien-être psychologique des réfugiés, la continuité du soi et leur intégration socioculturelle.

La phase qualitative a impliqué des entretiens semi-directifs avec 14 réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans résidant à Paris et à Toulouse. Guidée par le modèle PARI (Echterhoff et al., 2020), le concept de continuité du soi (Sedikides et al., 2023) et le modèle d'identité sociale du changement identitaire traumatique (Muldoon et al., 2020), l'analyse a mis en évidence des trajectoires d'adaptation hétérogènes. Les récits ont révélé des formes fragiles d'ajustement marquées par la marginalisation et une continuité du soi perturbée, aux côtés de formes plus équilibrées d'intégration biculturelle (Berry, 1997, 2005). Les participants ont souligné les effets perturbateurs des traumatismes, l'insécurité des procédures d'asile et l'exclusion, mais aussi le rôle protecteur du lien entre passé et présent. Ils ont également mis en avant les stresseurs post-arrivée tels que la précarité du logement et les barrières linguistiques, tout en démontrant de l'agence et de la résilience grâce à leurs aspirations et réseaux sociaux.

À la suite des résultats qualitatifs, la phase quantitative a été conçue pour tester et généraliser ces résultats sur un échantillon plus large. Une enquête auprès de 101 réfugiés afghans a mesuré la contrainte perçue, les périls migratoires, la discrimination, l'intégration socioculturelle, les processus d'identité sociale et la continuité du soi. Bien que les hypothèses

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de médiation n'aient pas été confirmées, une analyse exploratoire par profils latents a identifié quatre trajectoires d'adaptation distinctes, allant d'une assimilation fragile et de la marginalisation à des formes plus résilientes et biculturelles d'intégration. Ces profils reflétaient étroitement les résultats qualitatifs, soulignant à la fois la vulnérabilité et la résilience dans l'intégration des réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans.

En combinant approches qualitative et quantitative, cette thèse démontre que l'intégration n'est ni linéaire ni uniforme mais constitue une négociation multidimensionnelle entre perte, continuité et appartenance. Les résultats contribuent à une meilleure compréhension des fondements psychologiques de l'intégration des réfugiés et mettent en lumière le rôle central de la continuité du soi dans la navigation du déplacement forcé et la reconstruction identitaire en exil.

Mots-clés : psychologie de la migration, réfugiés afghans, intégration socioculturelle, identité sociale, continuité du soi.

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Chapter 1: General Introduction

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General Context of Refugees and Forced Migration

Forced migration is among the most urgent humanitarian, political and psychological issues of the 21st century (Bisht, 2024). Beyond the legal definitions and policy debates, displacement uproots individuals from their communities, identities, and sense of stability. For refugees, arrival in a safe country does not mark the end of their journey but rather, the beginning of a protracted and multifaceted process of adaptation, identity negotiation, and psychological reconstruction. Among the many refugee populations affected by these challenges, Afghan refugees stand out due to their prolonged exposure to conflict in and structural vulnerability of their country. In recent years, they have emerged as one of the largest and most at-risk displaced groups in Europe, particularly in France (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2024).

This thesis seeks to explore not only the structural and social aspects of their integration, but also the psychological dimensions that often remain invisible such as trauma, disruption to self-continuity, and the ongoing effort to rebuild a coherent sense of self and maintain meaningful social identities within unfamiliar cultural settings.

Legal and Policy Framework: Defining Refugee Protection in Europe

To fully understand refugee integration processes, it is essential to consider the legal and institutional frameworks that determine refugee status and entitlements. At the core of international refugee protection lies the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (United Nations, 1951) and its 1967 Protocol (United Nations, 1967).

Rooted in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), these foundational instruments define who qualifies as a refugee and establish the obligations of states to provide protection. Initially adopted in the wake of World War II, the Convention was limited to individuals displaced in Europe before 1951. The 1967 Protocol subsequently removed these

temporal and geographic restrictions, extending the Convention's relevance to refugee situations worldwide (United Nations, 2010).

The Convention defines a refugee as an individual who is outside their country of origin due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. In contrast, an asylum seeker is a person who has applied for international protection and is awaiting a decision on their claim to refugee status. While not all asylum seekers are ultimately recognized as refugees, they are entitled to legal protection throughout the adjudication process (United Nations, 2010).

Key legal principles enshrined in the Convention include non-refoulement (the prohibition of returning individuals to a place where they face threats to life or freedom), non-discrimination, and the recognition that refugees may need to enter host countries irregularly to seek asylum (United Nations, 1951). Host countries are thus obligated to provide access to essential services, including education, employment, legal protection, and participation in social and cultural life. The Convention also protects refugees' rights to family unity, freedom of religion, access to identity and travel documents, public relief and assistance which are foundational to long-term integration. The UNHCR supervises and supports the implementation of these protections (United Nations, 2010).

Understanding these foundational legal protections is essential before considering the broader context in which refugee populations are evolving globally. The scale, demographics, and complexity of forced displacement have dramatically shifted in recent decades, underscoring the urgent need to examine current global and European migration trends.

Europe and the 2015 Refugee Crisis

The 2015 so-called "Refugee Crisis" marked a pivotal turning point in Europe's migration landscape, testing the European Union's (EU) institutional capacity, internal solidarity, and political unity. During this period, over one million asylum seekers, primarily

from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, entered the EU, many via irregular and perilous routes across the Mediterranean and the Balkans. The scale and speed of arrivals overwhelmed asylum systems in frontline states such as Greece and Italy and triggered divisions among Member States over responsibility-sharing (Collett & Coz, 2018).

Although Europe had previously managed displacement flows, such as those from the Balkans in the 1990s, the volume and rapid pace of arrivals in 2015 were unprecedented in the post-war era (Krzyżanowski et al., 2018). Despite early warnings, the EU lacked a coordinated crisis-management mechanism, resulting in a fragmented and improvised response, shaped more by national decisions than by unified EU action (Collett & Coz, 2018). Some countries, notably Germany and Sweden, adopted a welcoming approach, while others, particularly in Eastern Europe, resisted relocation schemes and questioned the legitimacy of EU-level interventions (Krzyżanowski et al., 2018).

Key policy initiatives emerged during this period, including the EU-Turkey Statement in March 2016, which aimed to stem irregular arrivals via the Aegean Sea by returning migrants from Greece to Turkey. Additionally, the European Commission launched the 'hotspot' approach, deploying EU agencies to register and process asylum seekers in frontline states. While these actions provided short-term relief, they also revealed significant limitations in EU solidarity and governance structures (Collett & Coz, 2018).

Alongside policy fragmentation, the crisis unfolded within a highly politicized and mediatized landscape. Public and political discourse across Europe increasingly framed the refugee influx as a threat rather than a humanitarian challenge, often deploying alarmist narratives that emphasized security concerns and cultural incompatibility. The term "refugee crisis" itself became a loaded and ideologically driven label, used by political elites and the media to justify restrictive migration and asylum policies (Krzyżanowski et al., 2018).

This politicization of the crisis was accompanied by the rise of exclusionary narratives, Islamophobia, and xenophobic populism, particularly in countries where far-right parties gained electoral traction by capitalizing on anti-immigrant sentiment. Media representations often blurred the distinctions between refugees, asylum seekers, and economic migrants, contributing to public confusion and fear, and reinforcing securitized migration discourses (Krzyżanowski et al., 2018).

Despite these challenges, the crisis prompted some degree of institutional learning. Lessons emerged around the need for early-warning systems, better coordination among EU agencies, and more equitable responsibility-sharing mechanisms. However, efforts to develop a unified and sustainable asylum framework remain incomplete, and the political fractures exposed in 2015 continue to shape EU migration policy today (Collett & Coz, 2018).

The 2015 Refugee Crisis exposed deep divisions within the EU and underscored significant weaknesses in coordinated asylum and migration management. Beyond policy gaps, it brought to light the social and cultural tensions that influence how refugees are perceived and how they adapt within host societies. These challenges are central to understanding the broader landscape of refugee integration in Europe today.

Building on this context, it is important to consider the ongoing global and European migration trends that continue to shape refugee flows and integration challenges in the region.

Global and European Migration Trends

Over the past two decades, the world has witnessed a steady and dramatic transformation in global migration dynamics, driven increasingly by conflict, persecution, and instability. According to the (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2023), more than 117 million people were forcibly displaced by the end of 2023, nearly double the global total a decade earlier. This upward trend is closely linked to prolonged and intensified crises in countries such as Afghanistan, Syria, Sudan, and Venezuela (International

Organization for Migration (IOM), 2024), which have disproportionately affected vulnerable populations, especially children and youth. Indeed, approximately 40% of displaced persons are children under the age of 18 years, 54% are adults (18–59 years), and 6% older persons (60+), reflecting the broad demographic impact of these crises.

Within the OECD region, migration flows remained stable through 2018–2019 but dropped sharply in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, the number of asylum applications increased by 11% in 2019, with Afghanistan among the top countries of origin. Labour migration continued to grow, especially in sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, and domestic services, areas where migrants are overrepresented and often face poor working conditions (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2020).

These trends show how migration today is complex, with forced displacement happening alongside economic migration and demand for workers in certain jobs. In France, the intersection of forced displacement and economic migration presents complex policy challenges, including the need for coordinated institutional responses across multiple government agencies and sectors, as well as effective integration strategies that address both legal and socio-economic barriers faced by refugees (Bahar et al., 2024; Martin, 2018).

Displacement is often seen as a side effect of conflict, but recent research shows that violence is sometimes used on purpose to force people to leave their homes. This violence targets civilians to achieve political, military, or ideological goals (Gutiérrez-Sanín & Wood, 2017). Forced migration is therefore not just an accident of war but a deliberate tool to control populations, causing lasting damage to people's safety, livelihoods, and communities (Sun, 2024). This kind of violence disrupts basic needs like housing, jobs, healthcare, and social support, creating many layers of hardship. For refugees, these difficulties are made worse by ongoing instability, weak support systems, and uncertain migration routes (UNHCR, 2023).

These challenges affect not only policies but also refugees' mental health, sense of identity, and feeling of belonging, issues that this thesis will explore in depth.

These ongoing migration dynamics highlight the complexity of refugee flows and the multifaceted challenges of integration within Europe. Understanding these trends is essential before examining how different European countries, including France, approach cultural integration. The following section explores national integration models and practices, emphasizing how cultural adaptation and social belonging are negotiated within diverse political and historical contexts.

Cultural Integration Models and Practices in Europe

Refugee integration in Europe is increasingly recognized as a multifaceted process that extends beyond legal and economic inclusion to encompass cultural adaptation and social belonging. Historically, European countries have framed integration through national models shaped by unique political histories and cultural traditions. For example, France exemplifies the Republican assimilationist model, which emphasizes the adoption of the French language, civic values, and secularism. This model expects immigrants to conform to a universal national identity, with limited public recognition of ethnic or religious difference. Cultural and religious expressions are tolerated only in private, as reflected in policies such as the ban on wearing the veil in public schools, aimed at preserving cultural homogeneity (Choquet, 2017).

The UK, in contrast, employs a multidimensional integration framework that highlights practical access to employment, housing, education, and health, alongside social connections both within migrant communities and between migrants and the broader society. This approach reflects a shift away from one-dimensional, assimilationist models and instead values cultural pluralism and everyday social participation (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018), while also acknowledging key domains of integration such as social bonds, rights, and safety as outlined by Ager & Strang (2008).

Germany presents a rights-based pragmatic model, focusing strongly on language acquisition, labor market integration, and legal security. Although public cultural expressions are more tolerated than in France, integration success is largely measured through economic participation and civic knowledge. Here, integration policies promote conditional inclusion based on demonstrable progress (Wolffhardt et al., 2019).

At the EU level, integration is assessed through a benchmark framework that includes indicators such as political participation, access to services, and family reunification. This comparative approach seeks to identify best practices while recognizing the dominance of national models in policy implementation (Wolffhardt et al., 2019).

A key challenge across these models is balancing cultural integration with respect for diversity. In the French context, the assimilationist tradition, rooted in a universalist and republican model of citizenship, often produces tensions around the visibility of ethnic and religious identities, particularly when these expressions conflict with secular norms (Bertaux, 2016). The hesitation to acknowledge cultural differences in public space contributes to structural exclusion, while also limiting opportunities for identity negotiation and social recognition among immigrant populations (Joppke, 2007).

Moreover, cultural integration is not a linear or uniform process but is shaped by power dynamics, local contexts, and refugee agency. Recent research emphasizes that integration must be understood as a lived experience involving complex negotiations of identity, belonging, and acceptance (Hovil, 2014). It also highlights the shift from state-centric assimilation towards more decentralized and participatory approaches involving local authorities, civil society, and refugee communities themselves (Scholten, 2012).

In France and across Europe, policies are evolving from rigid models to more hybrid and multi-level governance frameworks that attempt to accommodate cultural diversity while promoting social cohesion. This transition reflects broader trends toward recognizing

integration as a two-way process requiring engagement and adaptation from both refugees and host societies (Cerna, 2019).

Understanding cultural integration is crucial for this thesis as it directly affects refugees' psychological adaptation, identity reconstruction, and social belonging. These dimensions cannot be fully captured through structural or policy analyses alone. Integration models that emphasize language acquisition, civic participation, and cultural conformity often overlook how refugees negotiate cultural identity and face cultural dissonance in host societies, particularly in countries like France with strong assimilationist traditions. Exploring cultural frameworks and refugees' lived experiences offers a more holistic understanding of integration challenges and informs culturally sensitive policy recommendations.

Refugee Reception in France

France plays a central role in the international refugee protection regime as a signatory to both the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (United Nations, 1951, 1967). By ratifying these instruments, France committed to implementing their provisions domestically, aligning its asylum policies with international legal standards. France is therefore legally bound to uphold the Convention's core principles, including non-refoulement, the prohibition of returning a refugee to a country where they may face persecution, as well as non-discrimination and the protection of refugees from penalties for irregular entry, provided they present themselves without delay. As a Contracting State and based on Articles 4, 16, 22–24 of the convention, France is also obligated to guarantee refugees access to fundamental rights such as freedom of religion, access to legal remedies, education, employment, and public assistance. Additionally, Article 34 of the Convention calls on signatory states to promote access to citizenship, recognizing it as a critical pathway toward long-term integration and full participation in society (United Nations, 2010).

To ensure compliance with these commitments, France's obligations under these treaties are monitored by the UNHCR, as per Article 35 of the Convention and Article II of the Protocol, which require states to cooperate and report on their implementation of refugee protections (United Nations, 2010). In reaffirming these commitments, France not only acknowledges the humanitarian dimensions of asylum but also contributes to a rules-based international order for the protection of displaced persons.

At the national level, the asylum process is structured through a two-tier asylum system composed of the *Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides* (OFPRA) and the *Cour Nationale du Droit d'Asile* (CNDA). OFPRA is responsible for examining first-instance asylum applications, while CNDA adjudicates appeals. In 2022, OFPRA received over 131,000 asylum applications, with Afghanistan among the top countries of origin (OFPRA), 2022).

During the application process, asylum seekers may be placed in various accommodation structures and reception centres, including Centre d'Accueil pour Demandeurs d'Asile (CADA), Hébergement d'Urgence pour Demandeurs d'Asile (HUDA), Centres d'Accueil et d'Évaluation des Situations (CAES), and other temporary schemes. However, only about half of asylum seekers are housed in official reception facilities, while the rest often rely on emergency shelters or face homelessness (Delbos & Tripier, 2020; Fine, 2019). Even after protection is granted, transitioning to permanent housing remains difficult, as social housing is limited and the transition period is short (Gardesse & Lelevrier, 2020).

 Legal recognition as a refugee in France theoretically opens access to a range of entitlements. These include residence permits, healthcare, education, employment, and certain social services. Yet in practice, many face significant delays in obtaining these rights. For instance, bureaucratic hurdles in issuing residence permits often block access to work and welfare benefits, even for individuals who have already received protection (Delbos & Tripier, 2020).

Integration efforts are formally coordinated by the *Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration* (OFII) the primary government agency responsible for coordinating refugee integration in France. Upon receiving refugee status, individuals are required to sign a Contrat d'Intégration Républicaine (CIR), which offers access to civic education and language instruction. The system is often too rigid and inadequately resourced to address the actual needs of diverse refugee populations; the CIR is not tailored to those with limited literacy or formal education, making it difficult for many to benefit meaningfully from the integration process (Directorate General for Foreign Nationals in France (DGEF), 2020). Furthermore, even though refugees are eligible for social assistance such as the *Revenu de Solidarité Active* (RSA), age-based exclusions and administrative burdens mean that access is far from automatic (Fine, 2019).

 In light of these institutional limitations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a critical role in supporting refugees through the asylum and integration process. Organizations such as *France Terre d'Asile*, Cimade, and SINGA offer essential services, including legal support, housing assistance, language classes, and employment guidance (Delbos & Tripier, 2020; Fine, 2019). These NGOs also operate mentorship programs and community initiatives that help refugees navigate French institutions and local life. For example, *France Terre d'Asile* runs several integration-focused programs including *Reloref and Duos pour demain* and *Accompagnement global et individualisé des réfugiés* (AGIR) (DGEF, 2020).

Meanwhile, Cimade provides legal and administrative assistance throughout the asylum process (Delbos & Tripier, 2020), while other key organizations such as Forum Réfugiés, the Croix-Rouge française, and the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS France) also contribute to refugee integration through housing support, legal aid, language training, and community-based accompaniment (Delbos & Tripier, 2020; Fine et al., 2018; French Red Cross Foundation, 2020; Jesuit Refugee Service, 2022). Though their contributions are invaluable, NGOs frequently face

resource constraints, and their availability varies by region, contributing to uneven access across the country (Fine, 2019).

Afghan Refugees in France

A Historical and Current Overview

The story of Afghan migration to France spans several decades and is closely linked to Afghanistan's prolonged history of violence, conflict, and political upheaval. From the Soviet invasion in 1979 to the Taliban's resurgence in 2021, repeated cycles of instability have forced millions to flee the country (European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), 2024; UNHCR & The World Bank, 2016). A detailed account of Afghanistan's violent history and displacement patterns, including the recent fall of Kabul, is provided in Chapter 3, which offers a comprehensive review as part of this thesis's systematic literature review.

The first major wave of Afghan refugees arrived in France during the 1980s, following the Soviet invasion. Many early migrants were members of the educated elite or politically connected groups. However, the numbers remained very low, mostly limited to a small group of educated elite and politically connected Afghans. For example, as of 1984 only about 580 Afghan refugees were residing in France (Law Library of Congress, 1994).

The second wave occurred in the 1990s and early 2000s, amid escalating civil conflict and the rise of the Taliban. During this period, asylum applications increased as Afghans fled both widespread violence and targeted persecution (UNHCR & The World Bank, 2016). Asylum application numbers remained very low throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. In fact, France received so few Afghans asylum requests that even a decade later (by 2014) the annual applications were under 500 (Leschi, 2025).

The 2015 European migration crisis triggered another surge in Afghan arrivals. Afghan applications in France were extremely modest (only 472 applications in 2014). In 2015, however, France registered approximately 2,200 asylum applications from Afghan nationals.

In 2016, there were just under 6,000 applications (Leschi, 2025). France saw a steady influx of asylum seekers during this time, including newly displaced individuals and members of the Afghan diaspora relocating from other European countries (Danish Refugee Council, 2017).

After the Taliban regained power in August 2021, the number of Afghan asylum seekers worldwide, including those in France, sharply increased as many sought urgent protection from threats to their lives and freedoms (ECRE, 2024). In 2022, France received about 23,755 Afghan asylum applications (ECRE, 2023). 17,550 first-time Afghan asylum applications were filed in 2023 (including 812 unaccompanied Afghan minors), meaning France was the first country of asylum for these individuals (Leschi, 2025).

The Afghan refugee population in France is diverse, with a significant number of young, single men. Families and unaccompanied minors are also part of this group, which includes several ethnicities such as Pashtun, Tajik, and Hazara. Migrants often undertake irregular and perilous journeys through countries like Iran, Turkey, Greece, and Italy before reaching France (IOM, 2016).

The fall of Afghanistan in 2021 marked another significant wave of Afghan migrants arriving in France. By contrast, as of 2024 the Afghan population in France is estimated at over 100,000 people. This includes Afghans of various legal statuses, from recently arrived asylum seekers to recognized refugees and their family members. Official records show about 89,000 Afghan adults holding residence permits in 2024 (Leschi, 2025).

The current situation of Afghan refugees highlights the complex challenges they face in culturally integrating into a new society. Many encounter administrative hurdles, insecure legal status, and difficulties accessing housing and employment (ECRE, 2024). Additionally, Afghan refugees arrived in France alongside large numbers of Ukrainians. This simultaneous arrival has added complexity to their situation, especially given the public and political reactions shaped by perceived symbolic threats tied to ethnicity and religion (De Coninck, 2023).

These ongoing challenges underscore the multifaceted nature of Afghan refugee integration in France. The combination of diverse backgrounds, complex migration routes, and difficult reception conditions creates a layered reality that shapes their experiences and opportunities. Understanding this context is essential for addressing both the practical and cultural dimensions that influence the integration journey of Afghan refugees in France.

Cultural Dimensions and Human Values in the Sociocultural Context of Afghan Refugee Integration in France

Understanding the integration of Afghan refugees involves more than legal status or employment; it requires examining how deeply rooted cultural values interact with new social environments. Two psychological models offer brief review of cultural dimensions and values: Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (Hofstede, 2011) and Schwartz's Basic Human Values (Gouveia & Ros, 2000; Schwartz, 2006). Hofstede's model explains how cultures differ in hierarchy, individualism, and time orientation, while Schwartz's theory focuses on universal values such as tradition, benevolence, and stimulation. Some dimensions, such as Hofstede's "Power Distance" and Schwartz's "Power," overlap conceptually; in this comparison review, these overlapping concepts are combined for clarity. Unique dimensions from each model are presented separately to provide a comprehensive framework. These models are widely used in cross-cultural psychology to study identity, adjustment, and adaptation, especially among migrants and refugees (Gouveia & Ros, 2000; Wach & Hammer, 2003)

Given limited direct Hofstede data on Afghanistan, this comparison review draws on research with young, educated Afghans (Rarick A et al., 2013) and uses Iran's cultural profile to complement this, since it shares key cultural traits like high power distance, collectivism, and traditional gender roles (Spooner, 1985). This approach helps provide a broader and more general understanding of Afghan cultural dimensions. Building on this, the following

comparison review compares Afghan and French cultures to explore how differences may affect refugee integration.

Reviewing cultural models is essential for this thesis because integration depends not only on structural factors but also on the cultural values refugees bring with them (Strang & Ager, 2010). These values influence how individuals perceive social relationships, group expectations, and identity, shaping their adaptation and sense of belonging in the host country (Berry, 2005). When there is a large gap between the cultural values of refugees and those of the host society, it can cause misunderstandings, social tensions, and psychological stress (Berry, 2005; Strang & Ager, 2010). Using Hofstede's and Schwartz's frameworks helps systematically explore these differences and how they affect integration challenges. Without considering these cultural factors, integration policies may miss important barriers and thus be less effective.

Furthermore, these models connect individual psychological processes with broader social and cultural patterns, supporting a holistic understanding of integration as a multifaceted process involving both sociocultural and psychological dimensions. This approach aligns with current refugee studies literature that emphasizes the importance of identity negotiation and cultural adjustment in successful integration (Hovil, 2014; Sabatier, 2008).

Power Distance and Power

Power Distance (Hofstede et al., 2010) and Power (Schwartz, 2006) describe how societies accept unequal power distribution and legitimize authority. Among young, educated Afghans, there is a shift toward valuing equality and shared decision-making, reflected in a low Power Distance score of 21 (Rarick A et al., 2013). However, Afghan society overall remains strongly hierarchical, with power concentrated in tribal, political, and familial structures. Under Taliban rule, these hierarchies have intensified, limiting women's autonomy through laws like male guardianship and bans on female education (The World Bank, 2024; UNHCR, 2024).

France, by contrast, upholds republican ideals of legal equality and civic participation, though hierarchical structures persist in bureaucracy (OECD, 2024). France scores high in Power Distance but combines this with an emphasis on civil rights and meritocracy (Liu, 2024). Afghan refugees socialized in deferential, hierarchical environments may struggle to adapt to French institutions that encourage self-advocacy and independent engagement, highlighting a key cultural challenge to integration.

Individualism and Self-Direction

Individualism and self-direction emphasize personal freedom, independent decision-making, and taking responsibility for one's actions. These ideas are central to both Schwartz's Self-Direction value and Hofstede's Individualism dimension (Hofstede et al., 2010; Schwartz, 2006).

Iran is known to be a highly collectivist society, where group harmony and family obligations take priority over individual goals (Moradi, 2024). Similarly, Afghan society as a whole remains strongly collectivist, although a study by Rarick A et al. (2013) found that young, educated Afghans score moderately high on individualism, indicating a shift toward more individualistic values among some younger individuals. In Afghanistan, major decisions about education, marriage, and work are typically made collectively and are heavily influenced by family and tribal elders, especially men (Kibria, 2013; Zazai, 2025). This cultural framework limits opportunities for personal independence and encourages conformity to social expectations.

In contrast, France places strong importance on individualism and self-direction. Schools and workplaces encourage initiative, critical thinking, and advancement based on merit (OECD, 2024). French culture supports personal freedom, self-expression, and equality as core societal values. Interestingly, France also accepts hierarchical structures while promoting

individual liberty, creating a unique cultural blend that supports both centralized governance and personal rights (Nikolov & Krumova, 2019).

For Afghan refugees, this difference can create challenges. They may struggle to balance family and community expectations with the host country's emphasis on independence and self-expression (Donini et al., 2016). Recognizing these cultural contrasts helps explain some of the difficulties refugees face when adapting to new social environments and institutions.

Tradition

Tradition refers to the respect and preservation of customs, social norms, and religious practices passed down through generations. These values help shape how people understand their role in society and influence everyday behavior (Schwartz, 2006).

In Afghanistan, Islamic values and traditional customs play an essential role in daily life. Islam shapes social norms, emphasizing principles like honesty, generosity, modesty, and respect for others (Dupree, 2002). Dress codes reflect religious observance and cultural heritage: women typically wear long, modest garments and headscarves, often the traditional shalwar kameez with a dupatta, while men commonly wear loose trousers and tunics, sometimes paired with turbans or pakol hats, symbolizing cultural and spiritual identity (Albrecht et al., 2022; Kohi, 2023). Across regions and ethnicities, these clothing styles signify modesty, respect, and adherence to religious expectations

In contrast, France emphasizes secularism, civic equality, and rationalism. Tradition is often viewed skeptically, especially when it appears to conflict with republican values (Belhaj, 2022). French policies, such as restrictions on wearing headscarves in schools and public institutions, reflect a commitment to state neutrality and secularism (Fernando, 2014; Kastoryano, 2004). Although intended to preserve secular public spaces, these policies can

marginalize individuals whose cultural or religious identities are visibly expressed (Belhaj, 2022).

For Afghan refugees, this difference in how tradition is treated can cause cultural tension. Maintaining traditional customs like religious dress, family structures, or gender roles may clash with the expectations of French society. This conflict can make it harder for refugees to feel fully accepted while trying to stay true to their own values and identities (Donini et al., 2016; Sabatier, 2008).

Conformity

In Schwartz's model, Conformity refers to following social rules, avoiding actions that might disturb others, and respecting group norms. This value emphasizes obedience, politeness, and awareness of collective expectations (Schwartz, 2006). It is a key element in cultures where social order is maintained by shared customs and limited tolerance for deviation.

Afghanistan, especially under Taliban rule, places strong emphasis on conformity, with strict social rules governing behavior, dress codes, and gender roles (Amnesty International; International Commission of Jurists, 2023). Individuals are expected to follow community norms closely, avoid standing out, and show obedience to authority. This emphasis on conformity is reinforced by both social pressure and upbringing from an early age (Rarick et al., 2013).

In contrast, French culture interprets conformity more as civic responsibility, encouraging respect for laws and participation in democratic processes while also valuing individual expression and open debate (Kastoryano, 2004; Ng & Lim, 2019). For Afghan refugees, adjusting from a culture of enforced obedience to one that encourages self-expression and questioning authority can be a significant and sometimes challenging shift.

Security and Uncertainty Avoidance

Security is a fundamental cultural value, referring to the need for safety, stability, and protection from threats (Schwartz, 2006). Hofstede's Uncertainty Avoidance dimension complements this by describing how cultures respond to ambiguity and risk (Hofstede, 2011).

Among younger, educated Afghans, uncertainty avoidance is moderate, reflecting a balanced attitude toward risk and change shaped by years of instability and adaptation (Rarick et al., 2013). Iran's cultural profile, which represents a more general societal norm in the region, shows high uncertainty avoidance, with a strong preference for clear rules, predictability, and guidance by tradition and religion (Moradi, 2024). Similarly, Afghan society as a whole places great importance on security due to decades of war, political turmoil, and displacement. Daily life often revolves around reliance on stable structures like tribal leadership and religious law, especially where formal institutions are weak or absent (Donini et al., 2016; UNHCR, 2024).

According to Hofstede's Theory of Cultural Dimensions, France scores high on Uncertainty Avoidance, indicating a strong preference for rules, structure, and predictability. People tend to avoid ambiguous situations and favor a cautious, organized approach to decision-making. This reflects France's historical experiences of conflict and instability, which have fostered a national desire for well-established institutions (Liu, 2024). France's public services are designed to provide long-term stability and equal access. French culture encourages individual initiative within this structured framework, expecting citizens to navigate and engage with formal systems independently (Hofstede, 2011; OECD, 2024).

For many Afghan refugees, this shift from informal, relationship-based systems to formal, bureaucratic institutions can be challenging. Language barriers, unfamiliar procedures, and different expectations may cause stress or mistrust (May, 2021). Recognizing how different cultures approach uncertainty and security is important for creating policies and services that support refugee integration effectively.

Achievement and Masculinity–Femininity

Achievement, as defined by Schwartz (2006), involves demonstrating personal success through competence and recognition. Hofstede's Masculinity–Femininity dimension adds a cultural perspective, where masculine cultures value competition, ambition, and success, while feminine cultures emphasize cooperation, care, and social well-being (Hofstede, 2011).

Among younger, educated Afghans, there is a strong focus on masculinity, reflected in high values placed on competitiveness, assertiveness, and success (Rarick A et al., 2013). This pattern aligns with cultural tendencies seen in Iran, where traditional male roles in work and family life are also emphasized (Moradi, 2024). Across Afghan society, traditional gender roles remain deeply influential. Opportunities for achievement are often limited and divided by gender. For instance, girls' education is frequently restricted, and women's participation in the workforce is discouraged or banned, particularly under Taliban rule (World Bank, 2024; UNHCR, 2024). These restrictions are often justified through religious and cultural norms (Zazai, 2025).

France presents a more balanced cultural profile, falling between masculinity and femininity on Hofstede's scale. Gender equality is central, with men and women expected to have equal opportunities in education, employment, and public life (Liu, 2024). The French system values both ambition and care, supporting a meritocratic society where success is measured by performance and progression (OECD, 2024).

However, these systems may be difficult for Afghan refugees, who come from more collectivist and tradition-based backgrounds, to navigate (Donini et al., 2016; Ng & Lim, 2019). While many gain access to new opportunities, they often feel unprepared, both psychologically and socially, to fully participate in achievement-focused environments. For Afghan women raised in restrictive settings, adapting to French gender expectations often requires significant personal and cultural transformation (Orav & Barlaoura, 2023).

Benevolence

Benevolence, according to Schwartz (2006), refers to the value placed on preserving and enhancing the welfare of close others such as family, friends, and people within one's immediate social circle.

Benevolence plays a vital role in Afghan society, where family and tribal ties often take precedence over formal institutions (Zazai, 2025). Due to weak or inaccessible state systems, informal community networks provide essential support with protection, caregiving, resource sharing, and decision-making, especially during crises (Donini et al., 2016). Afghan families organize migration, share responsibilities, and respond collectively to difficulties, reflecting this value. During displacement, refugees rely heavily on kinship networks to find housing, gather information, seek employment, and receive emotional support (Muller, 2008; Vergani et al., 2021). Although these close bonds offer security and belonging, they can also limit connections to the broader host society and restrict access to wider services and opportunities (Dupree, 2002; UNHCR, 2024).

In contrast, the French system is built around universal access to public services such as education, housing, and healthcare. These services operate under the republican principle of civic equality, treating everyone equally under the law (Nikolov & Krumova, 2019). However, this focus on formal institutions may overlook the ongoing importance of informal support networks within refugee communities.

Although Afghan refugees in France have legal access to services, many remain in low-income jobs and face barriers to full inclusion (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (Insee), 2023). They often rely on family and community networks, both due to tradition and difficulties navigating formal systems. This reliance on close-knit support contrasts with France's emphasis on structured institutions. While family ties offer belonging and protection, they can also limit opportunities for broader integration.

Universalism

Universalism, as defined by Schwartz (2006), means caring for the welfare of all people and the natural world. It emphasizes values like understanding, tolerance, and social justice beyond one's immediate social group. These values closely align with the principles of the French Republic. France promotes universal ideals through its laws, secular public life, and social welfare programs, which aim to provide equal access to education, healthcare, and housing for everyone (OECD, 2024). Public institutions are designed to treat all residents fairly, encouraging civic inclusion and social equality.

In practice, however, immigrants including Afghan refugees often face difficulties fully benefiting from these systems. Many work in low-wage jobs or remain underemployed, and economic and social gaps persist between immigrants and native-born citizens (Insee, 2023). Cultural barriers such as language challenges, unfamiliar bureaucracy, and differences in communication styles can further limit access, even when legal rights exist (Donini et al., 2016).

While French society values tolerance, solidarity, and mutual respect, key aspects of universalism (Ng & Lim, 2019), Afghan society places more importance on benevolence, focusing on family and close community relationships rather than broader civic responsibilities (Dupree, 2002; Razzaque, 2023). This contrast can make universalist values feel unfamiliar or difficult to accept for newly arrived Afghan refugees. Ideas like secularism, gender equality, or civic participation may seem distant or even conflicting with their prior beliefs (Noghanibehambari et al., 2020). Shifting from strong in-group loyalty to wider civic duties can be a major cultural adjustment.

Understanding these differences is important because how refugees relate to universalist values affects their ability to access services, find jobs, and build social trust. Addressing these cultural gaps is essential for creating more inclusive and effective integration policies.

Stimulation and Indulgence vs. Restraint

Stimulation refers to the desire for excitement, variety, and new experiences in life (Schwartz, 2006). Hofstede's related dimension, Indulgence versus Restraint, describes how cultures allow or control the expression of desires and enjoyment. Indulgent cultures tend to encourage people to enjoy life and express emotions freely, while restrained cultures emphasize self-control and limit personal gratification (Hofstede, 2011).

France scores moderate on the Indulgence dimension, indicating a society that balances restraint with some openness to leisure and personal enjoyment (Hofstede et al., 2010). Nevertheless, leisure activities, creativity, and emotional expression are widely encouraged in everyday life through education, media, and social interaction (Hofstede, 2011; OECD, 2024). Many young people in France, including those from immigrant backgrounds, actively engage with fashion, music, and digital platforms as forms of self-expression. Sabatier (2007) highlights that such cultural spaces enable immigrant youth to construct dual identities, allowing them to navigate both their family's traditions and the broader norms of the host society.

In contrast, Afghanistan is a highly restrained culture. Iran, sharing similar cultural patterns in the region, also shows a strong tendency toward restraint, where religious beliefs and moral codes guide the expression of desires and often prioritize community over individual enjoyment (Hofstede et al., 2010; Moradi, 2024). This similarity helps us better understand Afghan cultural values. Public behaviour in Afghanistan is strongly influenced by religious and social norms, leaving little room for individual self-expression, especially among women and youth (European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 2018; UNHCR, 2024). Under Taliban rule, this restraint has intensified through laws regulating clothing, entertainment, and gender interactions, reinforcing cultural expectations of discipline and modesty (ECRE, 2024).

These differences can make it difficult for Afghan refugees to adjust to life in France. Personal freedom, emotional openness, and leisure activities may feel unfamiliar or even uncomfortable for those raised in more restrained environments. Recognizing this cultural shift helps us understand how values related to stimulation and indulgence affect refugees' integration experiences.

Hedonism

Hedonism, according to Schwartz, refers to the pursuit of pleasure and personal enjoyment (Schwartz, 2006).

In France, especially in urban and secular settings, hedonistic values are openly expressed through everyday life. Fashion, food, leisure, nightlife, and media culture all reflect this orientation (Gouveia & Ros, 2000). These expressions are deeply connected to the French idea of *"art de vivre"*, or the art of living well, and are widely embraced by youth (OECD, 2024). For many young people, these lifestyle choices signal belonging and cultural integration (Gouveia & Ros, 2000).

In contrast, Afghanistan presents a very different picture. Specially under Taliban rule, leisure and personal enjoyment are often discouraged or punished, especially for women and youth. Religious and cultural norms emphasize modesty, duty, and restraint, leaving little space for public celebration, romantic freedom, or entertainment (Adeli, 2024; UNHCR, 2024).

These sharp differences can create cultural tension for Afghan refugees in France. Young adults, in particular, may struggle to balance new freedoms with family and community expectations. While some embrace opportunities for self-expression and leisure, others may feel guilt or pressure. Such conflicts can influence both their mental health and their ability to develop a stable bicultural identity (Donini et al., 2016; Sabatier, 2007).

Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation

Hofstede's Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation dimension looks at how cultures balance focusing on the future with attending to immediate needs, traditions, and social obligations (Hofstede, 2011).

France shows a strong long-term orientation. This is seen in its emphasis on education, innovation, and sustainable development. French culture encourages planning ahead and investing in future success. National policies support this outlook by promoting continuity and social progress (Hofstede et al., 2010; Liu, 2024). For example, raising the retirement age and offering vocational training programs reflect this future focus (OECD, 2024).

Afghanistan tends to have a short-term orientation, largely shaped by decades of conflict and instability. This outlook is similar to that of Iranian society, which emphasizes tradition and short-term goals, while allowing some long-term focus in academic and religious spheres, but generally prioritizes immediate obligations (Moradi, 2024). In Afghanistan, many people focus on daily survival and urgent needs rather than long-term planning. Saving for retirement or pursuing extended education is uncommon and often viewed as unrealistic (World Bank, 2024). Even among educated youth, short-term thinking remains widespread (Rarick et al., 2013).

These differences can affect how Afghan refugees experience integration in France. While French systems encourage long-term commitment, refugees often face pressing concerns like legal status, housing, and income. This mismatch can make long-term integration programs seem out of reach or irrelevant, despite their potential benefits.

The analysis of cultural dimensions using Hofstede's and Schwartz's frameworks reveals major differences between Afghan and French societies that shape Afghan refugees' integration experiences. Differences in power, autonomy, tradition, conformity, security, achievement, social support, universalism, and time orientation highlight cultural mismatches

affecting adaptation, identity, and wellbeing. Recognizing these patterns is vital for creating integration policies that are legally sound, culturally sensitive, and psychologically informed.

While these cultural gaps are significant, it is also important to acknowledge areas of overlap that may help ease the integration process. Some shared values can offer common ground and support a smoother cultural adjustment. Both societies, for instance, place importance on security and social order, even though these are expressed through different systems and expectations (Hofstede, 2011; Schwartz, 2005). Among younger, educated Afghans, there is also a growing emphasis on personal achievement and individual decision-making, which aligns with core aspects of French cultural life (Rarick et al., 2013). Additionally, both cultures show moderate levels of uncertainty avoidance, which reflects a shared preference for stability and clear rules (Hofstede, 2011).

The value placed on family also appears in both contexts. In Afghan communities, this is often expressed through close-knit support networks and a strong sense of responsibility toward relatives. In France, family remains important through supportive social policies. French family policy has gradually expanded to include childcare and parental leave in ways that keep parents, especially mothers, connected to the workforce. Although more recent reforms are shaped by labor market demands, the system continues to support working families (Fagnani, 2012; Martin, 2018).

Recognizing not only the contrasts but also the cultural similarities helps create a more balanced understanding of how Afghan refugees may relate to or gradually connect with aspects of French society. Similar to the mismatches that can make integration difficult, these areas of overlap, even if limited, can support sociocultural adaptation, reduce psychological stress, and help individuals maintain a stable sense of identity during integration.

Structural and Psychological Barriers to Afghans' Integration in France

Afghan refugees in France encounter a range of structural, cultural, legal, economic, and psychological challenges that complicate their integration and wellbeing. These obstacles exist at multiple levels, including institutional barriers, socio-economic inequalities, and deep psychological effects stemming from forced displacement.

Discrimination and Islamophobia are persistent problems, especially related to visible religious markers such as the hijab. Refugees often face verbal harassment, denial of services, and exclusion from housing and employment, leading to feelings of marginalization and alienation (Ahmadi-Montecalvo et al., 2024; Feinstein et al., 2022). The French principle of laïcité, or state secularism, promotes a public culture that discourages visible religious expression, which can conflict with Afghan cultural and religious practices (Ahmadi-Montecalvo et al., 2024; Dupree, 2002).

Access to healthcare, though guaranteed in theory, is often obstructed by language barriers, unfamiliarity with the system, and discrimination in medical settings. Refugees may avoid seeking help due to administrative complexity or stigma, especially around mental health (DGEF, 2020).

Demographically, Afghan refugees usually come from a youthful population with high dependency ratios and limited formal education. Afghanistan's national literacy rate remains low, particularly among women (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2023), contrasting sharply with France's near-universal literacy and well-established education system (Insee, 2023). This gap limits refugees' ability to navigate bureaucratic processes, access employment, and fully participate in civic life. Additionally, limited recognition of foreign qualifications hinders their labor market integration (Delbos & Tripier, 2020; OECD, 2020).

Legal restrictions under the Dublin Regulation, which also apply in France, present significant obstacles. Afghan asylum applicants are often subject to transfers back to the first EU country of entry, even when that country has low protection rates or systemic deficiencies in its asylum system (ECRE, 2024). These uncertainties prolong asylum procedures, exacerbate insecurity, and delay integration efforts in host societies like France.

Beyond these structural barriers, Afghan refugees face profound psychological challenges linked to war-related trauma, forced migration, and cultural dissonance. Many experience post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety, worsened by post-migration stressors such as unemployment, social isolation, and legal insecurity (Ahmadi-Montecalvo et al., 2024; Sifat et al., 2024). The disruption of self-continuity is another serious challenge. Forced displacement, family separation, and changes in social roles interrupt refugees' sense of identity, undermining their wellbeing and complicating adaptation to their new environment (ECRE, 2024; Sedikides et al., 2023).

Research Problem and Rationale

Although refugee integration has been widely studied, much of the existing research lacks the psychological depth necessary to fully understand the internal and social realities of forcibly displaced individuals. Many studies adopt policy or sociological perspectives and often generalize refugees without addressing individual psychological impacts such as trauma, disrupted identity, and loss of social belonging (Fazel et al., 2005; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010). These factors are especially salient for Afghan refugees, whose prolonged exposure to conflict and instability profoundly affects their mental health and capacity for integration (Ager & Strang, 2008; Fazel et al., 2005).

The exclusive focus on Afghan refugees, rather than refugees from diverse origins, is informed not only by the researcher's linguistic and cultural familiarity with this community but also by the prolonged conflict-driven displacement trajectory of Afghans. This makes them

a particularly relevant case for studying trauma-informed and identity-sensitive models of integration. While this study is contextually situated in France and centered on Afghan participants, the core constructs explored such as migration related perils, psychological suffering, self-continuity, social identity development, and belonging, may hold relevance for other forcibly displaced populations. This research aims to provide empirical support for future studies applicable to other refugee communities facing similar challenges.

Current integration frameworks, particularly in France, often overlook trauma-informed and identity-sensitive approaches (Isakov & Markovic, 2024; Norton et al., 2024). The psychological burden of forced displacement, which includes exposure to strategic and collective violence, commonly manifests as anxiety, depression, and a fragmented sense of self, all of which hinder sociocultural integration and wellbeing (Gutiérrez-Sanín & Wood, 2017; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010). Additionally, France's assimilationist model, grounded in secular republicanism, may unintentionally marginalize refugees by discouraging public expressions of religious or cultural identity, further intensifying psychological distress (Barou, 2014; Berry, 2005).

Despite the critical role of psychological factors in integration, existing models rarely examine how pre-migration trauma, perceived forcedness, and disruptions in identity continuity influence long-term integration outcomes such as belonging, wellbeing, and social participation. This gap is particularly apparent in research on Afghan refugees, whose experiences continue to be framed predominantly in political or humanitarian terms with insufficient attention to their internal psychological realities (Ager & Strang, 2008; Fazel et al., 2005).

This thesis addresses this gap by adopting a trauma-informed and identity-sensitive framework that focuses on the psychological impacts of forced displacement to explore Afghan refugees' integration as a deeply psychological process. By focusing on migration related perils,

self-continuity, social identity, and acculturation, this thesis offers an innovative, trauma-informed, and identity-sensitive perspective that enriches existing integration research.

Moreover, based on our findings, I aim to inform culturally and psychologically responsive integration policies that better support refugees' mental health and sociocultural inclusion. Recognizing the interplay between psychological wellbeing and structural integration is essential for developing more effective interventions and fostering genuine social belonging for forcibly displaced populations (De Jesus et al., 2023; Walther et al., 2021).

Research objectives

This thesis aims to investigate the sociocultural integration and associated psychological responses, including wellbeing, of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in France. It explores the impact of perceived forcedness, exposure to violence, and migration-related perils, while also examining the role of psychological factors such as self-continuity, emotional suffering in shaping their integration experiences and outcomes.

Overview of Methodology

This thesis adopted an exploratory sequential mixed methods design, to examine the sociocultural integration and wellbeing of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in France. The design was chosen because the research problem was qualitatively oriented, focusing on complex and underexplored psychological constructs such as trauma, social identity, suffering, uncertainty and self-continuity. This approach allowed for in-depth exploration before developing and testing theoretical insights across a broader population (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

The thesis was conducted in three connected phases. The first phase consisted of a systematic literature review, which was used to map existing knowledge on the psychological consequences of violence, forced displacement, and integration among refugees, particularly those from Afghanistan. This review helped identify key conceptual gaps in the literature,

including the limited integration of perceived forcedness, violence, and trauma-informed, identity-focused models within refugee integration research.

Building on the review, the second phase employed qualitative semi-structured interviews to explore Afghan asylum seekers and refugees' lived experiences of forced migration and integration in the French context. Thematic analysis was used to identify psychological mediators, which later informed the structure and content of the quantitative phase.

The third phase involved the development of a quantitative instrument, designed based on themes and constructs identified during the qualitative phase. The goal of this phase was to explore whether and how these emerging constructs generalized across a larger sample of Afghan refugees. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) explain, exploratory sequential designs are especially useful when qualitative findings are needed to generate or refine research questions that can then be examined through subsequent quantitative inquiry.

Although this was non-experimental research, the overall mixed methods design was conceptually organized around a cause–mediation–effect logic introduced in Chapter 2. The key constructs, including perceived forcedness, migration-related perils, discrimination, uncertainty, emotional suffering, and self-continuity, are defined in the theoretical framework (Chapter 2) and then applied in the empirical chapters (Chapters 4 and 5). Instead of being tested as a stand-alone model, this structure was used as a guiding lens to bring together the qualitative and quantitative findings in the final discussion.

Importantly, while the qualitative and quantitative phases were presented in separate chapters, each with its own analysis and discussion, the mixing of the two data sets occurred only at the interpretation stage, consistent with best practices for this design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This means that both datasets were first analysed independently, and then conceptually integrated in the final general discussion chapter. In doing so, the research

preserved the integrity of each method while enabling a deeper, psychologically grounded understanding of the integration process. I also followed the step-by-step process for implementing an exploratory sequential design as outlined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), ensuring methodological coherence throughout.

The Table 1.1 shows the main phases of the exploratory sequential design adopted in this thesis, adapted from Creswell and Plano Clark (2018). It summarizes the overall procedure and highlights how each phase was specifically implemented within the present research.

Table 1.1

Overview of the Exploratory Sequential Mixed-Methods Design

Phase	Procedure	Adaptation within the Present thesis
Phase 1	Conduct the Qualitative Strand	- Conducted semi-structured interviews with Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in France. - Identified key psychological themes: self-continuity, perceived forcedness, and migration-related stressors. - Emergent themes informed new research questions related to social-identity and mental health.
Phase 2	Use Qualitative Results to Develop the Quantitative Strand	- Converted qualitative insights into measurable constructs (e.g., integration outcomes, psychological responses, self-continuity). - Designed a quantitative survey using both validated scales and items derived from interview themes. - Formulated new quantitative questions targeting the new predictor variable (discrimination) and outcome variable (social identity) identified in the qualitative phase.
Phase 3	Conduct the Quantitative Strand	- Surveyed a broader sample of Afghan refugees in France. - Collected data on trauma exposure, perceived forcedness, self-continuity, social identity, and integration. - Analyzed results using descriptive and inferential multivariate statistics.
Phase 4	Interpret the Connected Results	- Mixed the two strands only at the final interpretation stage. - Used qualitative themes to deepen and explain the quantitative patterns. - Interpreted the combined results through the lens of psychological theory (e.g., PARI, self-continuity). - Developed integrated insights and practical implications for refugee integration policy and mental health support.

Thesis Structure Overview

This thesis is divided into two main parts, following an exploratory sequential mixed methods design.

The first part, including Chapters 2 and 3, focuses on the theoretical background. Chapter 2 introduces the key frameworks guiding the study: the PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020), which offers a trauma-informed perspective on forced migration integration, the concept of Self-Continuity (Sedikides et al., 2023) and Social Identity Model of Traumatic Identity Change (Muldoon et al., 2020). Chapter 3 presents a systematic literature review on the psychological effects of violence, displacement, and integration, highlighting gaps that shaped the empirical work.

The second part presents the empirical research through a mixed methods approach. Chapter 4 describes the qualitative phase, which is based on semi-structured interviews with Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in France, providing psychological insights that informed the design of the quantitative survey. Chapter 5 reports the quantitative phase, which involved surveying a larger group of Afghan refugees to further explore and expand upon the qualitative findings. Chapter 6 presents the general discussion, integrating results from both the qualitative and quantitative phases to provide a comprehensive understanding of Afghan refugee integration by combining the depth of qualitative data with the breadth of quantitative analysis.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter set the stage for exploring Afghan refugee integration in France by outlining the global context of forced displacement and the legal and policy frameworks involved. It highlighted the gap between France's assimilationist approach and refugees' psychological experiences, such as trauma and identity loss. The chapter also emphasized the need to include psychological and cultural dimensions in integration research. It introduced the mixed-methods design chosen to capture these complex experiences in depth and breadth. This foundation prepares for the next chapter on the theoretical frameworks guiding the study.

PART I: Conceptual Foundations and Literature

Context

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that forms the foundation of the empirical studies of the present thesis. The central research question guiding this work was: *How do Afghan refugees psychologically process experiences of forced displacement, and how do these processes shape their sociocultural integration in France?*

To address this question, I identified, reviewed and integrated relevant theoretical models that offer insight into the psychological mechanisms linking migration-related distress to integration relevant psychological responses and integration outcomes, as described within this chapter. These frameworks collectively informed the empirical study's design, methodology, and interpretation of findings.

A clear and well-defined theoretical framework was essential for grounding our empirical work in established knowledge. As Grant & Osanloo (2014) emphasize, it serves as the structural "blueprint" for both the qualitative and quantitative studies, shaping the rationale, research questions, and analytical approach. Without this foundation, refugee experiences risk being understood only at a surface level, which may lead to overlooking deeper psychological factors such as perceived forcedness, exposure to violence, emotional dislocation, identity disruption, and coping challenges.

For this reason, the framework adopted in this study incorporated socio psychological and trauma-informed perspectives, an approach that not only grounded the study in empirical and theoretical rigor but also reflected the lived realities of Afghan refugees facing complex emotional and sociocultural transitions.

This chapter begins by reviewing several theories related to migration, integration, identity, and trauma. These include sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), social integration theory (Turner, 1981), the acculturation model (Berry, 1997), the interactive acculturation

model (IAM, Bourhis et al., 1997) and Neo-Classical Migration Theory (Harris & Todaro, 1970). Each theory is briefly presented and evaluated for its relevance to the research question, particularly in terms of how it addresses psychological dimensions of forced displacement.

Sociocultural Theory highlights the role of social interaction and cultural context in learning (Vygotsky, 1978), but its developmental orientation limits its relevance for understanding adult refugees' psychological responses to trauma.

Social Integration Theory offers insight into structural cohesion and shared norms (Turner, 1990), yet it fails to account for the emotional and identity-related consequences of displacement.

Berry's Acculturation Model (1997) highlights the importance of cultural maintenance and participation in the host society, offering a valuable framework for understanding how individuals negotiate belonging. These dimensions remain relevant for refugees, although their experiences of coercion and trauma make it harder to apply the model in a straightforward way. However, the model still assumes voluntary migration and provides only a generalized view of identity, overlooking the emotional instability that accompanies forced displacement.

 IAM (Bourhis et al., 1997) builds on Berry by incorporating host society perspectives and policy dynamics, yet it similarly downplays the internal psychological impact of trauma and identity disruption.

Neo-Classical Migration Theory (Harris & Todaro, 1970) explains migration as a rational labour-market decision based on expected income differentials. While useful for analysing voluntary, economically motivated migration, it is not applicable to refugee contexts where survival, coercion, and trauma are central drivers, and it lacks attention to psychological or emotional dimensions.

While these models offer valuable sociocultural and structural insights, they do not sufficiently capture the internal psychological mechanisms, such as distress, identity disruption,

and coping, that were central to this study. For this reason, they were not adopted as core components of the theoretical framework. Their relevance and limitations are summarized in the following Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Assessment of Theories on Forced Migration: Psychological and Contextual Fit

Theory	Relevance to Forced Migration	Focus on Psychological Mediators	Supports Mediation Logic (A → B → C)	Addresses Trauma, Identity, Belonging	Fit for Afghan Refugee Context
Sociocultural Theory	Low	No	No	No	Weak
Social Integration Theory	Low	No	No	No	Weak
Acculturation Model	Moderate	Limited	Limited	Partially	Moderate
Interactive Acculturation Model	Moderate	Limited	No	Partially	Moderate
Neo-Classical Migration Theory	Low	No	No	No	Weak

Integrated Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Addressing Conceptual Gaps in Refugee Integration Research

Despite growing academic interest in refugee integration, significant conceptual limitations remain, particularly regarding how refugees psychologically process forced displacement. Much of the literature continues to prioritize structural indicators such as employment, legal status, and housing (Donini et al., 2016; D. Ryan et al., 2008), while paying insufficient attention to internal mechanisms like emotional distress, identity disruption, and meaning-making.

A first major gap involves the pathologization of refugee suffering. As Alemi et al. (2023) argue, refugee mental health resiearch often conflates culturally embedded experiences

of loss and grief with psychiatric disorders, using tools not validated for the specific population of the study. Theisen-Womersley (2021) similarly critiques Western trauma paradigms for overlooking collective identity rupture and post-migration uncertainty. Extending this critique to intervention design, Murray et al. (2010) contends that many refugee mental health services remain contextually insensitive, relying on frameworks that inadequately capture the interplay between trauma, identity, and sociocultural integration.

A second limitation involves the under-theorization of identity disruption. Mainstream acculturation models, such as Berry's (1997), focus on outward behavioural adaptation but rarely address internal processes like identity repair, narrative coherence, or self-continuity. This limits their explanatory value in contexts where identity destabilization is central. Hosseini et al. (2024) further note that services targeting Afghan refugees often rely on superficial cultural adaptations, ignoring deeper psychosocial and identity-based needs.

Third, much integration research fails to engage with the emotional and cognitive labor that refugees perform to adapt. Studies by (Schlechter, Kamp, et al., 2021; Schlechter, Wilkinson, et al., 2021) and Walther et al. (2020) show that unresolved trauma, depression, and identity confusion significantly impair participation in integration-related domains such as education and employment. When refugees lack a sense of psychological coherence or control, their motivation and capacity for engagement are compromised.

Finally, the concept of self-continuity, the perceived coherence between past, present, and future identity, remains largely absent from integration research. Camia and Zafar (2021) argue that forced displacement often severs this continuity, making emotional regulation and decision-making more difficult. Sedikides et al. (2023) provide empirical evidence that preserved self-continuity supports resilience, while Groen et al. (2018) show that identity coherence is critical for maintaining mental health in Afghan and Iraqi refugee populations.

Together, these critiques underscore the need for integration models that are psychologically grounded, culturally sensitive, and identity-focused. In response, this study adopted a theoretical framework that centers on internal psychological processes, distress, identity coherence, and social belonging, as the mechanisms linking forced displacement to integration outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

To address the complex psychological processes shaping refugee integration, this study adopted an integrated theoretical framework composed of three interrelated models: the Psychological Antecedents of Refugee Integration (PARI) (Echterhoff et al., 2020), the concept of Self-Continuity (Sedikides et al., 2023), and the Social Identity Model of Traumatic Identity Change (SIMTIC) (Muldoon et al., 2020). Each model informed a different aspect of how refugees might experience and respond to forced displacement, collectively providing a comprehensive lens for understanding sociocultural adaptation.

The PARI model served as the overarching structure, offering a framework for examining how refugees' subjective perceptions of forcedness and post-migration stressors could give rise to psychological responses such as emotional distress, uncertainty, and diminished self-efficacy.

The concept of Self-Continuity was used to conceptualize disruptions in personal identity as a key psychological mechanism influencing emotional regulation and motivation.

In contrast, the SIMTIC model was employed to interpret identity-related integration outcomes, particularly how refugees might maintain or reconstruct social identities, form new group affiliations, and derive meaning from shared social bonds. These identity processes were seen as central to broader integration domains, including belonging, social participation, and civic engagement (Muldoon et al., 2020).

Together, these models provided a complementary framework that captured the psychological, identity-based, and social dimensions of refugee adaptation. By linking perceptions of forcedness and migration-related perils with processes of identity continuity and reconstruction, the framework offered a coherent basis for analysing how Afghan refugees experience displacement and integration. This integration of perspectives ensured both conceptual breadth and analytical depth, guiding the study's design and interpretation in a way that reflected the psychological realities of forced migration.

Psychological Antecedents of Refugee Integration (PARI)

The PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020) introduces a person-centered perspective in refugee integration research by emphasizing psychological experiences over structural or policy-driven explanations. At its foundation, the model places the subjective perception of forcedness at the center of understanding how refugees emotionally and cognitively respond to resettlement. Rather than viewing forced migration as a static label, PARI highlights how individuals interpret their migration experience, whether they felt compelled to flee due to violence, persecution, or systemic threats, as a core driver of psychological adaptation.

The development of the PARI model emerged from a need to more effectively conceptualize refugee integration through the lens of psychological science. Situated within interdisciplinary efforts to connect social psychology with migration studies, the model was introduced to address a gap in existing frameworks that often overlooked the internal, subjective experiences of displaced individuals (Echterhoff et al., 2020).

The PARI model is rooted in earlier theories of migration and acculturation, particularly Berry's framework and related models (Berry, 2005; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). As the authors explain, their approach "resonates with existing models of acculturation" but "goes beyond these existing models" by explicitly incorporating forcedness and migration-related perils as defining antecedents of refugee integration (Echterhoff et al., 2020, p. 858). The model shows

that psychological integration is shaped not only by structural and social conditions but also by refugees' own perceptions of coercion, threat, and uncertainty. This perspective highlights how external circumstances and internal psychological processes work together to influence adaptation. A simplified diagram of these dynamics, referred to as the Psychological Antecedents of Refugee Integration (PARI) model, with a focus on refugees' and residents' perceptions of forcedness and related perils, is presented in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1

The Psychological Antecedents of Refugee Integration (PARI) Model
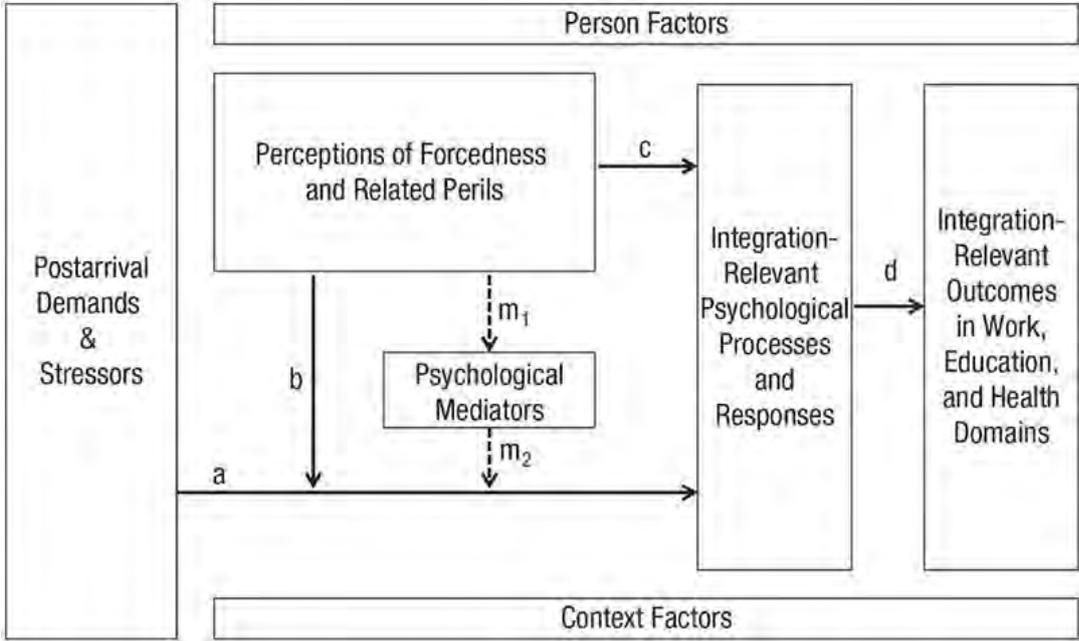
A distinguishing feature of the PARI model is the emphasis it places on refugees' perceptions of forcedness and associated perils. This refers to how strongly individuals feel they were compelled to migrate due to violence, persecution, or hardship. These perceptions exert influence in two principal ways. First, they can directly affect psychological responses (Path c). Second, they may moderate the relationship between post arrival stressors and psychological responses (Path b), meaning that the impact of stressors is heightened or diminished depending on the degree of perceived forcedness (Echterhoff et al., 2020).

This assumption is supported by empirical work. Knausenberger et al. (2022) found that perceived forcedness played a significant role in shaping psychological outcomes. Their research showed that individuals who experienced greater forcedness were more likely to report lower levels of migration regret and higher confidence in their ability to integrate.

In the PARI model, post arrival demands and stressors are conceptualized as situational challenges encountered by refugees after settling in the host country. These include unfamiliar immigration procedures, legal uncertainty, subjection to foreign laws and regulations, restricted freedom of movement, divergent cultural norms and habits, language barriers, loss of familiar environmental structures and social contexts, unemployment, loss of social status, xenophobia, and discrimination. These stressors threaten basic psychological needs and serve as key antecedents that activate psychological responses (Path a) (Echterhoff et al., 2020).

Research confirms these mechanisms. Kahl et al. (2023), in their study with Arabic-speaking refugees, identify migration-related regret as a key psychological response influenced by both pre- and post-migration experiences. Their findings show that refugees who faced higher levels of discrimination after resettlement were more likely to express stronger feelings of regret about leaving their country of origin. This suggests that perceived injustice or demoralizing treatment in the host country significantly contributes to emotional distress in the form of regret. Within the framework of the PARI model, this relationship illustrates how post arrival stressors, such as discrimination, directly shape psychological responses like regret, consistent with Path a (post arrival demands → psychological responses) (Echterhoff et al., 2020).

To further explain these relationships, the model introduces psychological mediators, which help to clarify the influence of perceived forcedness on psychological outcomes (Echterhoff et al., 2020). The mediators discussed by Echterhoff and colleagues are loss of control, external attribution (blaming external forces for one's situation), as well as experiences

of trauma, suffering, lack of self-efficacy and feelings of uncertainty. According to the model, these are activated by perceptions of forcedness (Path m1), and they influence the extent to which post arrival stressors impact psychological responses (Path m2) (Echterhoff et al., 2020). Schlechter et al., 2021 provided empirical evidence supporting this logic, showing that emotional distress and trauma-related symptoms mediated help-seeking behavior in Syrian refugees in Germany. Refugees who experience strong emotional disruption or a reduced sense of control may find it more difficult to regulate their emotions, maintain motivation, or engage socially. When they feel they have little control or low confidence in their ability to cope (i.e., low self-efficacy), they may be more vulnerable to stressors encountered after arrival. This can diminish their motivation and willingness to participate in integration-related activities (Echterhoff et al., 2020).

Consistent with this, Edele et al. (2021) found that refugee students with higher self-efficacy and stronger German language skills were more successful in transitioning to further education. Conversely, mental health problems and trauma were associated with poorer educational outcomes, suggesting a mediating role of emotional and psychological factors in educational integration. While not based on the PARI model, their findings empirically support key assumptions of the model, particularly the influence of psychological factors on integration outcomes.

The model also posits that the strength of perceived forcedness can shape how post-arrival demands are psychologically processed. Refugees who strongly feel they were forced to leave may experience intensified emotional responses to challenges in the host country (Path b), while Path c represents the direct effects of post-arrival demands on psychological responses (Echterhoff et al., 2020).

Again, Knausenberger et al. (2022) empirical work provides support. In a study among Syrian refugees, this team found that "participants who experienced high levels of

discrimination reported higher regret about migration when perceived migration perils were low. In contrast, regardless of the discrimination experiences, regret was low when perceived migration perils were high" (p. 543). This interaction effect demonstrates that the psychological impact of post-arrival stressors, like discrimination, is moderated by earlier migration experiences, supporting the PARI model's argument that pre- and post-migration factors jointly shape integration-relevant responses.

In the PARI model, integration-relevant psychological processes and responses refer to internal, subjective outcomes that reflect how refugees are adapting psychologically over time. The outcomes discussed by the authors include emotional wellbeing, motivation, coping strategies, trust in host institutions, sense of belonging, and attitudes toward the host society. These processes are directly influenced by post arrival demands and perceived forcedness, and they, in turn, affect longer-term integration outcomes (Path d). This final stage of the model connects psychological responses to observable outcomes such as employment, education, and participation in the host society (Echterhoff et al., 2020).

This relationship is supported by Acarturk et al. (2022), who found that trauma-informed interventions not only improved refugees' mental health but also increased their engagement in education and use of community services, reinforcing PARI's assumption that psychological readiness is essential for successful integration.

Similarly, Edele et al. (2021) found that trauma and mental health challenges, common among refugee youth, negatively affect educational participation. They also reported that refugees with stronger German language skills, higher motivation, and greater mental stability were more likely to remain in school, transition to vocational training, and enter the labour market.

In addition, the PARI model integrates person factors, such as personality traits, resilience, prior trauma, and educational background, and contextual factors, including public

attitudes, social support systems, and institutional policies. These elements shape how post arrival stressors are experienced and how individuals respond to them. This argument is supported by Edele et al. (2021) in their study of Syrian refugees in Germany, who demonstrated the impact of external support as a contextual factor in promoting integration. Their findings show that access to German peers, supportive teachers, and inclusive schools significantly improved integration outcomes. Furthermore, educational background and cognitive resources acquired pre-migration (in Syria) facilitated access to the labour market.

In this thesis, both in the systematic review and the empirical work, the PARI model was used as the primary conceptual foundation for analysing how Afghan refugees' perceptions and emotional responses shaped their integration experiences.

The PARI model visualizes how the interplay between past experiences, such as trauma and forcedness, current contextual stressors, and psychological processes determines the degree and quality of refugees' integration into host societies. By focusing on subjective perceptions and emotional-cognitive mechanisms, the model shifts attention beyond structural integration to the internal experiences that significantly shape the integration journey. It also underscores the importance of tailoring interventions and policies not only to address external barriers but also to support the psychological wellbeing and agency of refugees.

The flexibility of the PARI model allows researchers to explore both subjective and behavioural dimensions of integration through mixed methods. It accounts for variation across individuals and contexts, recognizing that personal meaning-making and social interaction jointly shape outcomes. By highlighting the mediating role of psychological processes, PARI offers a nuanced and person-centred lens for understanding refugee integration across sociocultural settings. In sum, the model provided a coherent foundation for examining the relationship between psychological adaptation and integration outcomes in the context of Afghan refugees in France.

Self-Continuity

The concept of Self-Continuity refers to the subjective sense that one's past, present, and future selves are meaningfully connected, maintaining a coherent identity across time despite life changes (Sedikides et al., 2023). For refugees, this sense is often deeply disrupted by forced migration, trauma, and the loss of familiar roles, relationships, and cultural anchors. These disruptions can lead to psychological distress, including identity confusion, emotional dislocation, and a sense of estrangement from one's former self (Camia & Zafar, 2021; Groen et al., 2018; Habermas & Köber, 2015). As Sedikides et al. (2023) emphasize, individuals with stronger self-continuity are more likely to experience emotional stability, psychological resilience, and a coherent sense of purpose, all of which are crucial for successful sociocultural integration.

The refugee experience constitutes what Camia and Zafar (2021) term a "biographical rupture", a break in the continuity of one's life story that destabilizes personal identity and psychological well-being. Their findings suggest that autobiographical meaning-making, constructing coherent life narratives that link past experiences to one's evolving self, can help restore a sense of identity continuity. Reflective strategies such as self-event connections have been shown to support emotional recovery and reduce psychological distress, while self-continuity has also been found to strengthen social identity maintenance by fostering feelings of connectedness to others (Habermas & Köber, 2015; Sedikides et al., 2023). Other studies confirm that disruptions in personal identity and narrative continuity are prevalent and influential among refugee populations, supporting the inclusion of self-continuity as a core psychological mediator (Schlechter et al., 2021; Sedikides et al., 2023).

Symbolic tools such as nostalgia, cultural memory, and the preservation of social roles also contribute to the restoration of self-continuity. For example, Hong et al. (2022) demonstrated that nostalgic recall reinforces identity-defining values, fostering global self-

continuity even in alienating environments. Similarly, reconnecting with cultural rituals and familial traditions helps refugees affirm continuity with their pre-migration identities, promoting emotional regulation and goal-directed behavior (Groen et al., 2018; Sedikides et al., 2023).

The PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020) emphasizes that postmigration psychological responses are central to integration outcomes. In this context, the empirical work treated self-continuity as a key mechanism linking pre- and postmigration experiences with integration trajectories. While self-continuity was not originally formulated within the PARI framework, it aligned conceptually with its emphasis on subjective psychological processes and was integrated accordingly.

Further theoretical support is provided by Becker et al., 2018, whose study identifies three bases of self-continuity: (1) perceived stability of identity over time, (2) narrative coherence linking life events, and (3) associative links to the past, such as objects, places, or memories. These bases are shaped by personal beliefs, such as mutability (beliefs about whether people can change), and cultural norms. For example, individuals with low mutability beliefs are more likely to derive self-continuity from identity stability, while those from high-mutability cultures rely more on narrative strategies.

In refugee contexts, these mechanisms are particularly relevant. Ballentyne et al. (2021) emphasize that a loss of narrative coherence can undermine psychological well-being, while Wildschut et al. (2019) demonstrate that nostalgia, as an associative link to the past, fosters identity continuity and emotional resilience in displaced populations. These processes mirror Becker et al.'s (2018) bases of self-continuity and highlight its role as a buffer against psychological fragmentation.

Moreover, Camia and Zafar (2021) showed that for Afghan refugees, identity stability, especially rooted in cultural and familial roles, is crucial for managing integration-related stress.

Their findings align with Becker et al.'s concept of essentialist strategies, where continuity is preserved through role and value consistency. By contrast, younger or more acculturated individuals often adopt narrative reconstruction strategies, integrating new experiences into revised self-concepts. These distinctions were particularly relevant for our population and informed the development of both interview protocols and interpretive categories.

In summary, self-continuity was framed as a psychological mediator that links pre- and postmigration experiences with integration related psychological responses and integration outcomes. In our empirical work, self-continuity was understood to shape how Afghan refugees might interpret and adapt to the experience of forced migration. It was theorized to function as both a buffer against trauma and a support for forward planning and sociocultural engagement. The concept was examined both qualitatively, through narrative exploration of identity change (Becker et al., 2018), and quantitatively, via instruments assessing perceived coherence between past and present identity.

Social Identity Model of Traumatic Identity Change (SIMTIC)

The Social Identity Model of Traumatic Identity Change (SIMTIC) provides a theoretical framework for understanding how trauma disrupts individuals' social identities and how the restoration of these identities can support psychological recovery and well-being (Muldoon et al., 2020). SIMTIC extends the earlier Social Identity Model of Identity Change (SIMIC) (Jetten & Pachana, 2012), which is grounded in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, as cited in van Lange et al., 2012) and self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987, as cited in van Lange et al., 2012).

At the core of SIMTIC is the argument that social identity is a key factor shaping how people respond to trauma. According to Muldoon et al. (2020), social identities are formed through group memberships, such as family, nation, religion, or profession. These identities provide a sense of belonging, meaning, and support. When trauma damages or disrupts these

group ties, individuals may experience a greater struggle to cope. However, if people are able to maintain or rebuild their social connections, they are more likely to recover and, in some cases, even experience post-traumatic growth.

Trauma, as Muldoon et al. (2020) suggest, does not only affect people emotionally or physically. It can also destabilize their sense of who they are and where they belong. When the social groups that individuals identify with are disrupted, such as their community or cultural background, their coping ability can be significantly weakened. In this way, trauma threatens the foundations of a person's social identity, not just their individual well-being.

People vary widely in how they respond to trauma. While some suffer deeply, others adapt and even grow. Muldoon et al. (2020) explain this variation through a set of identity pathways outlined in the SIMTIC model. These pathways include maintaining existing group memberships (social identity continuity), developing new ones (social identity gain), and deepening existing ties through renewed meaning (social identity revitalisation). Each pathway offers a distinct route through which identity change can influence psychological outcomes following trauma.

One of the central pathways in SIMTIC is identity continuity. Muldoon et al. (2020) argue that maintaining a connection to pre-existing social identities plays an important role in reducing psychological distress after trauma. This proposition is empirically supported by Panagiotopoulos et al. (2022) and Panagiotopoulos and Pavlopoulos (2023), whose studies with refugees and asylum seekers in Greece found that individuals who maintained ties to their pre-migration social groups reported lower psychological distress, improved physical health, and enhanced overall well-being. These findings support the identity continuity hypothesis by showing that the disruption of valued group memberships makes trauma more difficult to recover from.

Alongside continuity, Muldoon et al. (2020) also highlight the role of identity gain. This refers to the process of forming new group connections following trauma, particularly when previous identities are no longer accessible. By participating in new communities, taking on different roles, or building relationships with others who share similar experiences, individuals can regain a sense of purpose, support, and belonging. This idea is supported by Panagiotopoulos et al. (2022) and Panagiotopoulos and Pavlopoulos (2023), who found that forming new group memberships in the host country led to improved sociocultural integration and increased life satisfaction. Ballentyne and Drury (2024) also support this view. Their study on Ukrainian refugees in the UK found that gaining new affiliations with local communities and solidarity networks helped participants move from helplessness to emotional recovery, demonstrating identity gain in action. Panagiotopoulos et al. (2022) further confirm this by showing that refugees who had stronger post-migration group acquisition experienced reduced anxiety and depression over time. This suggests that forming new group connections can play a significant role in relieving psychological distress.

Another key concept within SIMTIC is identity revitalisation. This occurs when trauma strengthens a person's connection to an existing group or gives them a renewed sense of meaning and purpose. According to Muldoon et al. (2020), this process can help explain how some individuals grow from traumatic experiences by re-engaging with their group identity in a deeper or more purposeful way.

SIMTIC also emphasises that social identity can act as both a resource and a barrier to recovery. As Muldoon et al. (2020) point out, when people feel accepted by their social groups following trauma, identity becomes a powerful source of support. However, when they feel excluded or rejected, the same social identity can increase their suffering and hinder their recovery. This dual role of identity is reflected in the findings of Sharifi Ahmadipour and Sordé-Martí (2024), whose participants described both drawing self-worth from their cultural and

national heritage and feeling marginalised by the way host societies labelled or treated them. While not directly testing SIMTIC, their study offers qualitative insights that resonate with this aspect of the model.

Another important argument made by Muldoon et al. (2020) is that support is most effective when it is identity-based. People benefit more from help that comes from those who share similar cultural, religious, or experiential backgrounds. Support from in-group members tends to feel more authentic and meaningful, and therefore has a greater impact on recovery.

Building on this understanding, present research interpreted social identity continuity and development not as mediators, but as outcome variables, indicators of refugees' psychological adaptation and social integration. Based on the PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020), social identity maintenance and development were conceptualized as integration-relevant psychological responses, including a sense of belonging, trust in institutions, and openness to sociocultural engagement. This use of SIMTIC aligned with the broader framework's focus on internal psychological changes as key to successful integration.

While the Social Identity Model of Traumatic Identity Change (SIMTIC) proposes that identity continuity and gain can mediate the relationship between trauma and recovery, the model also allows flexibility depending on what is being studied, the process of recovery or its psychological outcomes. In our empirical work, SIMTIC was used to conceptualize social identity continuity and development as post-trauma outcomes rather than mediating variables. Specifically, our survey assessed how well participants have been able to maintain or rebuild group memberships following displacement. This interpretation aligns with the conceptual openness of SIMTIC, which recognizes that identity change can occur in response to trauma and can also represent a key marker of recovery (Muldoon et al., 2020).

Valenta (2008) provides qualitative evidence that self-continuity, maintained through self-reflection and identity reconstruction, plays a crucial role in supporting social identity

following forced migration. Through in-depth interviews with refugees and immigrants, the study illustrates how individuals actively engage in efforts to preserve or redefine their self-concept in response to dislocation, the loss of familiar networks, and the pressures of integration. This sense of continuity is often expressed through personal narratives that link past and present, helping individuals maintain a stable self-image despite external upheaval. By doing so, they are able to selectively rebuild social ties that align with their evolving identity. In contrast to approaches that treat social identity as the sole foundation of wellbeing, Valenta's (2008) findings suggest that a coherent personal identity may serve as a necessary base for re-establishing group affiliations, particularly when previous identities have been disrupted or stigmatized.

These insights reinforced our rationale for including social identity outcomes within the theoretical framework. They supported the idea that identity continuity and development are not only responses to trauma, but also key indicators of psychological integration. SIMTIC was thus incorporated as the third pillar of the integrated model, complementing PARI and Self-Continuity by offering a social dimension to the psychological processes examined.

Finally, SIMTIC draws attention to the role of interventions that support identity reconstruction. According to Muldoon et al. (2020), recovery should involve helping individuals reconnect with old group identities or form new ones that provide meaning and belonging. Whether through peer support programs, cultural organizations, or community involvement, identity-based strategies can play a vital role in rebuilding psychological resilience after trauma.

In sum, SIMTIC provided a valuable theoretical lens for framing social identity maintenance and development as an outcome relevant to refugee integration. Its inclusion in this our empirical work helped conceptualize how social identity maintenance and development could reflect the sociocultural integration of refugees following displacement.

Application of the Framework in the Empirical Research

Contextual and methodological Coherence

Our empirical work applied an integrated theoretical framework, comprising the Psychological Antecedents of Refugee Integration (PARI) model, the concept of self-continuity, and the Social Identity Model of Traumatic Identity Change (SIMTIC), throughout its exploratory sequential mixed methods design.

Importantly, this framework was theoretically aligned with the cultural and political context of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in France. This population has faced complex and compounding challenges, including traumatic displacement and extended, hazardous migration journeys (Schmeidl, 2019), precarious asylum conditions, and limited opportunities for social and civic inclusion in host societies (Fischer, 2013). These conditions intensify the psychological burden of migration and underscore the relevance of identity-related and emotional processes in shaping integration experiences. While not empirically validated in this specific population, the framework was selected for its conceptual fit with their lived realities, aiming to reflect population-specific concerns while maintaining theoretical coherence.

The theoretical model also served a unifying function across the entire research design. Rather than treating qualitative and quantitative studies as distinct or parallel tracks, the framework guided the development of research questions and variable selection, and facilitated conceptual integration across both studies. This alignment was intended to enhance the depth and clarity of the study's analysis and contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of refugee adaptation.

In the qualitative phase, the framework informed the design of semi-structured interview questions which are presented in detail in the part B of this section under related variables. Thematic analysis was supported by IRaMuTeQ, an open-source software based on R and Python. It enables statistical analysis of text corpora, focusing on lexical patterns,

clusters, and hierarchical classifications. The software also produces visualizations such as similarity analyses and factor maps, which help to identify meaningful structures and associations in the data (Camargo & Justo, 2016). This approach helped bring out patterns that were relevant to the study and guided the development of the overall framework, including the mediation model, which is described later in this chapter.

In the quantitative phase, insights from the qualitative findings guided the development of the survey instruments. These tools were designed to operationalize key constructs aligned with each component of the theoretical framework.

In the quantitative phase, insights from the qualitative findings guided the development of the survey instruments. These tools were designed to operationalize key constructs aligned with each component of the theoretical framework. The analysis then examined how these constructs related to one another, using mediation models as an overarching strategy to test whether psychological processes could help explain links between stressors and integration outcomes. The technical details of this mediation approach are presented later in this chapter.

The consistent application of the framework across both research studies enabled a methodologically integrated approach. Themes such as forcedness, self-continuity, cultural integration, which were first explored inductively through interviews, were subsequently examined through deductive statistical testing. This back-and-forth between qualitative insight and quantitative inquiry enhanced the interpretive depth and internal consistency of the research.

Ultimately, the application of this framework reflected a psychologically grounded and methodologically unified approach to studying refugee integration. By maintaining consistency across the qualitative and quantitative components, the study sought to ensure that the analytical thread from displacement to belonging was not only coherent but conceptually robust.

Variable Mapping and Mediational Structure

Mediation analysis is commonly used in social-psychology research to uncover the processes through which one variable affects another (Baron & Kenny, 1986). It can be applied in different research designs, such as longitudinal or multilevel studies that capture changes over time (Pan et al., 2018), as well as regression methods applied to single-timepoint data (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Detecting indirect effects often requires larger sample sizes, especially when mediational pathways are small or subtle (Sim et al., 2022).

Mediation model (Baron & Kenny, 1986) was employed to explore whether psychological process function as pathways between predictors and outcomes. This analytical approach followed the logic of Shrout and Bolger (2002) and provided a means to examine the coherence of the theoretical framework across a broader sample.

The model adopted in the empirical work of the present thesis followed a classic mediation logic outlined in the PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020), (A → B → C; see Figure 2.2), where A represents the predictor variables, B denotes the mediated variable, and C presents the outcome variable (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). This logic informed both the design and interpretation of the study's qualitative and quantitative components, grounded in the broader understanding that integration is shaped not only by external conditions but also by how individuals psychologically process the upheaval of forced migration (Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

Figure 2.2

Triangle of Predictors, Mediator, and Outcome
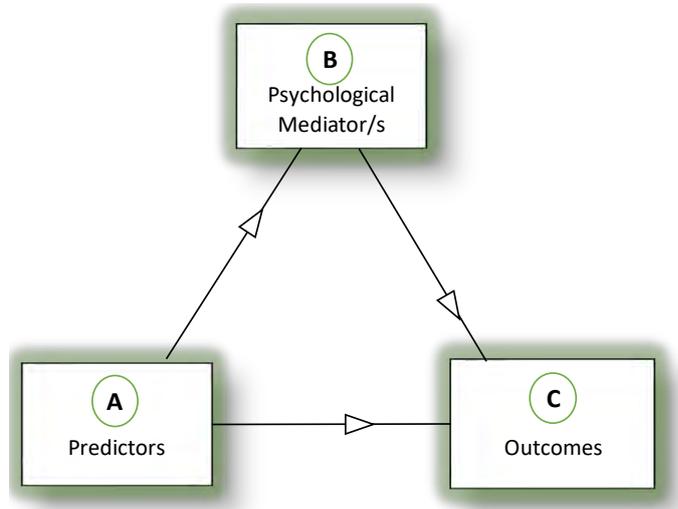
A- Predictor Variables

The predictor variables in our empirical work represented the core stressors and situational conditions that initiate psychological responses following displacement. These predictors formed the "cause" component of the study's mediation model (Howitt & Cramer, 2011) and served as the entry point for tracing how experiences of forced migration generate psychological and identity-related challenges.

In the qualitative phase, the two primary predictors; perceived forcedness and migration-related perils, were explored through targeted interview prompts focused on participants' subjective interpretations of their displacement experiences. This exploratory strategy allowed these experiences to be situated within the psychological framework, while also remaining open to the emergence of additional predictors that might emerge from participants' narratives.

In the quantitative phase, perceived forcedness and exposure to migration-related perils; including experiences of violence in the home country and during migration, were examined

alongside post-migration stressors, particularly perceived discrimination. These were treated as predictor variables, in the mediation model.

B- Mediator Variables

Mediators are internal psychological mechanisms that help explain how and why predictor variables influence outcome variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In our empirical work, three key mediators were considered: uncertainty, emotional suffering, and self-continuity.

In our empirical work, I employed the mediation logic to identify psychological pathways such as emotional distress and identity disruption, that connect external stressors to both psychological and structural integration outcomes.

In the qualitative phase, psychological mediators were explored through two main constructs: uncertainty, referring to ambiguity about one's present and future, and emotional suffering; defined as internal distress, and disorientation. Building on these insights, self-continuity was introduced as an additional mediating concept. Although not originally part of the PARI model, self-continuity aligned with its psychological logic and extended its relevance by integrating identity-level processes.

Self-continuity was considered critical for understanding psychological integration following forced migration (Sedikides et al., 2023). As discussed previously, studies have shown that trauma-related disruptions to identity coherence may undermine coping and resilience (Bourke et al., 2019; Camia & Zafar, 2021), while meaning-making and narrative integration can mitigate distress. This resonates with PARI's core logic, in which psychological mediators such as perceived control, uncertainty, and basic needs violations transmit the effects of stressors onto integration outcomes. In this way, self-continuity was not a departure from the model, but a conceptual deepening of its identity-relevant mechanisms.

In the quantitative phase, self-continuity was chosen as the sole mediator, based on theoretical fit and methodological pragmatism. Although other mediators such as uncertainty

and suffering were evident in the qualitative phase, including all of them would have increased model complexity and participant burden. Drawing on guidance from Hayes (2013) and MacKinnon et al., (2007), the study adopted a focused and theory-driven approach. This choice also respected the vulnerability of the sample by limiting survey length and cognitive load (Willis, 2005).

Altogether, the mediators examined; suffering, uncertainty, and self-continuity, reflect the real psychological struggles that many refugees face as they try to rebuild their lives. These aren't just abstract variables; they point to deeper human needs like feeling emotionally safe, having some control over your life, and holding onto a sense of who you are. According to self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), when needs like these go unmet, it becomes harder for people to adapt in healthy ways.

In this context, self-continuity offers a particularly valuable perspective. It helps us understand what it means to feel disconnected from your past, or unsure of your future, and how that can quietly shape someone's ability to integrate. Rather than being just a sign of distress, self-continuity can be seen as a mechanism that either helps or holds back adaptation. Including it in our empirical work was a way to give voice to these deeper identity challenges, and to expand the PARI model by highlighting how forced migration affects not just what people do, but how they hold themselves together.

C- Outcome Variables

The outcome variables captured both internal psychological responses and observable indicators of integration. These formed the "effect" component of the mediation model (Howitt & Cramer, 2011), and reflected how displacement experiences are psychologically processed and socially expressed.

In the qualitative phase, outcome variables were explored through participants' narratives on emotional adjustment, sense of belonging, and functional integration. Relevant

internal responses included well-being, attitudes toward the host society, acculturation preferences, and social trust. Observable indicators included access to education, employment, housing stability, and social connection.

In the quantitative phase, outcome variables were divided similarly. Internal psychological responses included acculturation orientation, migration regret, and two key dimensions of social identity: social identity maintenance and social identity development. These variables were chosen to identify integration-relevant psychological responses, reflecting cognitive-emotional aspects of adaptation. Although observable integration outcomes (e.g., education or work) were not measured through standardized psychological scales, they were recorded quantitatively in the sociodemographic section.

A special emphasis was placed on social identity variables, which functioned both as theoretical outcomes (per SIMTIC) and empirical indicators of integration. Social identity maintenance and development were interpreted as signs of successful emotional adaptation and social engagement. According to the SIMTIC model (Muldoon et al., 2020), these outcomes help individuals restore psychological stability and regain agency after trauma. Similarly, PARI (Echterhoff et al., 2020) identifies them as key dimensions of psychological integration.

Together, these outcome variables allowed the study to examine not just whether integration occurs, but how it is internally experienced and externally enacted. This dual approach reflected the study's aim to trace integration as both a psychological and a structural phenomenon, situated in the lived experiences of Afghan refugees.

To consolidate the theoretical and methodological integration across both qualitative and quantitative studies, Table 2.2 summarizes how each construct from the integrated framework was operationalized. This includes its theoretical origin, the variable used to capture it, and the study and instrument through which it was examined.

Table 2.2

Mapping of Theoretical Constructs to Operational Variables and Data Sources

Theoretical Construct	Conceptual focus	Indicators	Originating model	Study	Data source and instruments
Perceived forcedness	Subjective experience of being compelled to migrate	Coercion, lack of choice, sudden displacement	PARI	Qual + Quant	Qual: Interview Qs B1; reasons for leaving perceived coercion Quant: 2-item Perceived Forcedness Scale
Migration related perils	Traumatic and threatening events before and during the migration journey	Violence, life threats, illegality, lack of control	PARI	Qual + Quant	Qual: Interview Qs B2–B4 on dangers, legality or illegality Quant: 10-item Perils Scale covering threats, fear, stress, mobility restrictions
Post migration stressor	Perceived exclusion and negative treatment in the host society	Discrimination	PARI	Quant only	Quant: 9-item Everyday Discrimination Scale
Psychological mediators	Internal mechanisms translating distress into adaptation	Emotional suffering, uncertainty, self-continuity	PARI + Self-continuity	Qual + Quant (Self continuity)	Qual: Qs D; suffering and self-continuity Quant: 4-item Self-Continuity Scale
Integration-relevant psychological responses	Cognitive-emotional indicators of adaptation	Acculturation, wellbeing, social identity, migration regret	PARI + SIMTIC	Qual + Quant	Qual: Interview Qs C.a, Cb, C.c; wellbeing, attitude toward host society, acculturation Quant: 11-item Acculturation Competence Scale, 2 items Regret, 8 items- Social Identity Maintenance and Development Scales
Structural integration outcome	Concrete indicators of social and civic participation	Education, employment, housing, access to social support	PARI	Qual + Quant	Qual: Interview Qs E; access to education, employment housing, social support Quant: Socio-demographic questions on education, housing, employment

This mapping also illustrates how the framework functioned as a bridge between the exploratory qualitative themes and the confirmatory quantitative models, ensuring conceptual continuity and analytical coherence throughout the research.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter provided the theoretical foundation for the study by critically examining dominant migration and integration theories and highlighting their limitations in capturing the psychological dimensions of refugee experiences. While frameworks such as sociocultural theory, social integration theory, acculturation models, and economic migration theories offered valuable structural and sociological insights, they did not sufficiently address the emotional, cognitive, and identity-based processes that are central to understanding the refugee experience. These limitations reveal a key conceptual gap: the need for a framework that explains not just how refugees adapt externally, but how they internally process displacement, trauma, and belonging.

To address this gap, I adopted a psychologically grounded theoretical framework that integrates the Psychological Antecedents of Refugee Integration (PARI) model (Echterhoff et al., 2020), the concept of self-continuity (Sedikides et al., 2023), and the Social Identity Model of Traumatic Identity Change (SIMTIC) (Muldoon et al., 2020). Together, these models supported a structured mediation framework that links predictors such as perceived forcedness and trauma to integration outcomes, like wellbeing, belonging, and participation, through internal psychological mechanisms including identity coherence, suffering, and social affiliation.

The chapter also outlined the mediation structure that organizes the conceptual model around the core components of cause, mediator, and outcome. This structure informed both the qualitative and quantitative studies of the study, allowing for a consistent exploration of how Afghan refugees in France psychologically respond to forced migration. By mapping the pathways from migration-related adversity to integration outcomes through internal mechanisms, the framework enabled both narrative insight and empirical testing.

By grounding the study in this integrated and context-sensitive framework, the research maintained theoretical and methodological coherence across both studies of inquiry. This unified approach ensured that each stage, from interview design to statistical modelling, was guided by a consistent understanding of the psychological processes at work in refugee integration. As a result, the framework provided not only conceptual clarity but also analytical depth, supporting a holistic and human-centered account of how Afghan refugees navigate displacement and begin to rebuild belonging in a new sociocultural context.

Chapter 3 - Systematic Review of the Psychological and Sociocultural Impacts of

Violence and Forced Displacement Among Afghan Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Introduction

The experiences of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers are shaped by a complex interplay of violence, displacement, and sociocultural challenges in both their home and host countries. These experiences often lead to psychological distress and affect long-term integration outcomes. To understand these processes, it is essential to examine the broader patterns of violence and forced migration, as well as the psychological mechanisms that influence refugee adjustment.

This chapter presents a systematic review of empirical studies on Afghan refugees' experiences of violence, migration-related stressors, psychological responses, and integration outcomes. By contextualizing findings within the Psychological Antecedents of Refugee Integration (PARI) model (Echterhoff et al., 2020) and the concept of self-continuity (Sedikides et al., 2022), this systematic review highlights critical gaps, triangulates diverse evidence, and offers insights to inform future research directions.

Unlike traditional literature reviews, a systematic review follows a transparent and replicable methodology for identifying, selecting, appraising, and synthesizing relevant studies. This approach helps reduce bias and ensures that the findings are comprehensive and grounded in evidence (Higgins et al., 2019; Mulrow, 1994). It also enables the inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative studies, offering a richer understanding of refugee experiences across diverse contexts.

Importantly, this review forms the foundation of the sequential exploratory mixed methods design adopted in this thesis. It was conducted to inform the development of the subsequent qualitative phase by identifying core variables, recurring patterns, and underexplored themes in the existing literature. Beginning with a systematic review allowed

the research to be theory-informed and evidence-led, strengthening the design and relevance of the overall thesis.

Following this introduction, the chapter first provides an overview of global patterns of violence and forced displacement, highlighting the structural drivers that compel people to flee their countries. This is followed by a focused discussion of Afghanistan's migration history, including key phases of displacement, major migration routes, and recent developments since the 2021 Taliban takeover. These contextual sections help frame the lived realities and vulnerabilities of Afghan refugees.

Guided by this rationale, the systematic review addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What psychological and social issues do Afghan asylum seekers or refugees face in their country of origin and during their migration journeys?

RQ2: What challenges do Afghan refugees face during the asylum process and initial resettlement, and what are their common psychological responses?

RQ3: What longer-term integration challenges do Afghan refugees encounter in the host country, and how do they psychologically respond to these challenges?

RQ4: What psychological mediators are identified across studies, and in what ways do these mediators influence Afghan refugees' adaptation during different phases of migration and integration?

The chapter then presents the systematic review, beginning with the methodology and moving into a thematic synthesis of findings. These findings are organized around the key constructs of the PARI model: migration-related stressors, psychological mediators, and integration-relevant psychological responses. They are later interpreted in the discussion section, where they are considered in relation to the review's core objectives. This approach

supports both theoretical alignment and practical insight, offering a foundation for the thesis's subsequent qualitative phase.

Global Patterns and Underlying Causes of Violence and Forced Displacement

Forced displacement is a major global challenge, with millions of individuals fleeing their homes due to violence, persecution, poverty, and environmental disasters. Among these drivers, conflict and violence remain the most dominant and widespread causes. Refugees and asylum seekers often encounter violence at multiple stages of their migration journeys, including in their countries of origin, during transit, and even after arrival in host countries.

In their home countries, many refugees experience direct or structural violence that forces them to flee. This includes bombings, homicides, ethnic persecution, property destruction, and human rights violations. In places like Myanmar, the Rohingya have faced mass killings, denial of citizenship, and destruction of their communities (Faxon et al., 2015; Rahman, 2015). In Syria, more than 14 million people have been displaced due to over a decade of civil war, with bombings and attacks on civilians continuing as recently as 2023 (Bakkour & Sahtout, 2025). In Palestine, the escalation of violence in October 2023 led to mass displacement in Gaza, where civilians were killed, entire neighbourhoods were destroyed, and access to basic needs was cut off (Human Rights Watch, 2024).

Similarly, civilians in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan have experienced long-term exposure to conflict, including targeted attacks, civil war, political violence, and ethnic cleansing (Giovetti, 2019; Hassan, 2014). Women and children are particularly vulnerable, often subjected to sexual violence, forced marriage, and severe restrictions on mobility and rights (Jackson, 2009; Jensen, 2018; Parmar et al., 2019). In Afghanistan, decades of conflict across different regimes have involved mass arrests, torture, bombings, and attacks on minority groups such as the Hazaras. These cycles of

violence have contributed to widespread trauma, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorders (Aljazeera, 2021; Ben Farhat et al., 2018; Jackson, 2009).

Violence during migration journeys also remains a critical issue. Refugees in transit often face robbery, physical abuse, humiliation, sexual exploitation, and trafficking. Perpetrators include smugglers, traffickers, law enforcement, and at times even fellow migrants. Syrian refugees crossing through Turkey have reported beatings, threats, sexual assault, and forced detention (Servan-Mori et al., 2014). Afghan migrants, particularly unaccompanied minors, have been exploited for labor in agriculture and construction, and many women have been trafficked or sexually abused en route to Pakistan or Gulf states (Marchand et al., 2014; Torfa et al., 2022).

Even after reaching host countries, violence does not necessarily stop. Refugees frequently report experiences of physical, emotional, and economic abuse. Women remain at high risk of sexual violence and domestic abuse, especially in countries where legal systems do not fully protect refugee rights. Marital rape is often not criminalized, and traffickers continue to exploit displaced populations in contexts of weak governance and limited oversight. Afghan refugees, for instance, have reported emotional abuse, restricted rights, and continued vulnerability in host settings (Jensen, 2018; UNHCR, 2021b)

The root causes of such violence are deeply connected to ideology, ethnicity, political instability, and historical marginalization. In Myanmar, the denial of Rohingya identity and exclusion from political processes contributed to systemic violence (Chingono, 2016). In Sri Lanka, Tamils were persecuted by the Sinhalese-majority government, leading to decades of conflict and displacement (Ratnapalan, 2012). Across African nations, causes include ethnic discrimination, religious conflict, poor governance, and competition over natural resources (Chingono, 2016).

Similarly, Afghanistan has seen ongoing violence under various governments and armed factions, from the Soviet occupation to the Taliban and post-2001 democratic period, marked by insurgent attacks, civilian casualties, and political upheaval (Clark, 2023; Hassan, 2014; Jackson, 2009). The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) recorded high civilian casualties, with more than 47,000 civilian deaths between 2001 and 2021, many of whom were women and children (Aljazeera, 2021).

Beyond violence, persecution based on religion, political opinion, ethnicity, or gender is another major cause of forced migration. Religious minorities such as Christians in the Central African Republic, Hindus in Pakistan, and Muslims in Myanmar have faced systemic threats (UNHCR, 2018). In Venezuela and North Korea, political persecution has forced thousands to flee. After the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in 2021, violence against women and minorities such as the Hazaras intensified, and many women were denied education, work, and public participation, prompting a new wave of displacement (Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict (CIVIC), 2010; Naeemi, 2024; UNHCR, 2021a)

Organized crime and gang violence also play an increasing role in displacement. In countries such as El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico, individuals and families flee extortion, kidnappings, and forced recruitment by powerful criminal networks (Cantor, 2016; Reynolds, 2014). These forms of violence blur the lines between political instability and everyday insecurity.

Natural disasters are another key driver of displacement, especially in fragile or conflict-affected states. Earthquakes, floods, and landslides in South Asia have repeatedly forced people to abandon their homes. Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Nepal have all experienced large-scale climate-related displacements (Giovetti, 2019; Marchand et al., 2014). In 2021 alone, over 38 million internal displacements were caused by disasters, mainly tropical storms and floods (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2022). In Afghanistan,

the impact of natural disasters has been worsened by weak infrastructure, limited shelter, and poor access to healthcare and employment, particularly in the aftermath of decades of war and economic collapse (Kronenfeld, 2008; UNHCR, 2021a).

Food insecurity and hunger are closely tied to displacement. Conflict, poverty, climate change, and broken supply chains have disrupted food access across large regions, especially in Yemen, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Afghanistan (Concern Worldwide US, 2022; Giovetti, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have further increased global hunger and instability, prompting new waves of migration.

Economic instability also drives migration, especially in low-income or conflict-affected countries. In West Africa, many people migrate in search of employment and better living conditions (Giovetti, 2019). In Afghanistan, decades of political instability, violence, and sanctions have pushed individuals to migrate internally and internationally to reduce risk and improve livelihood prospects (Jackson, 2009).

Global figures reflect the scale of displacement. In 2021, the countries with the highest numbers of conflict-related internal displacement included Ethiopia (5.1 million), the Democratic Republic of Congo (2.7 million), Afghanistan (723,000), Burkina Faso (682,000), and Somalia (549,000) (IDMC, 2022). In Palestine, forced displacement has persisted since the 1948 Nakba, and over 5.9 million Palestinians remain registered as refugees with UNRWA (Amnesty International, 2024; Margesson & Zanotti, 2024).

Taken as a whole, this evidence reveals the complex and overlapping forces behind forced migration. Refugees often endure multiple layers of violence, persecution, and instability, beginning in their countries of origin and continuing across borders. Their experiences are shaped not only by conflict and displacement, but also by natural disasters, hunger, and economic insecurity. These drivers interact in ways that profoundly affect the mental health, safety, and long-term prospects of displaced populations worldwide.

Trends of migration in Afghanistan and their link to increased violence

Afghanistan has experienced decades of conflict and instability, driving persistent waves of migration. Ethnic tensions, political fragmentation, crime, poor infrastructure, and environmental degradation have compounded these challenges, leaving millions displaced (Lopez-Lucia, 2015). The history of migration reflects the impact of major upheavals, with key waves outlined below (Avis, 2021; Lopez-Lucia, 2015; Schetter, 2012; Sørensen et al., 2003).

During the communist era and Soviet intervention (1978-1989), millions of Afghans fled to Pakistan, Iran, and further afield to Europe, the U.S., and Australia (Schetter, 2012; Sørensen et al., 2003).

Following the Soviet withdrawal and the Mujahedeen takeover (1989-1992), internal conflict between the Mujahedeen and the communist administration, followed by infighting among Mujahedeen groups, led to further displacement (Schetter, 2012; Sørensen et al., 2003).

The Taliban's rise to power (1994-2001) caused mass violence and displacement, with an estimated 3–5 million Afghans fleeing to neighboring countries. Border restrictions by Pakistan and Iran exacerbated the situation, forcing more people into internal displacement (Sørensen et al., 2003).

The 2001 U.S.-led intervention and the signing of the Bonn Accord displaced over 300,000 people (Schetter, 2012)but also enabled the return of around 5.9 million refugees, mainly from Pakistan and Iran. Despite these returns, continued insecurity and economic instability caused many to migrate again (Schmeidl, 2019).

After 2014, renewed instability from political transitions, escalating violence, and economic downturns triggered further migration. Many fled due to the worsening security and living conditions (Schmeidl, 2019).

The August 2021 Taliban takeover of Kabul triggered a large-scale migration crisis, with many Afghans fleeing due to the fear of persecution under the new regime. This exodus,

caused by restrictions on women, political repression, and widespread insecurity, led to an influx of refugees into neighboring countries and the evacuation of thousands by U.S. forces (Barlas, 2022). In total, around 123,000 people were airlifted from Afghanistan, including workers with foreign governments, human rights defenders, and journalists (Amnesty International, 2021).

Key host countries like the U.S., Canada, the UK, and several European nations, Poland, Spain, and Germany, offered temporary asylum and resettlement opportunities. While the U.S. led resettlement efforts, Canada pledged to resettle up to 40,000 evacuees, and Germany hosted over 4,000 individuals. Despite these efforts, many evacuees continue to face uncertain futures, awaiting permanent relocation. Meanwhile, neighboring countries like Iran and Pakistan managed significant refugee inflows under challenging conditions. This migration crisis highlights the complex challenges of managing large-scale displacements due to conflict and regime change (Amnesty International, 2021).

This overview underscores Afghanistan's status as one of the most sustained refugee-producing countries in the world. Over the past four decades, repeated cycles of conflict, regime change, and economic instability have led to both internal and external displacement on a massive scale. Research shows that 76% of the Afghan population has experienced displacement at some point, with 41% displaced internally, 42% externally, and 17% experiencing both (Jackson, 2009). The August 2021 crisis is a stark reminder of the continued instability and its human cost. As of June 30, 2024, UNHCR reported 6.4 million Afghan refugees, asylum-seekers, and individuals in refugee-like situations globally, including in neighboring countries like Iran and Pakistan, as well as Europe and North America (UNHCR, 2024).

To provide a clearer picture of how political upheavals and violence have shaped these migration patterns, Table 3.1 presents a chronological overview of the eight main phases of

Afghan displacement, adapted from Schmeidl (2019) and updated with recent data (Amnesty International, 2021). It illustrates the intersection of conflict events and migration trajectories, highlighting the cyclical nature of flight and return that has defined Afghanistan's modern history.

Table 3.1

Overview of Afghan displacement phases

Phase	Period	Key event	Migration Pattern
1	(1978–1989)	Soviet invasion and withdrawal	Over 6 million flee; rising internal displacement
2	(1990–1995)	Mujahideen civil war	1.2 million return briefly; renewed displacement due to civil war
3	(1996–2000)	Taliban's first rule; severe drought	New exodus; 900,000 returns; drought worsens flight
4	(2001–2002)	US-led intervention post 9/11; Taliban removed.	1.5 million flee; targeted internal displacement
5	(2002–2006)	Bonn Peace Agreement; new government.	About five million return (largest UN assisted)
6	(2007–2014)	Insurgency resurgence, weak governance	Returns slow; ~700,000 IDPs; renewed exodus
7	(2015–2019)	Political/economic crisis, insecurity	962,000 asylum claims; 1.8 million IDPs; 4 million returnees
8	(2019–2021)	Taliban regain power; (August 2021 takeover)	123,000 evacuated by air; millions flee to neighbors

Migration Routes and Destinations of Afghans

The limited regular pathways to leave the country for Afghans leave them with no choice but to consider embarking on irregular journeys with the assistance of smugglers (Mohammadi et al., 2021). Three immediate destinations are identified by the refugees to seek refuge: Pakistan, Iran, and India. Most people fly to India directly from Kabul, securing a visa for the country (Mixed Migration Centre & Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative, 2017; UNHCR, 2022). Many refugees migrate into Pakistan and Iran using some temporary routes with their families too.

The illegal land route most commonly used by people-traffickers is known as the golden crescent, which is also popular for smuggling narcotics. Afghans are brought through the deserts of Nimruz province of Afghanistan over the border into the Balochistan region of Pakistan. From there, they cross over into Iran, travelling across the hostile, mountainous terrain between the two countries. Those pursuing their journey to Europe use the Balkan route, known for its treacherous journey, to cross the border of Turkey (Mahadevan et al., 2023)

Although families are an important determinant of the lives of Afghan people, the majority of migrants have reported being individual men seeking jobs. They predominantly migrate to Iran or Pakistan (Marchand et al., 2014) and then move onward to European countries such as France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and the United Kingdom (Schuster, 2011). However, migration patterns are not uniform across all demographic groups. While adult men often migrate alone for work, young individuals and families have different motivations and strategies (Marchand et al., 2014).

Additionally, due to the uncertain context of Afghanistan, minors and youth between the ages of 14 to 21 are frequently involved in migration decisions (Bozok & Bozok, 2019). For these young individuals, migration often involves working hard to repay loans used for their journey and sending financial support back home to their families (Marchand et al., 2014). For those traveling to nearby destinations like Iran, Pakistan, and India, migration often occurs with families to ensure access to education for children and protection for family members (Fischer, 2013).

Traditionally, Afghan migrants have travelled through Iran and Pakistan before moving on to European countries. However, the events of August 2021, following the U.S. and NATO withdrawal, disrupted these established routes. Although some individuals were airlifted, many others, including those with travel authorization, were left behind due to barriers such as Taliban checkpoints and closed borders. As a result, many Afghans resorted to irregular

migration routes, facing challenges such as deportations and heightened security at border crossings (Amnesty International, 2021).

As I have noted throughout the descriptions above, the violence and forced displacement experienced by Afghan refugees are part of a long-standing crisis that has shaped migration patterns over the years. The complex web of violence ranging from conflict and political persecution to systemic discrimination has forced countless Afghans to flee their homes, with many facing perilous journeys through transit countries and at their final destinations.

This review explores the challenges Afghan refugees face, with a particular focus on their psychological responses to violence and displacement. It examines how the violence experienced both in Afghanistan and during transit affects refugees' integration. The review also addresses various migration stressors experienced before, during, and after migration. The goal is to synthesize existing research, identify gaps in current knowledge, and improve understanding of how these stressors impact the refugee integration process.

Guided by this aim, the review sought to deepen understanding of migration challenges, stressors, psychological responses, and integration issues through systematic analysis of secondary data. Specifically, it aimed to understand the psychological impact of violence and forced displacement on Afghan refugees, to identify key integration challenges encountered by Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in destination countries, and to explore potential psychological mediators involved in their integration processes.

Conceptual foundation for the systematic review

This section presents the key constructs of the Psychological Antecedents of Refugee Integration (PARI) model and the concept of self-continuity, which are detailed as the theoretical framework for the thesis in Part I, Chapter II. For the purpose of the systematic review, selected components of the PARI model were emphasized due to their relevance to the

lived experiences of Afghan refugees. These include postarrival demands and stressors, perceptions of forcedness and related perils, psychological mediators, and integration-relevant psychological responses. In Figure 3.1, these focal constructs are marked with star symbols to visually differentiate them from the remaining elements of the model.

The PARI model emphasizes how forced migration introduces critical stressors that undermine control, disrupt safety, and produce long-term vulnerabilities, which in turn shape outcomes in mental health, education, and employment (Echterhoff et al., 2020). The model also highlights the role of psychological mediators such as coping strategies, perceived control, and identity-related processes, which link these stressors to broader integration outcomes. Extending this framework, the current review incorporates the concept of self-continuity as an additional mediator. This construct reflects refugees' efforts to maintain a coherent sense of self across disrupted life trajectories, including their past, present, and future identities (Camia & Zafar, 2021; Sedikides et al., 2023).

Figure 3.1

Conceptual Foundation Based Selected Components of the PARI model
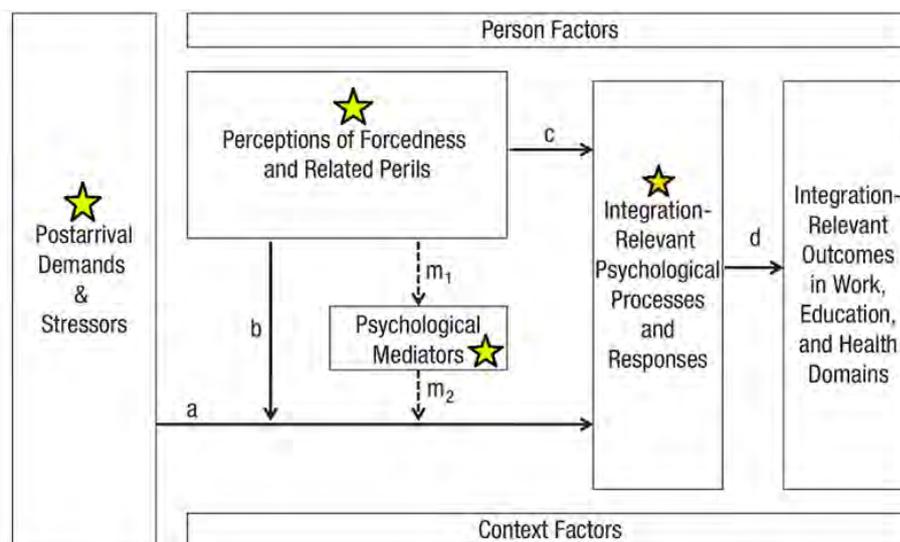
Note. The star symbols were added to indicate the focal conceptual constructs selected for emphasis in this systematic review. Specifically, these constructs are postarrival demands and stressors, perceptions of forcedness and related perils, psychological mediators, and integration-relevant psychological processes and responses. These elements represent the aspects of the PARI model that have been related to this systematic review.

Perception of forcedness, related perils and experiences of violence

This theme addresses the cumulative challenges refugees face before and during forced migration, combining pre-arrival stressors and violence with forced migration as interconnected constructs. Forced migration is often associated with severe perils and threats both prior to departure and during the migration journey (Echterhoff et al., 2020).

Pre-arrival stressors, such as experiences of war and persecution in refugees' home countries, establish a baseline of psychological vulnerability, influencing refugees' perceptions of migration as an involuntary and perilous process (Theisen-Womersley, 2021). Research has demonstrated that exposure to pre-migration stressors, such as violence and persecution, increases the likelihood of long-term psychological conditions, including PTSD and depression, which further complicate integration processes (Miller & Rasmussen, 2010).

Forced migration frequently involves sudden departures with little time for planning, further compounding psychological distress, disruptions in social support networks, loss of possessions, and uncertainty about the future (Schlechter et al., 2023). The loss of control and forced displacement exacerbate feelings of instability, reinforcing perceptions of migration as an uncontrollable and dangerous process (Echterhoff et al., 2020). For instance, refugees who experience both pre-migration violence and forced displacement are more likely to struggle with self-confidence and trust in host institutions, impacting their overall integration outcomes (Kirmayer et al., 2011).

Together, these constructs offer a nuanced perspective on how cumulative experiences of violence and forced displacement influence refugees' psychological responses throughout the integration process.

Psychological mediators

Psychological mediators connect the emotional and mental impacts of migration to integration-related processes, explaining how factors like loss of control, trauma, uncertainty,

and coping influence adaptation during and after migration (Echterhoff et al., 2020). While these mediators are outlined in the PARI model, this study integrates self-continuity as an additional mediator to explore its role in shaping refugees' experiences.

Self-continuity reflects the subjective sense of connection across past, present, and future selves, supporting identity coherence and psychological stability despite displacement (Sedikides et al., 2023). Refugees often experience challenges to their self-continuity due to forced migration and biographical breaks, which disrupt their ability to relate to their former selves and maintain a cohesive life narrative (Camia & Zafar, 2021). Disruptions to self-continuity can hinder refugees' ability to make decisions and build meaningful relationships in their new environments, further worsening their vulnerability during the integration process (Camia & Zafar, 2021).

Integration-relevant psychological processes and responses

According to the PARI (Echterhoff et al., 2020), integration-related psychological responses are modelled as the outcomes of the interplay between refugees' experiences of forced migration and the psychological mediators that process those experiences. These responses are the behaviors, emotions, and attitudes refugees exhibit as they adapt to the challenges of integration. The model emphasizes that these responses are influenced by both internal factors (e.g., psychological processes) and external circumstances (e.g., societal conditions). Echterhoff et al. (2020) also outline these processes as coping strategies, emotional regulation, and emotional responses, such as positive emotions (hope and optimism) that drive engagement and negative emotions (anxiety, fear, and trauma) that hinder participation and adjustment. Motivation and goal setting are influenced by challenges like loss of control and uncertainty. These processes are critical pathways through which refugees manage stress, fulfil basic needs, and build resilience during integration. Understanding how these processes play out in everyday life highlights the challenges refugees face during integration.

Refugees often face significant emotional challenges, including trauma, fear, anxiety, and uncertainty from their difficult experiences, which make it harder to adjust to a new life. These emotions can disrupt their ability to make decisions, build relationships, and engage in integration activities like language learning or finding a job. However, positive emotions, such as hope and optimism, supported by family, community, and cultural practices, help refugees stay motivated (Schweitzer et al., 2006). Engaging in education and community activities fosters a sense of belonging and supports their overall adaptation to new environments, demonstrating the importance of resilience-building measures in overcoming these challenges (Walther et al., 2021).

Taken together, the three constructs of the PARI model form a triangular framework that shows the pathway from migration-related stressors to psychological mechanisms and, ultimately, to either positive or negative outcomes (See figure 3.2). This triangular logic shaped both the theoretical lens of the study and the design of the systematic review. The inclusion criteria focused on studies that addressed one or more parts of this sequence: (a) stressors such as forced migration, violence, and related perils, (b) mediators such as uncertainty, loss of control, or self-continuity, and (c) integration-related psychological responses such as coping, motivation, and social identity processes.

During data extraction, the constructs served as a guide for identifying how different studies defined and measured these factors. For example, accounts of pre-migration violence were grouped under "perils," while findings on identity reconstruction were categorized under "self-continuity." The same framework was then used to group the findings by stressors, mediators, and responses, showing where the studies agreed and where gaps remain.

Figure 3.2

The tringle foundation derived from PARI model
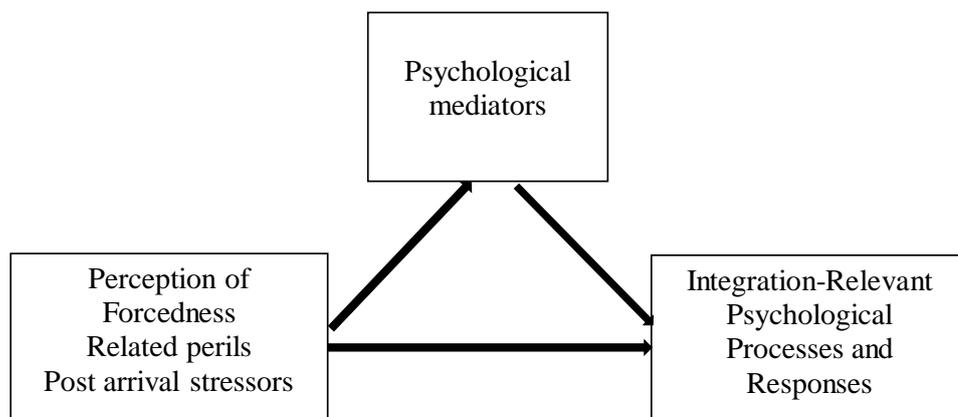
Methodology

This review followed the Preferred Reporting Item for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines and checklist to ensure methodological transparency and comprehensive reporting (Page et al., 2021a). PRISMA is an internationally recognized framework that promotes clarity in how systematic reviews are conducted and reported, covering key steps such as search strategy, screening, eligibility checks, and study inclusion. Although originally designed for systematic reviews with meta-analysis, PRISMA is widely applied to other forms of evidence synthesis, including qualitative and mixed-method reviews, because it strengthens replicability and critical appraisal (Sarkis-Onofre et al., 2021).

This review is best classified as a Mixed Methods Systematic Review (MMSR), incorporating evidence from qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods primary studies. To integrate these different data types, the JBI Convergent Segregated approach was adopted, which allows for separate synthesis of quantitative and qualitative findings followed by integration at the interpretive level. Although the term "meta-synthesis" is sometimes used informally to describe synthesis efforts, it is methodologically specific to qualitative reviews. Therefore, this review is more accurately described as a Mixed Methods Systematic Review

using a convergent segregated narrative synthesis approach, consistent with JBI guidance. The overall review process is illustrated in Figure 3.3, which outlines each step from search and screening to quality appraisal, data extraction, and final synthesis, following the JBI framework and adapted from (Stern et al., 2021).

Figure 3.3

Review process (adapted from (Stern et al. (2021))
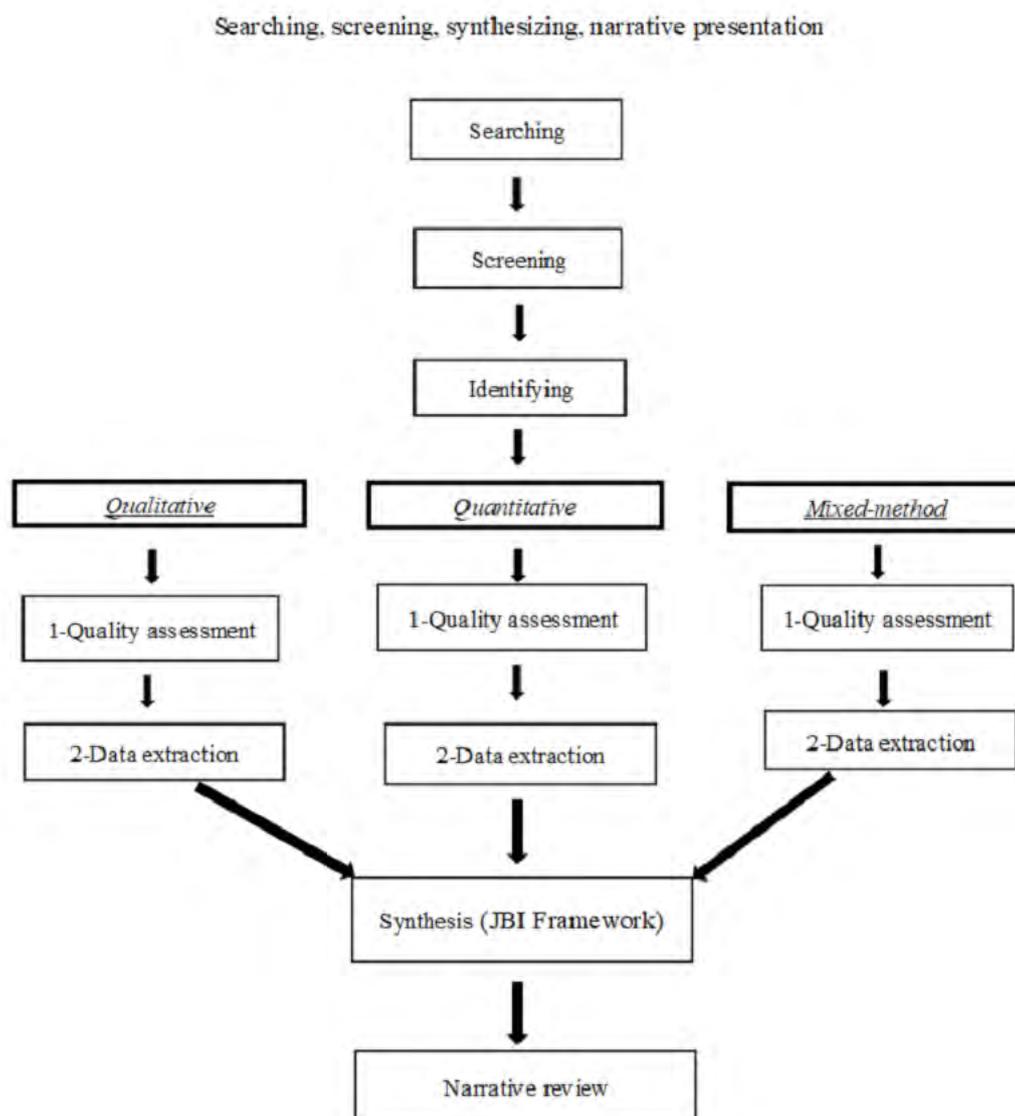
Eligibility criteria

The studies included in this review (n=23) were published between 2010 and 2024 and involved adult samples aged 18 and older, aligning with the target demographic for the

empirical studies in the present PhD thesis. The articles focused on interventions specific to Afghan refugees or asylum seekers in the pre- or post-migration stages, and the language of publication was English.

The articles included either focused solely on Afghan refugees or asylum seekers residing in developed countries, or involved refugees from Afghanistan or other countries, where only the findings specific to Afghan refugees or asylum seekers were extracted. Additionally, the articles addressed topics related to Afghan refugees' integration, psychological problems, and experiences of forced displacement.

Articles published before 2010, those not focused on Afghan refugees or asylum seekers, or those that did not separate findings specific to them were excluded from this review. Additionally, articles involving minors below 18 years of age, systematic reviews and other types of literature reviews, studies on Afghan refugees not conducted in developed countries, and articles addressing topics unrelated to the constructs of the study framework were also excluded. The focus was solely on Afghan refugees and asylum seekers to identify relevant studies and determine if this topic had been adequately explored.

Information sources

I used various platforms for my research, including EBSCO and Google Scholar. EBSCO, with its large number of databases, allowed me to access peer-reviewed articles and use logical operators like "OR" and "AND" to organize my search terms more effectively. By applying filters, I was able to reach more precise data. The search in EBSCO was conducted through two key databases: PsycARTICLES and PsycINFO. Meanwhile, Google Scholar provided me with additional relevant articles, particularly from migration-related journals.

Ethics and registration

The protocol for the systematic review was pre-registered on OSF on (22/11/2024) available with registration link: https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/NXEUH.

Search strategy

I searched the keywords applying the following Boolean search ("Afghan refugees" OR "Afghan asylum seekers") AND ("violence" OR "trauma" OR "forced displacement" OR "displacement" OR "forced migration") AND ("sociocultural integration" OR "integration" OR "psychological impact" OR "mental health") AND ("developed countries" OR "host countries"). The EBSCO platform offered the logical operators "AND" and "OR," but for Google Scholar, I used the logical operators manually by separating the search terms using parentheses.

I conducted the search twice. The first search was on February 28, 2023, with a filter applied to include articles published between 2010 and December 2023. As I approached the report-writing stage of the systematic review, I conducted another search to include newly published articles, applying a filter for articles published between 2010 and November 2024. All other steps of the systematic review process were applied to the combined total of articles identified from both searches.

Screening and data extraction procedure

This section describes the processes of screening and data extraction performed in the systematic review. The steps were designed to ensure that all included studies met the predefined eligibility criteria and that relevant data were systematically collected to address the research questions.

Screening

The screening process was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021). The initial search resulted in 2,398 articles. After removing 981 duplicates, 1,417 articles were retained for title review. Following the title review, 121 articles were selected for abstract screening and examination of relevant information in the body of the articles. From this, 27 articles were identified for full-text screening.

During the full-text screening, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied more specifically. Initially, 25 articles were considered eligible (2 master's theses and 23 published scientific articles). Following a discussion between reviewers, one master's thesis and one scientific article were excluded as they did not fully meet the inclusion criteria, leaving a final set of 23 articles for the systematic review: 11 qualitative, 10 quantitative, and 2 mixed-method studies. Due to the limited number of peer-reviewed studies addressing specific psychosocial variables among Afghan refugees, one high-quality master's thesis was retained and included in the synthesis after passing quality appraisal. Two reviewers independently screened the full texts, and all findings were discussed to ensure relevance, agreement, and consistency.

The screening process is summarized in the PRISMA Flow Diagram (see figure 3.4), which visually represents the stages of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

Figure. 3.4

PRISMA Flow Diagram of Systematic Review Process

Data Extraction
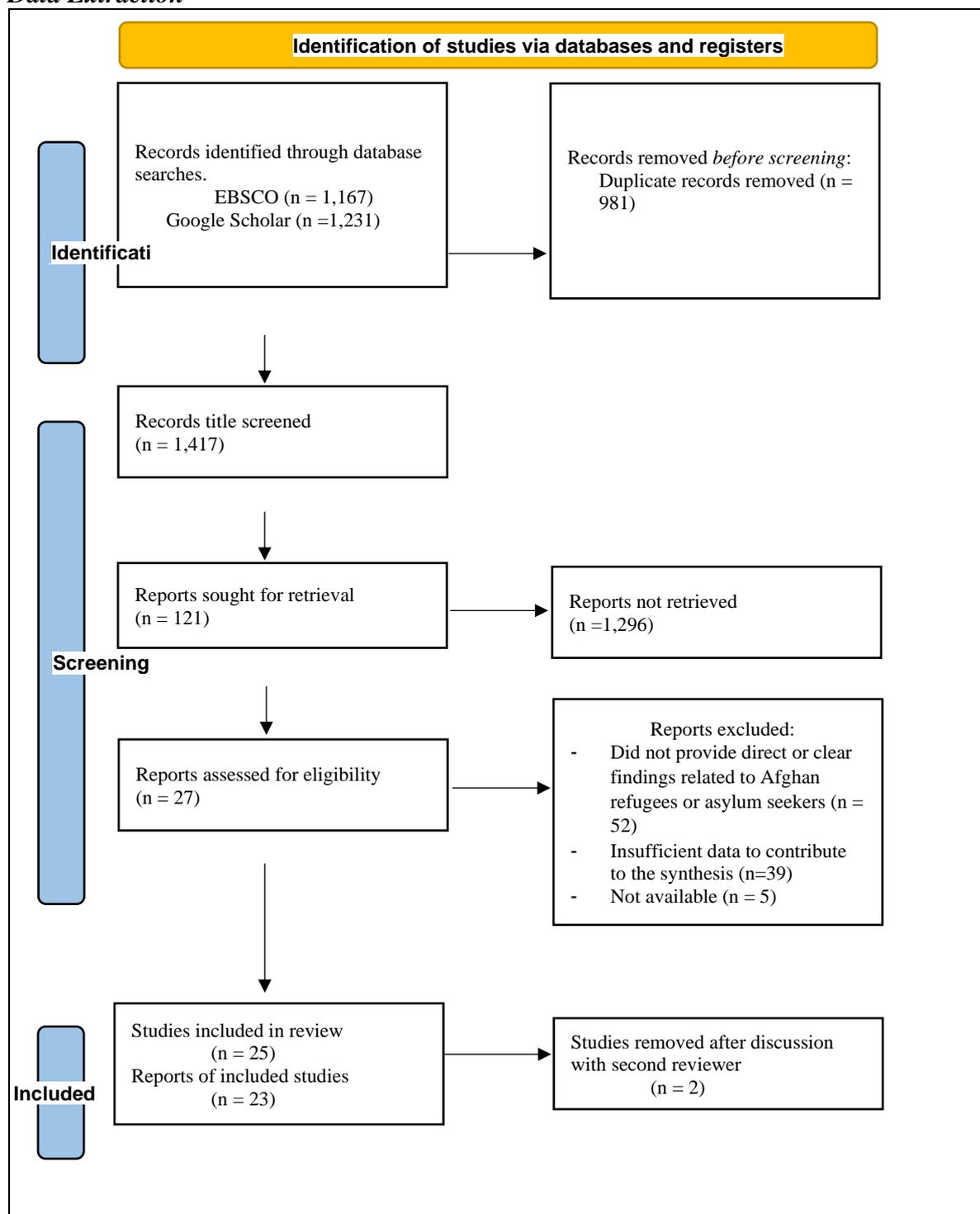
A standardized data extraction form was developed in excel to systematically collect

relevant information from each included study. Two extractors independently completed the

data extraction, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion to ensure reliability. The

extraction focused on key elements such as study title, study design, population characteristics, outcomes, and other relevant findings. The selection of extracted variables was guided by the review's research questions, ensuring that the data collected directly addressed the psychological and social dimensions of Afghan refugees' experiences across migration and integration phases.

Adjustments were made to the format of extracted data, such as sample size, age groups, and outcomes measured, in alignment with suggestions provided by the second reviewer. These modifications ensured a consistent presentation of the extracted data and facilitated a systematic synthesis of the findings.

Data synthesis

The extracted information was systematically synthesized using the JBI Mixed Methods Synthesis Framework (Stern et al., 2021). This framework facilitated the integration of data across different methodologies, ensuring a comprehensive synthesis of the findings.

In line with the JBI Convergent Segregated Approach (Stern et al., 2021), qualitative and quantitative data were first treated separately and then brought together at the level of interpretation. This process enabled the review to preserve methodological distinctions while developing integrated conclusions.

Thematic categories were developed independently for each set of studies and later aligned using the PARI model as the guiding analytical framework. This model structured the synthesis around three core constructs: (1) perceptions of forcedness, related perils, and post-migration stressors, (2) psychological mediators, and (3) integration-relevant psychological responses. This alignment enabled the findings from both qualitative and quantitative studies to be meaningfully compared and interpreted together without collapsing their methodological distinctions.

Due to substantial heterogeneity across the quantitative studies, particularly in study design, measurement instruments, and reporting formats, a statistical meta-analysis was not feasible. The quantitative findings were therefore synthesized descriptively and narratively, following established guidelines for narrative synthesis in mixed-methods reviews (Stern et al., 2021). Where available, statistical outputs such as prevalence estimates, risk ratios, or regression coefficients were reported to support interpretation, but no pooled effect sizes were calculated.

The final synthesis brought together the separately developed qualitative and quantitative findings by identifying common themes and differences based on the PARI model. This interpretive process offered a structured yet flexible way to build a clear understanding of the review's main objectives, and its results are presented and interpreted in the Discussion section.

The synthesized findings are summarized in the Table 3.2 which provides an overview of the articles' key details. The items under each category were included based on mutual agreement between the two reviewers during the synthesis process.

Table 3.2

List and Characteristics of Studies Included in the Review

Author	Title	Design	Sample characteristics				Outcomes Measured
			Size	Age	Status	Geographic Origins	
Ahmad et al. (2020)	Posttraumatic stress disorder, social support and coping among Afghan refugees in Canada	Quant	49	Adult (18-45)	Refugees	Afghans	- PTSD symptoms and demographic factors associated with it - Social support - Coping mechanisms - Relationship between self-related health and PTSD
Alemi et al. (2015)	Correlates and predictors of psychological distress among Afghan refugees in San Diego County	Quant	130	Adults (18-85)	Refugees	Afghans	- Psychological distress and their predictors - Factors associated with stress
Alemi et al. (2016)	Contextualizing Afghan refugee views of depression through narratives of trauma, resettlement stress, and coping	Qual	18	Adult (36-71)	Refugees	Afghans	- Causes and symptoms of depression - Perceived treatments and Coping mechanisms
Alemi and Stempel (2018)	Discrimination and distress among Afghan refugees in northern California: The moderating role of pre- and post-migration factors	Quant	259	Adult (18-84)	Refugees	Afghans	- Psychological distress - Perceived discrimination - Pre- and post-resettlement factors
Andisha and Lueger-Schuster, (2024)	Afghan Refugee Populations' Mental Health: Exploring Pre-migration Environmental Differences and Post-migration Stressors	Quant	305	Adult (18+)	Refugees & Asylum seekers	Afghans	- Mental health outcomes - Psychological distress - Pre- and post- migration trauma and stressors
Batool et al. (2024)	Gendered, Collectivist Journeys: Exploring Sociotechnical Adaptation Among Afghan Refugees in the United States	Qual	14	Adult (25-35)	Refugees	Afghans	- Economic, psychological, and sociocultural adaptation - Role of technology in adaptation

Belabbas et al. (2022)	From Conflict Zones to Europe: Syrian and Afghan Refugees' Journeys, Stories, and Strategies	Qual	11 Afghans 2 Syrians 9	Adults (20-50)	Refugees	Syrian and Afghans	- Factors shaping refugee journeys - Migration trajectories - Role of chance in migration trajectory
Gladwell (2021)	The impact of educational achievement on the integration and wellbeing of Afghan refugee youth in the UK	Mixed	Afghans 31 Informants 14	Adults (21-24)	Refugees	Afghans	- Socioeconomic integration - Wellbeing - Future prospects
Hamrah et al. (2021)	The prevalence and correlates of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among resettled Afghan refugees in a regional area of Australia	Quant	66	Adults (18-79)	Refugees	Afghans	- Prevalence of PTSD among Afghan refugees - Factors associated with PTSD - Mental health care-seeking behaviour - Post Migration Living Difficulties (PMLD)
de Jong (2022)	Evacuation, experiences and integration of recently arrived Afghans to the Netherlands (Master's thesis)	Qual	10 Afghan 8 Coaches 2	Adults	Asylum seekers	Afghans	- Experiences of Integration - Domains of integration - Societal context
Knefel et al. (2022)	A brief transdiagnostic psychological intervention for Afghan asylum seekers and refugees in Austria	Quant	120	Adults (18+)	Asylum seekers and refugees	Afghans	- General health - Post-migration living difficulties - Posttraumatic stress symptoms
Kohlbacher (2020)	Frustrating Beginnings: How Social Ties Compensate Housing Integration Barriers for Afghan Refugees in Vienna	Qual	65	Adults (18-70)	Refugees	Afghans	- Social ties - Structural integration - Coping strategies
van Laer (2022)	(Seeking) Asylum in the Netherlands: Experiences of and Challenges to Sustain Human Security of Afghan Forced Migrants (Master's thesis)	Qual	14	Adults (21-53)	Asylum seekers	Afghans	- Resettlement challenges - Migration process factors - Impact of status
Nguyễn-Nalpas (2023)	Deep Listening: What Afghan Refugee Women's Narratives Reveal About Social and Political Dynamics of Power	Qual	3	Adult (27-41)	Refugees & asylum seekers	Afghans	- Healing adaptation strategies - The psychosocial consequences of war

						-	Critical consciousness and community
Salley (2024)	Reaching Actualisation After Resettlement: A Qualitative Analysis of Afghan Refugees in the U.S.	Qual	17	Adult (25-48)	Refugees	Afghans	- Basic needs fulfilment - Social and interactive adaptation - Emotional and psychological wellbeing - Actualization
Schiess-Jokanovic et al. (2022)	The boundaries between complex posttraumatic stress disorder symptom clusters and post-migration living difficulties in traumatized Afghan refugees	Quant	93	Adults (34.77) (21-49)	Asylum seekers and Refugees	Afghans	- Complex post-traumatic stress disorder - Post-migration living difficulties
Sharifi-Ahmadipour and Sordé-Martí (2024)	From Exile to Belonging: The [re]construction of Identity in the Context of Forced Migration	Qual	35 Afghans 20 Syrians 15	Adult	Refugees & asylum seekers	Afghans & Syrians	- Identity patterns - Self-worth and belonging - Social integration
Sifat et al. (2024)	The association of migration-related stress with poor mental health among recently resettled Afghan refugees	Quant	348	Adult (18+)	Refugees	Afghans	- Mental health outcomes - Post migration stress factors
Stempel et al. (2017)	Gendered sources of distress and resilience among Afghan refugees in Northern California	Quant	259	Adults (18-84)	Refugees	Afghans	- Mental health distress - Resettlement challenges associated with distress - Gender ideology - Acculturation stress
Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson (2012)	'Thinking Too Much': Psychological distress, sources of stress and coping strategies of resettled Afghan and Kurdish refugees	Mixed	193 Afghans 90 Kurdish 103	Adults (18-70)	Refugees	Afghan & Kurdish	- Psychological distress - Sources of stress - Coping strategies
Walther et al. (2020)	Psychological distress among refugees in Germany	Quant	2569 (Syrian 1372 Afghans 323 Iraqi 311	Adults (18-54+)	Refugees	Afghan, Syrian, Iraqi, Eritrean and others	- Psychological distress and it's prevalence - Host country factors and Policy-related indicators - Impact on integration

			Eritrean 167 Other 396)					
Wehrle et al. (2018)	Can I come as I am? Refugees' vocational identity threats, coping, and growth	Qual	31 Syrian 23 Afghans 3 Libya 1 Kosovan 1 Iraqi 2 Ghana 1	Adults (18-40)	Refugees	Afghans, Syrian, Libya, Kosovan, Iraqi, Ghana	- - - -	Identity threats Identity protection and restructuring Psychological growth Resourcing
Wilmsen (2013)	Family separation and the impacts on refugee settlement in Australia	Qual	41 Afghans 15 Burmese 14 Sudanese 12	Adults (20-55)	Refugees	Afghan, Burmese, Sudanese	- -	Impact of family separation on the overall well-being Barriers to settlement

Quality assessment

I conducted the quality assessment using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) (Hong et al., 2018), which is specifically designed for evaluating the quality of studies during the appraisal phase of systematic reviews that include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research. The MMAT allows for the assessment of methodological quality across five categories: qualitative research, randomized controlled trials, non-randomized studies, quantitative descriptive studies, and mixed methods studies (Hong et al., 2018).

For this research, I adapted the four components of the MMAT criteria; Screening questions, Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods, to align with the studies included in this review. Following the tool's recommendation, the quality assessment was conducted independently by two reviewers. A colleague agreed to serve as the second reviewer, and we both rated all the studies separately based on the MMAT guidelines. Afterward, we discussed any discrepancies in our ratings and reached consensus through discussions.

According to the MMAT, quality assessment questions can be answered with "Yes," "No," or "Can't tell." The MMAT's 2018 version user guide provides explanations to help the reviewers judge the criteria and provide the responses.

Importantly, the MMAT does not advocate for excluding studies after assessment, and we did not intend to remove any studies from the review (Hong et al., 2018). The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate the methods used in the articles. This approach not only contextualizes the findings within existing research but also highlights the variety of methods used in this field. Overall, this assessment enables a deeper interpretation of the findings, enriching the discussion and leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

In the quality assessment process, the first step involved answering the screening questions for each study. The screening questions were as follows: S1. Are there clear research questions? and S2. Do the collected data allow addressing the research questions? All studies,

regardless of their methodological approach, answered "YES" to both screening questions, indicating that they met the fundamental criteria for inclusion. As the MMAT (Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool) suggests, further quality appraisal is only appropriate when both screening questions are answered affirmatively (Hong et al., 2018). Therefore, after confirming the positive responses to these questions, the studies were subjected to a more detailed appraisal based on their specific methodological approaches (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods).

Qualitative design, methodological quality criteria

The following criteria were used to assess the methodological quality of the included qualitative studies (see Table 3.3)

— Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?

— Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?

— Are the findings adequately derived from the data?

— Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?

— Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?

Table 3.3

Quality Assessment of Included Qualitative Studies

Author	Title	Methodological quality criteria (YES, NO, CT)				
		1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5
Alemi et al. (2016)	Contextualizing Afghan refugee views of depression through narratives of trauma, resettlement stress, and coping	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Batool et al. (2024)	Gendered, Collectivist Journeys: Exploring Sociotechnical Adaptation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Belabbas et al. (2022)	From Conflict Zones to Europe: Syrian and Afghan Refugees' Journeys, Stories, and Strategies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
de Jong (2022)	Evacuation, experiences and integration of recently arrived Afghans to the Netherlands (Master's thesis)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kohlbacher (2020)	Frustrating Beginnings: How Social Ties Compensate Housing Integration Barriers for Afghan Refugees in Vienna	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
van Laer (2022)	(Seeking) Asylum in the Netherlands: Experiences of and Challenges to Sustain Human Security of Afghan Forced Migrants (Master's thesis)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nguyễn-Nalpas (2023)	Deep Listening: What Afghan Refugee Women's Narratives Reveal About Social and Political Dynamics of Power	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Salley (2024)	Reaching Actualisation After Resettlement: A Qualitative Analysis of Afghan Refugees in the U.S.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sharifi-Ahmadipour and Sordé-Martí (2024)	From Exile to Belonging: The [re]construction of Identity in the Context of Forced Migration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wehrle et al. (2018)	Can I come as I am? Refugees' vocational identity threats, coping, and growth	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wilmsen (2013)	Family separation and the impacts on refugee settlement in Australia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The studies reviewed explore various aspects of Afghan refugees' experiences using methods like interviews, ethnography, and narrative analysis. They focus on topics such as adaptation, integration, identity, and the impact of family separation. The studies are strong in their use of clear methods, participant quotes, and theme analysis, which makes their findings reliable. However, many studies have small sample sizes, which limits how widely the findings can be applied, and some raise concerns about the quality and depth of interview data collected through online tools. Despite these limitations, the studies provide useful insights into refugee experiences and offer helpful information for those working in refugee resettlement and support.

Quantitative design, methodological quality criteria

The following criteria were used to assess the methodological quality of the included quantitative studies (see Table 3.4).

— Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question?

— Is the sample representative of the target population?

— Are the measurements appropriate?

— Is the risk of nonresponse bias low?

— Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?

Table 3.4

Quality Assessment of Included Quantitative Studies

Author	Title	Methodological quality criteria (YES, NO, CT)				
		2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5
Ahmad et al. (2020)	Posttraumatic stress disorder, social support and coping among Afghan refugees in Canada	Yes	Ct	Yes	Ct	Yes
Alemi et al. (2015)	Correlates and predictors of psychological distress among Afghan refugees in San Diego County	No	No	Yes	Ct	Yes
Alemi and Stempel (2018)	Discrimination and distress among Afghan refugees in northern California: The moderating role of pre- and post-migration factors	Yes	No	Yes	Ct	Yes
Andisha and Lueger-Schuster, (2024)	Afghan Refugee Populations' Mental Health: Exploring Pre-migration Environmental Differences and Post-migration Stressors	Yes	Ct	Yes	No	Yes
Hamrah et al. (2021)	The prevalence and correlates of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among resettled Afghan refugees in a regional area of Australia	No	No	Yes	Ct	Yes
Knefel et al. (2022)	A brief transdiagnostic psychological intervention for Afghan asylum seekers and refugees in Austria	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Schiess-Jokanovic et al. (2022)	The boundaries between complex posttraumatic stress disorder symptom clusters and post-migration living difficulties in traumatized Afghan refugees	Yes	Ct	Yes	Ct	Yes
Sifat et al. (2024)	The association of migration-related stress with poor mental health among recently resettled Afghan refugees	Yes	Ct	Yes	Ct	Yes
Stempel et al. (2017)	Gendered sources of distress and resilience among Afghan refugees in Northern California	No	No	Yes	Ct	Yes
Walther et al. (2020)	Psychological distress among refugees in Germany	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ct	Yes

Note. CT = "can't tell".

The quantitative studies reviewed provide important insights into the mental health, PTSD, and resilience of Afghan refugees. They use strong research methods, including validated tools and advanced statistics, to explore issues like PTSD, social support, discrimination, and stress after migration. However, many of the studies have limitations such as small or non-random samples, high dropout rates, and issues with how representative the samples are. Despite these challenges, the studies offer valuable information that can guide interventions and future research, especially regarding the long-term effects of displacement and trauma.

Mixed method design, methodological quality criteria

The following criteria were used to assess the methodological quality of the included mixed method design studies (see Table 3.5).

— Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?

— Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?

— Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?

— Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?

— Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?

Table 3.5

Quality Assessment of Included Mixed-Method Studies

Author	Title	Methodological quality criteria (YES, NO, CT)				
		3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5
Gladwell (2021)	The impact of educational achievement on the integration and wellbeing of Afghan refugee youth in the UK	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson (2012)	'Thinking Too Much': Psychological distress, sources of stress and coping strategies of resettled Afghan and Kurdish refugees	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The two mixed-method studies reviewed use strong designs that combine both qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore the mental health challenges of refugees. They use triangulation, combining different data sources like interviews and FOI (Freedom of Information) data, which adds credibility to their findings. Both studies have clear research questions and provide relevant data to answer them. These mixed-method approaches offer a deeper understanding of the complex issues refugees face and strengthen the overall quality of the research.

Narrative review

This section presents a narrative synthesis of studies examining Afghan refugees' experiences of forced migration. The synthesis, conducted using the JBI Convergent Segregated Approach, was organized thematically under the core constructs of the PARI model: (1) perceptions of forcedness, related perils, and post-migration stressors; (2) psychological

mediators; and (3) integration-relevant psychological responses. These themes are later interpreted in the discussion in relation to the review's main objectives.

Perceptions of Forcedness, Related Perils, and Post-Migration Stressors

Findings from the included quantitative studies are presented descriptively, highlighting patterns across diverse methodologies. Within this theme, the quantitative evidence focused on post-migration stressors, showing that Afghan refugees faced significant challenges after arrival. These findings are primarily based on associations reported in cross-sectional studies.

Specifically, Ahmad et al. (2020) reported that unemployment was a major compounding factor, with 59.1% of unemployed refugees in Canada meeting criteria for PTSD compared to none among the employed. Walther et al. (2020) similarly showed that precarious legal status and residence in refugee housing facilities increased risk ratios for distress (RR 1.55 and RR 1.21, respectively), with women (53%) and older refugees (70.4%) facing especially high vulnerability. Andisha & Lueger-Schuster (2024) further confirmed that post-migration stressors such as economic hardship, language barriers, and social isolation aggravated the impact of pre-migration trauma on refugees' wellbeing.

The psychological impacts of displacement are inseparable from these experiences of forcedness and migration-related difficulties. For example, Ahmad et al. (2020) reported that 53% of Afghan refugees in Canada had been exposed to severe migration-related trauma, with older age (80% prevalence in those above 45) further heightening vulnerability. Hamrah et al. (2021) found that nearly half (48.8%) of Afghan refugees in Australia met criteria for probable PTSD. Family separation emerged as a critical risk factor, increasing the likelihood of PTSD almost tenfold (OR = 9.9). Together, these findings show how forcedness and migration-related perils translated into acute mental health consequences.

Qualitative evidence offers rich insights into the perils faced at all stages of displacement, including before departure, during the migration journey, and after arrival. These

accounts illustrate how Afghan refugees experienced forcedness, danger, and ongoing stressors in their daily lives. Laer (2022) reported that participants described having "no choice" but to flee due to Taliban persecution, shootings, and direct threats.

Belabbas et al. (2022) recounted hazardous Mediterranean and Balkan crossings taken out of desperation when no legal routes were available. Wilmsen (2013) documented how family separation during migration caused worry, sleeplessness, and guilt.

de Jong (2022) and Kohlbacher (2020) highlighted post-migration stressors including overcrowded camps, frequent relocations, exploitative housing markets, and stigma from landlords. Nguyễn-Nalpas (2023) identified gendered experiences of harassment, Islamophobia, and xenophobia, while also highlighting mothers' roles, resistance strategies, and community activism as important sources of agency and healing. Participants in Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson (2012) described ongoing challenges of unemployment, poor English, and social isolation after arrival, alongside the pervasive expression of "thinking too much," status dissonance, experiences of discrimination, and coping strategies such as religion, walking, and social networks.

Building on these findings, more recent studies emphasize the long-term psychological toll of displacement and instability. Laer (2022) highlighted that long-term asylum waiting in Dutch centers created a sense of "permanent temporariness," which gradually eroded refugees' dignity and self-worth. Batool et al. (2024) added further evidence on stressors not widely discussed elsewhere, including overcrowded and militarized refugee camps, lack of maternal and postpartum care, children's trauma from repeated displacements, and persistent fears of police encounters and deportation in the host country.

These accounts underline how daily uncertainties and insecurities continued to shape refugees' sense of safety and wellbeing long after initial resettlement.

Taken together, quantitative studies showed high levels of trauma, PTSD, and distress linked to unemployment, precarious legal status, family separation, and social isolation. Qualitative studies described these same patterns through accounts of persecution, dangerous journeys, overcrowded camps, exploitative housing, and discrimination. Both strands of evidence consistently pointed to forcedness, migration perils, and post-migration stressors as central features of Afghan refugees' experiences, with family separation and language barriers appearing across study types as particularly significant.

Psychological mediators

Quantitative studies examining psychological mediators were summarized descriptively, with a focus on thematic relevance. A smaller subset of studies examined mediators, and only a few explicitly identified psychological mediators that shaped the link between trauma, post-migration stressors, and integration outcomes. The studies varied in their mediation models and outcome measures.

Within these studies, several mediation pathways were identified. Andisha & Lueger-Schuster (2024) used mediation models to show that post-migration stressors such as economic hardship, language barriers, and social isolation mediated and aggravated the impact of pre-migration trauma on mental health. Ahmad et al. (2020) found that coping and English language functioned indirectly through social support, which in turn buffered PTSD severity. Family bonds and employment were associated with stronger social support, which indirectly contributed to better outcomes. Schiess-Jokanovic et al. (2022) showed that language acquisition difficulties and insecure legal status were closely connected to affective dysregulation, which acted as a central psychological mediator linking trauma symptoms with post-migration difficulties.

Qualitative studies did not provide evidence of psychological mediators and did not explicitly highlight any variable as such. The concept of self-continuity, for example, was not

tested as a mediator in any of the studies but was instead described as a psychological barrier to belonging and acculturation (Sharifi-Ahmadipour & Sordé-Martí, 2024). Similarly, identity-protection and restructuring strategies were presented as coping mechanisms through which refugees mitigated stigma and rebuilt a sense of self (Wehrle et al., 2018).

Taken together, the evidence indicates that only a limited number of quantitative studies tested psychological mediators, identifying post-migration stressors, coping and social support pathways, language-related challenges, and affective dysregulation. These findings were reported individually and interpreted thematically, in accordance with the review framework. Qualitative studies, while not testing mediation, revealed related psychological responses such as disrupted self-continuity and identity-restructuring strategies, which acted as barriers or coping mechanisms in the integration process.

Integration relevant psychological response

Quantitative studies exploring psychological responses were analyzed thematically and presented descriptively to reflect outcome patterns across varying study contexts. Quantitative studies documented high rates of psychological distress linked to migration experiences and post-migration stressors. Hamrah et al. (2021) reported that communication difficulties were strongly associated with PTSD, raising risk more than fourteenfold. Among recently resettled Afghans in the U.S., Sifat et al. (2024) found that 62% screened positive for depression, 20% for generalized anxiety disorder, and 60% for high distress, with predictors including discrimination, financial strain, and family worries.

Similarly, findings from studies conducted in other host countries confirmed these patterns. In San Diego, Alemi et al. (2015) reported chronic distress, with widowed participants and those facing financial insecurity showing the highest scores. Alemi and Stempel (2018) demonstrated that perceived discrimination strongly predicted distress, particularly among refugees with strong intra-ethnic identities and histories of trauma. In Germany, Walther et al.

(2020) found that distressed Afghan men were significantly less likely to participate in employment or integration courses. Distress was especially pronounced among women (53%) and older refugees (70.4%), underscoring demographic vulnerabilities. Stempel et al. (2017) found that Afghan women in California experienced more distress than men. Better English skills helped reduce distress more for women, while traditional gender beliefs and close family ties had different effects for men and women. For men, conflict between Afghan and Western values increased distress, showing how gender roles and post-arrival challenges affect adjustment.

Qualitative evidence further illustrated how distress was experienced in everyday life. Alemi et al. (2016) described refugees' expressions of depression through "asabi" (irritability), "goshagiry" (self-isolation), "thinking too much" (rumination), and somatic symptoms such as insomnia and abdominal pain. Wilmsen (2013) reported that family separation caused nightmares, concentration problems, and reduced ability to attend classes or work. Sulaiman-Hill and Thompson (2012) noted that two-thirds of Afghan participants in New Zealand and Australia reported moderate-to-very high distress, often described as "thinking too much" about trauma, family left behind, and status loss. Salley (2024) described emotional states such as hope, grief, and survivor's guilt as critical in shaping adaptation. Hope sustained motivation and resilience, while grief and guilt limited confidence and participation.

At the same time, several studies documented strategies that refugees used to manage or cope with distress. Nguyễn-Nalpas (2023) highlighted that agency and community engagement emerged as key pathways through which Afghan women coped with trauma, using collective resistance and activism to transform suffering into empowerment. Batool et al. (2024) expanded these insights by documenting coping strategies such as emotional discharge (crying, venting, spiritual healing), avoidance coping (work engagement, limiting contact with distressing news or family), and peer support through WhatsApp groups and host community

ties. These strategies reveal both gendered patterns of adaptation and the tension between economic and cultural expectations, showing how coping responses intersect with distress and integration challenges. These burdens were compounded by discrimination, cultural dissonance, and gender-specific challenges, particularly for widows and women with childcare responsibilities.

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative findings show that while psychological distress such as trauma, grief, and disrupted identity functions as a major barrier to integration, qualitative studies also revealed how refugees drew on coping strategies and community-based resources to sustain resilience, agency, and participation in host societies.

Structural exclusion was another major barrier to integration. Employment was a key protective factor: in Canada, none of the employed Afghan refugees met PTSD criteria, compared with more than half of the unemployed (Ahmad et al., 2020). In Australia, Afghan refugees with communication difficulties were nearly fifteen times more likely to meet PTSD criteria (Hamrah et al., 2021). In Germany, precarious legal status and residence in collective housing facilities significantly increased risk of distress, while distressed men were less likely to be employed or enrolled in integration courses (Walther et al., 2020). In Austria, Knefel et al. (2022) showed that the adapted Problem Management Plus intervention reduced distress and post-migration living difficulties but did not improve integration scores. Gladwell (2019) found that Afghan care-leavers in the UK faced extreme barriers to education. Most left school without qualifications, and many were blocked from further study or work due to insecure legal status. Those who did find employment were often trapped in the informal "grey economy" or in exploitative, underpaid jobs.

Qualitative studies provided vivid accounts of these integration obstacles. Afghans in Vienna described systemic exclusion from the private housing market due to competition, exploitation, and discrimination, often ending up in insecure or exploitative arrangements

(Kohlbacher, 2020). In the Netherlands, frequent relocations and remote housing placements caused isolation and blocked access to work and language learning (de Jong, 2022). Wilmsen (2013) showed how family separation limited women's ability to work or attend school, while Sulaiman-Hill and Thompson (2012) linked unemployment, poor English, and discrimination to ongoing distress. Across studies, structural exclusion intersected with psychological suffering, producing cycles of disempowerment and marginalization.

Across both quantitative and qualitative strands, findings converge: Afghan refugees face intertwined psychological challenges (depression, anxiety, distress, survivor's guilt, grief, loss of hope, cultural dissonance, and disrupted identity) and structural barriers (insecure status, housing exclusion, unemployment, lack of education and healthcare access). Quantitative studies identified the prevalence and predictors of distress, while qualitative accounts revealed how these conditions were lived as indignity, grief, emotional ambivalence, agency, activism, disrupted identity, and loss of agency. Across both quantitative and qualitative strands, the evidence suggests that psychological distress, including trauma, anxiety, grief, and disrupted identity, functions as both a consequence of displacement and a barrier to sociocultural integration.

Discussion

This systematic review set out to examine the psychological and integration experiences of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers through the lens of the Psychological Antecedents of Refugee Integration (PARI) model (Echterhoff et al., 2020) and the concept of self-continuity (Camia & Zafar, 2021; Sedikides et al., 2022). The PARI model identifies forcedness and migration-related perils as key stressors. These stressors activate psychological mediators such as loss of control, external attribution, future uncertainty, and perceptions of suffering and violence. In turn, these mediators shape integration-relevant psychological responses (Echterhoff et al., 2020). Building on this, the review also incorporated self-continuity as a

novel mediator reflecting the need for a coherent self across disrupted life trajectories. This discussion critically analyzes whether these constructs were evident in the studies and interprets the findings across the three primary objectives.

Psychological Impact of Forcedness and Migration-Related Perils

To explore the first objective, this section responds to Research Questions 1 and 2. RQ1 asks what psychological and social issues Afghan asylum seekers or refugees face in their country of origin and during their migration journeys, while RQ2 focuses on the challenges they encounter during the asylum process and initial resettlement, along with their psychological responses.

The reviewed studies show that many refugees left Afghanistan because of serious threats to their lives. These included war, targeted persecution, and attacks by the Taliban, all of which forced people to flee without preparation or choice (Laer, 2022). This loss of choice reflects what the PARI model describes as forcedness, where people feel they have no control over their decision to migrate (Echterhoff et al., 2020).

Refugees also experienced many dangers during their journeys. These conditions, including unsafe routes, family separation, overcrowded camps, and discrimination, can be understood as evidence of forcedness in the PARI model, where loss of choice and external threats undermine safety and agency (Belabbas et al., 2022; de Jong, 2022; Kohlbacher, 2020; Wilmsen, 2013). Women, in particular, reported harassment, xenophobia, and exclusion, highlighting how gendered violence reinforced feelings of vulnerability and lack of control (Nguyễn-Nalpas, 2023).

The psychological impact of these experiences was serious and long lasting. Refugees were reported to suffer from trauma, anxiety, depression, and distress (Ahmad et al., 2020; Hamrah et al., 2021; Sifat et al., 2024). Their emotional suffering often showed up in the form

of constant worrying, withdrawal from others, sleep problems, and physical pain (Alemi et al., 2016; Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012).

To see it from the mirror of the PARI model, these findings support the framework's argument that forced migration, exposure to danger, and future uncertainty affect mental health by taking away people's sense of control, safety, and stability (Echterhoff et al., 2020). Extending this perspective to the post-arrival context, Batool et al. (2024) showed that ongoing insecurity after arrival, such as militarized camps, inadequate maternal care, and repeated displacements, can prolong refugees' sense of danger and sustain psychological vulnerability. This supports the theoretical claim that both pre-arrival perils and post-arrival stressors jointly shape integration-related psychological responses, keeping refugees in a state of chronic instability.

Taken together, Afghan refugees experienced violence and forced displacement in ways that deeply shaped their psychological wellbeing. Their trauma was not only linked to what happened before leaving but also to the risks faced during migration and the uncertainty they continued to live with after arrival. Studies reveal that pre-migration violence, including exposure to war and persecution, establishes a baseline of psychological vulnerability that persists throughout the integration process.

Integration Challenges and Psychological Responses

The second objective of this review was to identify issues related to integration for Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in the country of destination. Two major challenges were identified, which were structural barriers and psychological difficulties.

Afghan refugees encounter several structural barriers that make integration more difficult. Unclear legal status, housing exclusion, unemployment, and limited access to education and healthcare were repeatedly reported as sources of instability and exclusion (Gladwell, 2021; Hamrah et al., 2021; Kohlbacher, 2020; Walther et al., 2020). Within the

PARI framework, these barriers represent host-country conditions that directly shape psychological responses by reinforcing uncertainty, dependence, and lack of control. Employment was highlighted as a protective factor, with those in work showing significantly better mental health outcomes (Ahmad et al., 2020).

Alongside these structural difficulties, Afghan refugees also face emotional and psychological challenges. Many report experiences of discrimination, racism, and Islamophobia, especially women and those who are visibly identifiable as Muslims (Nguyễn-Nalpas, 2023). Social isolation is another common issue, particularly for those living in remote or crowded housing where connection with others is limited (de Jong, 2022; Wilmsen, 2013). Refugees also spoke about the loss of their former roles and status, leading to a sense of identity conflict and disconnection in their new environment (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012). A similar dynamic was observed by Stempel et al. (2017), who showed that integration is deeply gendered. Afghan women face added stress from social restrictions and disrupted roles, while men experience distress when unable to meet traditional provider expectations. This suggests that post-arrival adaptation is shaped not only by external barriers but also by gendered norms influencing psychological adjustment. These psychological difficulties match what the PARI model describes as emotional responses to migration stress, including loss of motivation, emotional imbalance, and challenges to identity (Echterhoff et al., 2020).

At the same time, several studies highlighted coping responses. Batool et al. (2024) described emotional discharge (crying, venting, spiritual healing), avoidance coping (work engagement, limiting contact with distressing news or family), and peer support through WhatsApp groups and host community ties. These strategies sustained agency and social connection but also reflected gendered expectations and economic pressures. Sulaiman-Hill and Thompson (2012) similarly noted coping through religion, walking, and social networks, while Wehrle et al. (2018) showed how identity-protection and restructuring helped refugees counter

stigma and rebuild a sense of self. Together, these findings illustrate that distress coexisted with resilience, as refugees actively used coping mechanisms to navigate integration challenges.

These coping responses can be read through the lens of the PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020) as attempts to restore meaning (through religion, spirituality), belonging (through social networks and peer groups), and control (through work engagement, avoidance strategies, identity-restructuring).

Together, these findings show that Afghan refugees face both external and internal barriers during integration. Structural exclusion often leads to emotional distress, while psychological suffering can make it harder to access support, form relationships, and rebuild a stable life in the host country.

Psychological Mediators in Integration

To explore the third objective, this section responds to Research Question 4 (RQ4), which asks what psychological mediators are identified across studies, and in what ways these mediators influence Afghan refugees' adaptation during different phases of migration and integration. Four key mediators emerged from the reviewed studies: post-migration stressors, social support, and affective dysregulation (Ahmad et al., 2020; Andisha & Lueger-Schuster, 2024; Schiess-Jokanovic et al., 2022; Stempel et al., 2017). These factors were shown to influence how trauma and displacement shaped psychological well-being and integration outcomes. While only a small number of studies tested mediation models, their findings offer preliminary insights into the internal psychological processes involved in refugee adaptation.

These mediators demonstrated partial conceptual alignment with the PARI model, which emphasizes internal mechanisms such as loss of control, external attribution, future uncertainty, and perceptions of suffering and violence. The reviewed studies did not explicitly frame their findings using these constructs, but there were notable conceptual overlaps that connect the empirical evidence to PARI's theoretical structure.

Post-migration stressors such as financial hardship, language barriers, and social isolation were found to intensify the psychological effects of earlier trauma, confirming that daily challenges play a central role in long-term adjustment (Andisha & Lueger-Schuster, 2024). Although this partly aligns with the PARI model's focus on future uncertainty (Echterhoff et al., 2020), the studies did not explicitly frame it in these terms. Rather, uncertainty was embedded in the lived realities of refugees' unstable legal and social environments.

Social support was another important mechanism, shown to reduce distress indirectly through the presence of strong family ties and community networks (Ahmad et al., 2020). While this resonates with the broader protective functions described in PARI, particularly in relation to external attribution (Echterhoff et al., 2020), the reviewed studies typically conceptualized social support as a standalone buffer. It was framed rather than as part of a broader attributional process.

Another key mediator was affective dysregulation, which was linked to insecure legal status and language difficulties. It emerged as a central psychological process connecting trauma symptoms to ongoing adjustment problems (Schiess-Jokanovic et al., 2022). This finding echoes PARI's focus on perceptions of suffering and emotional destabilization (Echterhoff et al., 2020), although the studies treated affective dysregulation more as a clinical outcome than as a meaning-based mediator.

Taken together, these findings reflect only partial correspondence with PARI's second-level processes, which describe how internal mechanisms mediate the effects of external stressors. The identified mediators in the literature do not fully match PARI's proposed mediators such as loss of control, external attribution, future uncertainty, and perceived suffering. This suggests that while the PARI model provides a relevant framework, the studies reviewed relied on a broader or differently framed set of psychological mechanisms.

Although self-continuity was identified as a targeted mediator in the theoretical framework, none of the reviewed studies formally tested it. Its absence represents a notable empirical and theoretical gap, despite conceptual overlaps with identity-related themes.

Altogether, the evidence offers limited but important insights into the role of psychological mediators in refugee integration. The few studies that applied formal mediation models provided valuable initial findings, but the overall picture remains fragmented. Many of the core mechanisms proposed in the PARI framework, including self-continuity, remain empirically underexplored.

Limitations

While this systematic review followed a rigorous methodology based on PRISMA (Page et al., 2021b) and JBI frameworks (Stern et al., 2021), several limitations constrain the strength and generalizability of its conclusions.

First, although quantitative studies reported statistically significant associations and mediation effects, most used cross-sectional designs. This limits the ability to infer causal relationships. In addition, the studies varied widely in terms of conceptual frameworks, outcome measures, and statistical analyses.

Second, although the review aimed to explore psychological mediators based on the PARI model, many of the included studies did not explicitly test or operationalize these constructs. In particular, variables such as self-continuity, external attribution, and affective regulation were often absent or only indirectly addressed. The analysis therefore relied on conceptual overlap and thematic interpretation to link findings to the model, which introduces a gap between theory and empirical testing.

Third, the small number of mixed-methods studies and the absence of longitudinal designs limited the ability to understand how psychological processes evolve over time or across stages of integration. In the same way, very few studies considered intersectional

variables such as gender, legal status, or socio-economic background in a way that would allow for more nuanced analysis across subgroups.

Lastly, due to the limited availability of peer-reviewed studies focusing specifically on Afghan refugees, one high-quality master's thesis was included in the synthesis. This decision followed a positive quality appraisal, but its inclusion may slightly lower the overall peer-review standard typically expected in systematic reviews.

Future Research Directions

Building on these limitations and the key findings of this review, I propose several directions for future research. First, longitudinal and comparative studies are needed to examine how psychological mediators evolve over time and affect integration outcomes across different host country contexts. Second, future studies should explicitly test psychological mediators using established theoretical frameworks such as the PARI model. In particular, underexplored constructs like self-continuity, external attribution, and affective regulation should be operationalized and assessed with validated tools. Third, greater standardization of outcome measures, sampling strategies, and analytic techniques would improve the potential for future meta-analyses, facilitating more robust cross-study comparisons and synthesis. Fourth, future studies should adopt mixed-methods designs, particularly sequential approaches where quantitative findings are enriched by qualitative exploration. This would allow researchers to capture both the prevalence of psychological issues and the lived meanings behind them, producing more comprehensive insights. Fifth, research should also explicitly address intersectionality. Examining how gender, age, legal status, and education interact will clarify how vulnerabilities compound in specific groups, such as older women with insecure status. This focus would support the development of more targeted and equitable interventions. Finally, more theory-driven and context-sensitive research is needed to ensure that studies not

only reflect refugees' lived realities but also meaningfully contribute to policy and practice in both humanitarian and host-country settings.

Chapter Conclusion

This systematic review examined the integration challenges and psychological experiences of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers through the lens of the PARI model and the concept of self-continuity. Drawing on 23 peer-reviewed and high-quality sources spanning qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research, the review highlighted how experiences of pre-migration violence, forced displacement, and structural exclusion in host countries interact with psychological mediators to shape refugees' integration pathways.

Findings revealed that forced migration and exposure to trauma create a baseline of psychological vulnerability that persists throughout the integration process. Refugees' perceptions of forcedness, combined with ongoing post-migration stressors such as discrimination, isolation, and legal precarity, were consistently linked to poor mental health outcomes. Quantitative studies identified statistical associations between structural barriers and distress, while qualitative accounts provided deep insights into lived experiences of suffering, resistance, and adaptation.

Although a few studies examined psychological mediators, most did not explicitly apply or test models like PARI. As such, the mediational processes remain underdeveloped in the current literature, with important gaps in understanding mechanisms like self-continuity and attribution processes.

Methodologically, the review followed the JBI Convergent Segregated approach to preserve the integrity of both qualitative and quantitative strands while enabling integrative interpretation. Despite this, heterogeneity and methodological limitations constrained the possibility of stronger synthesis, such as meta-analysis or generalizable conclusions.

Nevertheless, this systematic review serves as a critical foundation for the subsequent phases of this thesis, informing the design and scope of the empirical studies that follow. By identifying patterns, gaps, and priority areas, the review contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of refugee integration and offers a roadmap for future research grounded in both theory and the lived experiences of displaced populations.

Part II: Empirical Investigation: A Mixed Methods Approach

Chapter 4 - Qualitative Exploration of Psychological and Sociocultural

Integration Among Afghan Refugees and Asylum Seekers in France

Overview

The qualitative phase builds directly on the previous chapter, where the history of violence and displacement in Afghanistan was reviewed and existing research on Afghan refugees was systematically analyzed. From that review, several gaps emerged that called for a deeper exploration of the personal and psychological aspects of integration.

Many of the studies reviewed in this thesis on refugee integration tended to focus on structural indicators such as employment, legal status, and housing. While these elements are undeniably important, they often fail to consider the psychological and identity-related dimensions of adaptation, which are equally critical for long-term integration (Donini et al., 2016; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2000; Theisen-Womersley, 2021). Research specifically addressing Afghan refugees has rarely explored how individuals rebuild their sense of self after displacement, and there is a notable absence of such work in the French context. Concepts like self-continuity, as well as the emotional consequences of forced migration and post-migration uncertainty, remain largely unexamined.

To begin addressing these gaps, the qualitative phase was carried out with a focus on participants' own narratives and perspectives. This approach is particularly well-suited to capture complex experiences like identity disruption, emotional suffering, and the psychological responses to migration, which are often shaped by cultural and personal factors (Echterhoff et al., 2020). It also helps to build a foundation for the subsequent quantitative phase by identifying key themes and relationships that can be examined more systematically with a larger sample.

Building on this rationale, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 14 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers living in France. The analysis was guided by the theoretical

Chapter 4 – Qualitative Exploration

framework described in Chapter 2, which included the PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020) and the concept of self-continuity (Sedikides et al., 2023). This theoretical framework helped me to explore how participants make sense of their migration experiences, how they view their identities over time, and how these psychological processes influence their integration.

The central aim of this phase was to explore how Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in France experience sociocultural integration and wellbeing. To guide this inquiry, three more specific research questions were developed. First, the inquiry explored how Afghan refugees experience the process of sociocultural integration and how this relates to their overall wellbeing. Second, it examined how the degree to which refugees perceived their displacement as forced, along with their exposure to violence and related hardships, influenced both their psychological responses and their structural integration into French society. Finally, it explored the role of self-continuity in shaping both integration outcomes and psychological wellbeing after resettlement.

Based on these questions, the study was designed with the broader objective of exploring the sociocultural integration and wellbeing of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in France by examining the impact of perceived forcedness and violence, and investigating the role of self-continuity in shaping their experiences. This included understanding how connections to past identities influence both integration and overall wellbeing in the context of forced displacement, as well as identifying the psychological responses that emerge throughout this process and how these internal dynamics might support or hinder integration in a new cultural and social environment.

Although this study was exploratory, a set of directional hypotheses was developed to conceptually guide the research and inform the structure of both the interviews and the interpretation of findings. These hypotheses were grounded in the theoretical framework and existing literature, but were not intended for empirical testing in this qualitative phase:

Chapter 4 – Qualitative Exploration

— Hypothesis 1: On average, levels of integration among Afghan refugees in France are low.

— Hypothesis 2: A balanced structural integration is a prerequisite for a holistic integration of Afghan refugees and positively impacts their wellbeing.

— Hypothesis 3: Perceived forcedness of displacement negatively impacts wellbeing and integration.

— Hypothesis 4: The experience of perils during migration negatively impacts wellbeing and integration.

— Hypothesis 5: Psychological suffering and loss of control among Afghan refugees is rooted in perceived violence and displacement.

— Hypothesis 6: Psychological mediators, as identified in the theoretical framework, have either a positive (self-continuity) or negative (loss of control, suffering) influence on the sociocultural integration of Afghan refugees.

Method

Participants and Sampling

Twenty Afghan refugees and asylum seekers were initially targeted to participate in this study. Thematic saturation was reached after 14 interviews, when no new insights emerged (Guest et al., 2006). To ensure access to Afghan refugee communities, Paris was selected for its significant Afghan population, while Toulouse was chosen for its logistical accessibility.

The final sample included 14 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers ($M_{age} = 31.00$, $SD_{age} = 6.48$), of whom 5 were female and 9 were male. All participants were fluent in either Persian, Pashto, or English and had lived in France for at least eight months, allowing them to reflect meaningfully on their integration experiences.

Participants were recruited in collaboration with Afghan refugee support organizations, notably the Nouvelle Page Afghan Association, the Jesuit Refugee Service, and AFRANE.

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Additional participants were identified through snowball sampling and personal networks. No participants withdrew from the study, and all who initially expressed interest met the inclusion criteria. These included being an Afghan adult asylum seeker or refugee, aged 18 or above, residing in France, and able to speak either Persian (Farsi), Pashto, or English. Before participation, all individuals received study details in Persian or English and had two days to decide whether to take part.

Originally, the study planned to provide discount vouchers as compensation, but due to budget constraints and the loss of contact with some participants, compensation was not distributed. Despite this, participants remained engaged and willing to share their experiences. Many expressed a desire to have their voices heard, indicating that participation in the study provided an opportunity for self-expression and reflection.

Demographics

Participants varied in age (22 to 42), gender, legal status, and migration history. Four entered France legally, while remaining ten arrived through irregular routes. The length of their stay in France ranged from just 10 months to 10 years, and their year of departure from Afghanistan spanned from as early as 1990 to as recently as 2022.

Table 4.1 presents an overview of these demographic details, with pseudonyms used throughout the study to ensure confidentiality and consistency in referencing participants' accounts.

Table 4.1

Participant Demographics and Migration Background

Chapter 4 – Qualitative Exploration

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Year Left	Length of stay	Legal Status
Aziz	41	M	2002	10 years	Refugee
Anwar	29	M	2012	9 years	Refugee
Bahar	30	F	2015	8 years	Refugee
Jamil	30	M	2014	7 years	Refugee
Jamshid	41	M	1990	3 years	Refugee
Nimat	27	M	2013	2 years	Asylum seeker
Arezu	29	F	2021	2 years	Refugee
Rahman	29	M	2016	2 years	Refugee
Raza	24	M	2015	1 year	Asylum seeker
Maryam	42	F	1996	1 year	Asylum seeker
Basit	29	M	2021	1 year	Refugee
Amina	22	F	2020	1 year	Refugee
Zaki	36	M	2022	1 year	Refugee
Zahra	27	F	2022	10 months	Refugee

Note. The table provides a summary of key demographic characteristics of the participants, including pseudonym, age, gender, year they left Afghanistan, length of stay in France, and current legal status. Participants are listed in order of their length of stay in France, from longest to shortest.

Semi-structured Interview Guide

The interviews were guided by a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix 4A). The guide included several thematic sections addressing participants' backgrounds, migration experiences, psychological processes, and integration in France.

The first section covered general background information, including age, gender, time of arrival in France, length of stay, and current living conditions.

Another section focused on perceived forcedness and migration-related risks. Participants were asked to rank the extent to which they felt forced to migrate on a scale from 5 (very forced) to 1 (not at all forced), followed by open-ended questions exploring their displacement experiences in greater depth. This section reflected the construct of perceived forcedness and migration perils outlined in the PARI model (Echterhoff, 2020).

A further section addressed well-being and integration-related psychological processes. It included questions about participants' perceptions of happiness, attitudes toward the host

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country, acculturation preferences, and sense of certainty about the future, consistent with the PARI model (Echterhoff, 2020).

The guide also incorporated items examining psychological mediators, particularly self-continuity. The Circle Overlap Scale (see Figure 4.1), adapted from Ersner-Hershfield et al. (2009), and a narrative approach to identity change (Becker et al., 2018) were used to explore this construct. Participants selected the pair of overlapping circles that best represented how connected they felt to their past selves and elaborated on the experiences underlying their choice. They were also invited to reflect on emotional suffering and uncertainty in their current and future lives.

Finally, the interview guide included questions on sociocultural integration outcomes, such as employment status, access to education, housing conditions, and social support, as outlined in the PARI model.

Figure 4.1

Circle Overlap Scale Used to Assess Self-Continuity (Adapted from Ersner-Hershfield et al., 2009)
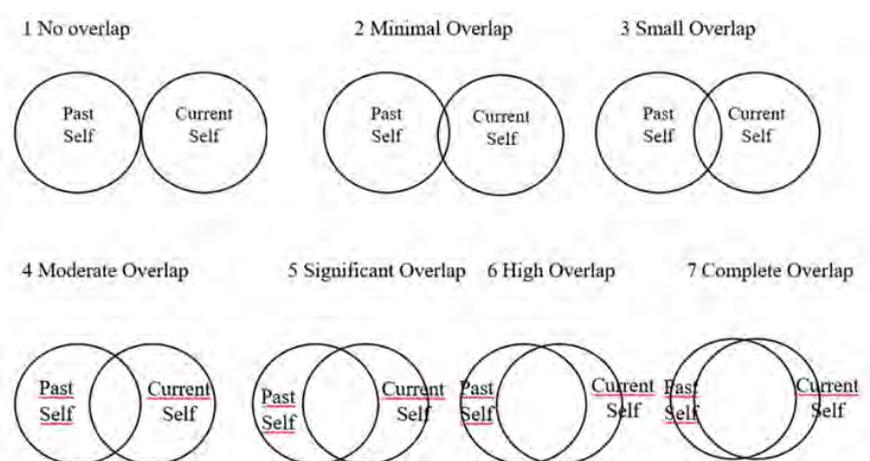
Note. The degree of overlap between the circles represents the perceived connection between one's past and current self. For instance, greater overlap (e.g., "6 High Overlap") indicates a stronger sense of self-continuity, whereas little or no overlap suggests discontinuity or change in identity.

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Procedure

Data collection took place over three months (July to September 2023). Each face-to-face interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and was conducted in private spaces at association centres, NGO offices, or participants homes ensuring a comfortable and confidential setting for participants.

Each session began with a clear explanation of the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality measures. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw their consent at any time before data analysis without consequences.

Interviews were conducted in Persian, while participants could respond in their mother tongue (Persian or Pashto). Questions were posed in Persian or English, depending on the participant's preference.

Due to cultural and religious beliefs, some male participants requested permission to bring a friend to the interview session, as they did not want to be alone in a room with a woman. Their request was granted, though it was noted as a limitation, as the presence of a friend may have influenced responses.

All interviews were recorded using a microphone and laptop. The audio recordings were transcribed in Persian and Pashto and translated into English by an external translator for analysis. To ensure accuracy and reliability of the translation, I cross-checked them against the original transcripts and English versions, making necessary corrections to minor errors.

Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Université Fédérale de Toulouse (see Appendix 4B), reference number 2023_646. It was also registered with the CNRS Data Protection Officer (see Appendix 4C), certificate number 2-23214. Special ethical care was taken due to the sensitive nature of working with refugees, including:

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Ensuring informed consent: Participants received the study protocol in their preferred language before agreeing to take part. The interview protocol in English (Appendix 4D) described the purpose and structure of the study, reminded participants of their voluntary participation, and explained how their data would be managed. The same protocol was provided in Persian (Appendix 4E). Participants then signed the informed consent form in English (Appendix 4F) or its Persian translation (Appendix 4G) prior to the interview.

Confidentiality and anonymity: No real names were recorded; instead, commonly known Afghan names were assigned in transcriptions to differentiate participants. Data was stored on a password-protected device and deleted after transcription.

Participant well-being: Ethical guidelines were followed to protect participants from distress. If a participant showed signs of distress, the interview was paused, and they were reminded they could skip questions or stop at any time.

Referrals for support: Some participants were provided the mental health and support services contact when needed.

Data Analysis and Verification

For the main analysis, I followed the thematic analysis steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021). I used a hybrid approach, combining both deductive and inductive coding (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This meant drawing on predefined codes from the theoretical framework and literature, while also remaining open to new codes that emerged directly from participants' narratives. Notably, three new codes under different themes emerged during the analysis. During this stage, I developed a preliminary codebook (see Appendix 4H) to organize the codes and definitions derived from both theoretical and data-driven sources. This approach ensured that the analysis remained grounded in theory while allowing participants' voices to meaningfully shape the findings.

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To enhance the credibility and consistency of the coding process, I involved a second coder in the analysis. After the initial phase of coding and the development of a preliminary codebook, I collaborated with a colleague who was familiar with both qualitative methods and the calculation of inter-rater agreement. Together, we developed a shared coding guide that reflected both the theoretical and emergent elements of the analysis. We held pre-coding discussions to define and align on the coding framework.

The second coder began by independently coding 20% of the dataset (2 interview transcripts) as a self-training phase, using the guide to familiarize themself with the data and coding structure. After the second coder completed an initial self-training phase, we refined some of the code definitions based on her feedback. Once the final coding guide was established, it remained unchanged throughout the double-coding phase. Following this, we independently double-coded 40% of the dataset (5 out of 14 interviews), using the same coding framework. During this phase, the second coder was blind to my initial coding, and we did not communicate until the independent coding was complete. A short sample of the coded interview text, showing how the coding was applied to part of a transcript, is provided in Appendix 4I to illustrate this process.

To statistically assess inter-coder reliability, Cohen's Kappa (κ) was calculated on these 40% of the data. This measure accounts for the level of agreement that could occur by chance and offers a more rigorous assessment than simple percentage agreement. The overall Kappa value was $\kappa = 0.73$, indicating substantial agreement, as interpreted using the benchmark scale proposed by Landis and Koch (1977), where values between 0.61 and 0.80 denote substantial agreement, and values above 0.81 indicate almost perfect agreement.

Notably, Cohen's Kappa values were especially strong for key theoretical constructs such as "perceived forcedness" ($\kappa = 0.78$), "access to mental health" ($\kappa = 0.73$), and "suffering" ($\kappa = 0.65$), enhancing the trustworthiness of findings related to core elements of the PARI

model. Kappa was calculated at both the code level and theme level (see Table 4.2), across a total of 44 codes within the framework. These results confirmed that the thematic structure was applied consistently, and that both coders interpreted the data in a comparable manner.

Table 4.2

Interpretation of Cohen's Kappa Based on Landis and Koch (1977)

Construct	Cohen's Kappa	Strengh of Agreement
Demographic	1	Almost Pefect
Integration outcomes	0,54	Moderate
Perceived Forcedness	0,78	Substantial
Wellbeing	0,47	Moderate
Attitude (towards host)	0,50	Moderate
Acculturation	0,50	Moderate
Certainity	0,51	Moderate
Self-continuity	0,57	Moderate
Access to Mental health	0,73	Substantial
Suffering	0,65	Substantial
Overall	0,73	Substantial

After independently coding 40% of the data, we met for post-coding discussions to resolve discrepancies and clarify interpretation differences. To ensure balanced representation in the final dataset, a blended integration strategy was used: for each double-coded interview, we alternated between using my coding and the second coder across different transcript segments.

In addition to manual thematic coding, I conducted a secondary lexical analysis using IRaMuTeQ (Camargo & Justo, 2016; Loubère & Ratinaud, 2014), aiming to implement triangulation of data analysis techniques (Lauri, 2011). Both the manual and IRaMuTeQ analyses were guided by the same predefined coding framework derived from the PARI model and the interview guide. This involved analysing the same corpus of data (the interview transcripts) using two distinct analytical approaches: thematic analysis and lexical analysis.

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        While the thematic analysis relied on manual interpretation, the lexical analysis performed by IRaMuTeQ included word clustering, co-occurrence analysis, and Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) within each of the four main thematic sub-corpora. The consistency of findings across these two methods enhanced the reliability of the results and supported the soundness of the overall interpretation.

        To prepare the data for this analysis, I segmented the corpus deductively by organizing participants' narratives according to four core thematic categories: (1) Perceived Forcedness and Migration Perils, (2) Psychological Mediators, (3) Integration-Relevant Psychological Responses, and (4) Integration Outcomes. These categories reflected both the structure of the interview guide and the theoretical framework underpinning the study. This allowed the software to analyze lexical patterns specific to each theme and enabled a focused comparison between manually coded themes and automatically extracted lexical clusters.

        The final corpus consisted of 14 interviews, containing 37,738 total word occurrences, 3,257 lexical forms, and 1,430 hapax legomena (words appearing only once), representing 43.91% of all forms and 3.79% of total occurrences. The corpus was segmented into 1,063 text segments, of which 866 (81.47%) were retained for analysis across the four thematic sub-corpora.

        Although IRaMuTeQ was not used to generate new themes, the lexical classes and high-frequency terms it produced closely aligned with the manually identified themes, supporting their internal coherence. According to Pélissier (2016), while there is no absolute threshold for an "ideal" classification rate in lexicometric analysis, a segment classification above 70% is generally considered acceptable, particularly for exploratory or medium-sized corpora. The classification rate observed in this analysis therefore supports the validity and internal consistency of the thematic structure. This lexical convergence reinforced the reliability of the manual analysis and added depth to the interpretation of patterns in the data.

Finally, to structure the findings visually, I developed a thematic map, presented at the end of the results section, which illustrates the relationships between the main themes and sub-themes. This map followed Braun and Clarke (2021) guidance and is presented in Figure 4.6.

Results

Thematic Findings

The findings are presented thematically and are organized around four main categories derived from the PARI model and the interview guide: (I) Perceived Forcedness and Migration Perils, (II) Psychological Mediators, (III) Integration-Relevant Psychological Responses, and (IV) Integration Outcomes.

Each theme was supported by participant narratives that illustrated key psychological and social dimensions of forced migration and integration. Where relevant, findings from the lexical analysis conducted in IRaMuTeQ were integrated to reinforce and triangulate the manually identified themes. Rather than generating new categories, the IRaMuTeQ analysis served to confirm key lexical patterns and co-occurrences within each main theme.

Throughout the results presented below, participants' voices remain central. Each sub-theme is presented with illustrative quotes that reflect the shared meaning and core issues expressed in the data. Where applicable, these quotes are contextualised with reference to lexical clusters to highlight how the IRaMuTeQ output complements and supports the narrative interpretation. The findings are presented below, beginning with participants' motivations for leaving Afghanistan and the dangers encountered during their migration journeys.

Theme 1: Perceived Forcedness and Migration Perils

This theme captured how participants experienced their migration as both compelled and dangerous, reflecting the "perceived forcedness" and "migration perils" constructs of the PARI model (Echterhoff, 2020). These two psychological antecedents, why they left and how

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they left, emerged consistently across narratives and shaped participants' emotional and cognitive responses to displacement.

The theme included three interrelated sub-themes:

(i) Perceived Forcedness, which explored the reasons participants felt they had no option but to leave Afghanistan.

(ii) Migration-Related Perils, which addressed the risky and often traumatic experiences encountered during the journey to France.

(iii) Post arrival stressors, which addressed the challenges faced upon reaching France, including long asylum procedures, lack of housing, financial insecurity, language barriers, and the psychological toll of navigating an unfamiliar system.

Lexical analysis using IRaMuTeQ reinforced this thematic structure. According to the software the discourse corresponding to this theme comprised 255 text segments, encompassing 1,562 forms and 9,110 occurrences. Of these, 188 segments were successfully classified, resulting in a segment loss of 26.27%. This classification rate is considered acceptable for medium-sized corpora, supporting the internal coherence of the analysis (Pélissier, 2016). The descending hierarchical classification (DHC) from IRaMuTeQ yielded six distinct lexical classes (see Figure 4.2), each reflecting a specific facet of participants' migration trajectories.

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Figure 4.2

Dendrogram of Lexical Classes for the Theme Perceived Forcedness and Migration Perils

classe 6	classe 3	classe 2	classe 1	classe 5	classe 4
Illegal pathway *16.5 %*	**Unsafe route** *17 %*	**Post arrival (A)** *16 %*	**Post arrival (B)** *14.9%*	**Forcedness** *18.1 %*	**Home country** *17.6%*
route	water	job	year	leave	father
turkey	boat	end	france	force	young
journey	night	work	enter	due	attend
illegal	captain	family	french	afghan	kabul
sea	island	money	man	security	province
greece	police	need	education	reason	nimeroz
smuggle	hour	hospital	initially	country	control
endure	cold	home	live	afghanistan	migration
risk	throw	day	europe	face	husband
dangerous	food	parent	come	situation	taliban
danger	attempt	lot	current	good	life
mountain	greek	difficult	covid	live	study
path	smuggler	back	sweden	economic	afghanistan
open	border	find	asylum	time	road
hunger	happen	decide	visa	difficulty	school
walk	point		tajikistan	homeland	abroad
	person		germany		
			god		

Note. The percentages shown for each lexical class indicate the proportion of all successfully classified text segments that were grouped into that class during Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) in IRaMuTeQ. For example, Class 5 ("Forcedness") comprises 18.1% of the classified segments, meaning that this proportion of the discourse was associated with lexical patterns related to forced migration experiences. The prominent words displayed under each class represent statistically significant terms, which are further interpreted and integrated into the thematic analysis in the relevant sub-theme. Notably, the two "Post arrival" classes (A and B) reflect distinct yet related facets of participants' early resettlement experiences, which are further elaborated in the subsequent sub-theme section.

Sub-theme (i). Perceived Forcedness. Most participants described their departure from Afghanistan as involuntary. The Table 4.3 describes the extent of forcedness that participants reported, using a self-rated scale from 1 to 5, where 5 indicates feeling highly forced to leave and 1 indicates minimal compulsion.

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Table 4.3

Participant Ratings of Migration Forcedness (1–5) with Illustrative Quotes

Participant	Self-Reported Forcedness Score	Supporting Quote
Jamshid	5	"I had no choice but to migrate."
Anwar	4	"If we weren't forced, why would I leave Afghanistan...If the living condition was better because it's our own country, our family was there, so I would not have left…"
Aziz	3	"I wasn't excessively forced… but also wasn't entirely safe considering the security and economic challenges faced by all Afghans at that time ."
Zahra	4	"I was forced as there were no more educational opportunities under the rule of the Taliban."
Nimat	5	"I was afraid that I couldn't survive and might even get killed if I stayed in Afghanistan…"
Raza	4	"I felt very compelled… I left Afghanistan due to both economic and security conditions."
Bahar	4	"I was forced to leave the country…"
Maryam	5	"… being forced to leave the country."
Arezu	5	"…I had no intention of leaving…I had no plan to come because of security risks and the lack of a safe place to progress, to study…If it was not for this compulsion, I would never have left Afghanistan…"
Jamil	4	"…if I had stayed there, my children would have been homeless..."
Basit	5	"Homeland is like a mother; in the mother's embrace, no one feels danger or sorrow, but we were forced to leave our homeland."
Amina	4	"In general, the Taliban and the insecurity in the country had made life difficult for everyone."
Rahman	4	-
Zaki	5	"I left Afghanistan for security reasons… the conditions were extremely dire and tough."

Participants' responses revealed a powerful and consistent sense of external compulsion. According to above table thirteen out of fourteen participants positioned their migration not as a choice, but as a reaction to existential threats. While one participant gave a more nuanced response (Aziz, score 3), however, he also acknowledged that the conditions were unsafe. The most common reasons cited were security threats, political instability, and

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lack of educational or economic opportunities, all of which reflect the collapse of normal life and personal safety.

This strong sense of external compulsion also emerged in the IRaMuTeQ lexical analysis, particularly in Class 4 and Class 5. Class 4 covered 33 segments, representing 17.55% of the main theme, and focused on contexts prior to migration. Its frequent terms, such as "father" (n = 6, χ^2 = 23.34, p < .001), "young" (n = 6, χ^2 = 23.34, p < .001), "attend" (n = 4, χ^2 = 19.2, p < .001), and "Kabul" (n = 6, χ^2 = 15.76, p < .001), suggest narratives of disrupted personal lives. Class 5 accounted for 34 segments, representing 18.09% of the main theme, and included high-frequency terms such as "leave" (n = 17, χ^2 = 33.85, p < .001), "force" (n = 9, χ^2 = 24.66, p < .001), "due" (n = 7, χ^2 = 22.74, p < .001), and "security" (n = 6, χ^2 = 18.27, p < .001). These lexical clusters confirm that the dominant language used by participants reflected perceptions of being driven out, often by violent or unsafe circumstances.

In sum, the sub-theme of perceived forcedness illustrates a clear pattern: participants did not migrate by preference, but by necessity. Their decisions to leave Afghanistan were shaped by structural collapse, personal threat, and systemic persecution. This perception of forcedness formed the psychological foundation for how they later experienced both the migration journey and their efforts to integrate in France.

Sub-theme (ii). Migration-Related Perils. While the reasons for departure were grounded in fear and necessity, participants also recounted significant hardships during the migration journey itself. These accounts highlighted a wide range of experiences, from crossing borders illegally to spending extended periods in unsafe or unstable transit countries. The journeys were often long, unpredictable, and marked by both physical and emotional suffering.

Ten out of fourteen participants said they took illegal routes. These included traveling from Iran to Turkey, then to Greece, Italy, and finally France. This involved crossing borders without authorization and spending long periods in unstable conditions. Illustrating this

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experience, Anwar stated, "From Pakistan border to Iran. Then I took the route to Turkey, Greece, and Italy, and finally reached France."

Nimat recalled his journey as a complex route through multiple countries:

So, I directly came from Kabul to Iran. and passed through Pakistan. Eventually, I arrived in Turkey and stayed there for a week. From Turkey, I headed towards Greece. I spent two days on an island and then took a ticket and managed to reach the Greek capital. From there, I continued until I reached the Macedonian border… we would sneak into freight trains during the one-hour stops they made… eventually stopped in Croatia…headed towards the Austrian border… We crossed into Austria … From there, I took a ticket for Hamburg, Germany. After a quick stay, I took a train towards Sweden…I had to come to France.

Amina described her journey as a series of exhausting stages across borders:

We came from Afghanistan to Iran by car, from Iran to Turkey on foot, from Turkey to Greece by boat, and from Greece to Italy by boat. Finally, we came to France by car. We stayed in Turkey for 65 days and one and a half years in Greece on an island under a tent.

These quotes show the long and difficult routes taken by many participants. Their journey was often not direct and involved delays, risky transportation, and unstable living conditions. It was not only a matter of reaching the destination, but surviving each stage of the process.

All ten participants who travelled through illegal ways described facing danger. These included walking long distances, hiding in trucks or containers, encountering violence at borders, and being detained.

Jamshid recalled his journey as one of life-and-death dangers, from barbed wire and armed threats to the deadly risk of the sea:

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> I endured all the hardships of the journey, including crossing the Black Sea, and forests, and walking on foot... There was a chance of being caught in Iran and deported, encountering thieves and hostage-takers in the mountains, and even being shot at...The barbed wire fences were dangerous; we managed to cross them in Iran. The biggest danger of going to Europe was the sea... If we drowned in the water, we would die, and if we made it across the sea, the way to Europe was open… It meant life and death right there.

Similarly, Amina recounted her migration as a perilous route marked by hunger, fatigue, and the fear of losing her newborn to smugglers:

> Our way was illegal and smuggled. The dangers we faced on the way included hunger, fatigue, lack of sleep, and my little daughter was born on the migration route in the refugee camp in Greece. Finally, we arrived, taking our lives into our own hands. Throughout the journey, there was the fear that the smuggler might abandon my daughter somewhere. As I had heard that they say if a child cries, the smuggler throws them into the water.

Aziz recounted his experience as a struggle against both nature and people, enduring snow, rivers, armed smugglers, and even storms at sea:

> We had to walk through mountains… One of the dangers that intimidated me was from smugglers. smugglers had guns with them and they threatened to kill us if we didn't continue the journey. Women and children were with us. the water kept getting deeper, and we were cold and wet. Then smugglers placed 19 people on a boat with a capacity of 10 people… When we wanted to leave, we got caught by the Greek police and surrendered… In the police station, there were people with tied hands to a pillar, severely beaten… Later, they put us on a coastal boat and placed us inside a cabin, and there was a severe storm at sea. We were shouting and crying as the boat was getting

tossed by the waves. After 5 hours of crossing, they finally brought us to an island. We stayed some days and they only provided us with food once every 24 hours. Until we reached France. During the journey, I clung to the underside of a truck in Italy… my knees couldn't function, and there was no blood flow.

These stories show that the migration journey was filled with danger, fear, and exhaustion. Participants faced both natural dangers, like sea storms and freezing mountains, and human dangers, such as smugglers with weapons or abusive border officials. Some had to carry children through all of this, with no guarantee of safety or support.

Four other participants who travelled through more formal pathways also described difficulties. Although they were not smuggled, they still felt fear and emotional pressure during the process. Arezu said, "I came through the evacuation program after the collapse of Afghanistan … Getting inside the airport was very difficult. It took three days until I could get through." Zahra explained, "With the invitation that my husband sent me to apply for a French visa. In Iran, they don't easily rent houses to us, and the prices are very high. Also, Iranians don't like Afghans."

These two quotes illustrate that even legal migration could be stressful, especially when it involved discrimination, long waiting times, and lack of stability in transit countries.

Lexical analysis from IRaMuTeQ also supported these findings. Class 3 represented 32 out of 188 segments, representing (17.02%) of the main theme, and Class 6 represented 31 out of 188 segments, representing (16.49%) of the main theme. Both classes included common terms such as "water" (n = 12, χ^2 = 56.05, p < .001), "boat" (n = 12, χ^2 = 45.78, p < .001), "route" (n = 9, χ^2 = 41.45, p < .001), "Turkey" (n = 10, χ^2 = 37.04, p < .001), and "smuggle" (n = 6, χ^2 = 20.77, p < .001).

In summary, participants described migration not only as a necessary decision but also as a painful and dangerous journey. Whether they travelled illegally or legally, most

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experienced fear, suffering, and instability before reaching France. These challenges added more emotional pressure to their lives and influenced how they later adapted to their new environment.

Sub theme (iii). Post arrival stressors. Emerging from the narratives of refugees, a new sub-theme was identified: post-arrival stressors or initial stressors upon arrival. Even after arriving in France, whether through legal or irregular routes, participants continued to face serious challenges. Thirteen participants recalled encountering long asylum procedures, the effects of the Dublin regulation, lack of housing, and financial insecurity. These post-arrival stressors included sleeping in public spaces or shelters, while working informal jobs to survive, coping with language barriers, unfamiliar systems, and psychological stress. For many, the end of the journey did not bring relief but instead marked the beginning of new struggles.

These difficulties were illustrated by Anwar, who described his first months in France as extremely unstable, "In the beginning, I spent about 3 months under bridges and other people's houses… When we came here, we registered ourselves at the police station and spent about 3 months sleeping under a bridge… Initially, it was difficult." Similarly, Aziz recounted sleeping rough and the emotional toll of rejection and isolation:

> After coming to France, I slept under a bridge in Gare de Lyon in Paris for 6 months and had nothing to eat… In the beginning, it was very difficult for me, and I even thought I might go crazy… I saw some Afghans in La Chapelle who had lost their minds and were talking to the walls… I was rejected by OFPRA but finally received a positive response from the CNDA… I was not receiving any support and I had to manage on my own.

These accounts show how precarious and unsupported the early period of arrival could be. Both Anwar and Aziz spoke of sleeping rough and feeling emotionally overwhelmed. The lack of

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housing and mental health support made it difficult for them to feel settled or secure, even after reaching a country they believed would be safe.

Nimat explained the impact of asylum regulations and economic hardship:

When I applied for asylum and gave my fingerprints, my application was rejected considering the Dublin law… I waited for 18 months until it was completed… When I first arrived here, the French government provided monthly financial assistance of 200 euros for the first 6 months, but it was later cut off… After that, I found illegal job, working with Pakistanis, who paid me 30 euros daily.

Arezu also described the uncertainty she faced when trying to build a future in France:

When I first arrived in France, everything felt blocked, and I didn't know what I could do… The administrative work is still unfamiliar… In the beginning thinking about the education and future career was very challenging for me, especially the language issue.

These two quotes show how legal, financial, and linguistic barriers continued to affect participants' daily lives. Nimat faced long delays and economic instability due to the Dublin regulation, while Arezu expressed a strong sense of uncertainty and helplessness. Both examples show how even basic needs such as income, paperwork, and communication remained difficult to manage after arrival.

The IRaMuTeQ lexical analysis further supported these findings. Class 2 consisted of 30 segments, representing (15.96%) of the main theme, and Class 1 included 28 segments, representing (14.89%) of the main theme. Both featured words such as "job" (n = 6, $\chi^2 = 26.38$, $p < .001$), "work" (n = 9, $\chi^2 = 26.34$, $p < .001$), "money" (n = 6, $\chi^2 = 21.72$, $p < .001$), "France" (n = 21, $\chi^2 = 69.03$, $p < .001$), "French" (n = 5, $\chi^2 = 18.33$, $p < .001$), and "education" (n = 5, $\chi^2 = 17.42$, $p < .001$), These frequent terms reflect the central concerns of participants during their early experiences in France, including finding work, understanding the system, and gaining access to basic services.

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While the lexical analysis identified two separate classes (Class 2 and Class 1), both were interpreted together under the sub-theme Post arrival stressors. The distinction simply reflects two complementary facets of the same experience: Class 2 (Post arrival A) highlighted daily adaptation and family resettlement challenges, whereas Class 1 (Post arrival B) reflected engagement with institutional and bureaucratic aspects of resettlement, such as asylum procedures and education. This analytical distinction was data-driven rather than intentional, and both classes collectively inform the interpretation of post-arrival stressors as a unified phenomenon. Taken together, these findings reinforce the qualitative accounts and point to the continuing nature of hardship after migration. This sub-theme highlights that arrival in France was not the end of hardship for most participants. Instead, it introduced a new set of difficulties related to survival, adaptation, and uncertainty about the future. These post-arrival stressors affected participants emotionally and practically, often making the process of integration more complex and overwhelming.

Together, these three sub-themes illustrate that forced migration was not a single traumatic event but a series of challenges that unfolded before, during, and after departure. The perceived lack of choice, the dangers encountered along the way, and the instability upon arrival created a sustained psychological burden. These experiences influenced how participants understood and approached their lives after arriving in France.

Theme 2: Psychological mediators

This theme captures the internal psychological processes that shaped how participants responded to forced migration and post-migration challenges. It reflects the psychological mediators construct in the PARI model (Echterhoff, 2020), which conceptualizes these mediators as essential links between the antecedents of migration (i.e., why and how individuals left) and their integration outcomes.

The theme was organized into three sub-themes:

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(i) Self-continuity, which explored participants' perceived connection to their past

selves despite displacement

(ii) Uncertainty, which reflected difficulties in envisioning a stable present or future

(iii) Suffering, which captured the enduring emotional and psychological impact of

forced migration.

Lexical analysis using IRaMuTeQ supported this thematic organization. The discourse related to this theme included 168 text segments, comprising 1,139 lexical forms and 5,841 total word occurrences. Of these, 109 segments were classified in four classes (see Figure 4.3), resulting in a 35.12% segment loss. According to Pélissier (2016), this classification rate remains within the acceptable range for medium-sized corpora, reinforcing the internal coherence of the analysis.

Figure 4.3

Dendrogram of Lexical Classes for the Theme - Psychological Mediators
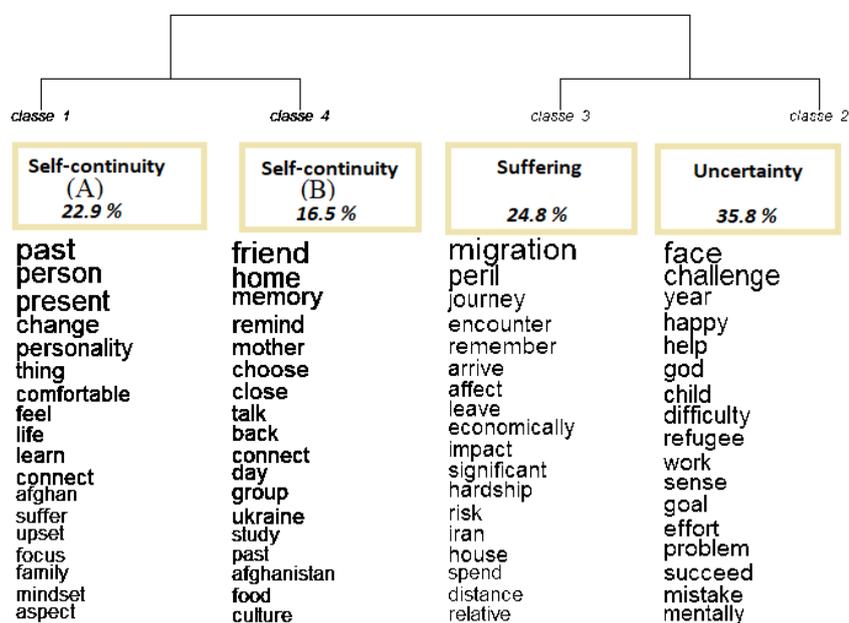
Note. Percentages indicate the share of 109 classified text segments assigned to each lexical class during Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) in IRaMuTeQ. For instance, the Uncertainty class represents 35.8% of the segments, showing that much of the content related to experiences of uncertainty. Keywords listed under each class are the most statistically significant terms. The two Self-continuity classes (A and B) reflect distinct but related aspects of identity continuity, which are further discussed together in the corresponding sub-theme section. These classes are discussed in the sub-theme sections below in relation to participants' psychological responses and narratives.

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Sub-theme (i). Self-continuity. This section explores how participants described their level of self-continuity. As outlined in the Semi-structured Interview Guide section, participants were asked to choose from a set of overlapping circles to represent how closely they felt connected to their past selves, with 1 indicating no overlap and 7 indicating the strongest connection. This visual exercise offered insight into how they experienced identity continuity after migration.

Five participants expressed a deep connection to their former selves, often rooted in familiar routines, cultural values, or strong family bonds. Six other participants described weaker links, shaped by the disruptions and changes brought on by forced migration. Two participants selected a middle score (4), explaining that everyday elements such as traditional food, native language, and memories of family and home helped maintain some connection to their past. One participant did not score himself. These patterns are summarized in Table 4.4, which presents participants' self-continuity scores alongside supporting quotes that illustrate their choices.

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Table 4.4

Participants' Self-Continuity Scores with Supporting Quotes

Participant	SC Score	Supporting Quotes
Jamshid	2	"I don't really know if I am entirely different from what I used to be before…However, the way I dress has changed to some extent…Some things from my past are still there. For example, the foods I used to enjoy in the past, like *Khoresht-e Qheema* (meat stew) I still like them now."
Anwar	3	"I am neither the same as before nor have completely changed. … My life today does not remind me of the past… specifically mindset of accepting people from different religions, ethnic groups, races, and nationalities."
Aziz	2	"…the little overlap, and it suits me… I am not the same as I used to be… I feel there isn't anything that makes me feel connected to my past."
Zahra	6	"… there is a strong overlap from the past… I feel good to be the same person… I feel connected with the past, especially because of my neighbors in Afghanistan…"
Nimat	-	"No, there is nothing that connects me to the past… I remember, and sometimes it comes to mind as well because some issues have passed over my head."
Raza	2	"… The only thing that remains from the past is the way I eat… Family is the only reason to connect me with the past…now I have covered very little of my past. Even the way I dress has changed."
Bahar	3	"The fact that I don't fully feel Afghan at times is because I don't have my own passport… it is a very political and administrative status."
Maryam	4	"There are many things because it's my homeland, and I have never had a day without dreaming about the friends I had in my childhood and youth… the memories we had together never fade away."
Arezu	6	"I can say there is still a very strong overlap with my past… Afghan dishes, language, and values in Afghan culture remind me of the past…."
Jamil	6	"…except for some changes in dressing, nothing else has changed in me… I still have the same culture, food, and good habits… I was the same person before, am now, and will be."
Basit	7	"All what I have now is from the past and all who I am now is carried from the past."
Amina	6	"… The same food, the same clothes, everything is in its place and being carried from the past."
Rahman	1	"My current state has covered (overtaken) a lot of my past, and most things from the past are not remembered, continued and even forgotten."
Zaki	4	"There's a significant difference between my past and my current situation…"

The table shows a clear divide in how participants experienced their connection to the past. While some described a strong and ongoing link to their former identity, others felt that migration had disrupted that sense of self. A few found themselves somewhere in between, holding on to familiar elements like food, language, or memories as anchors. The range of responses suggests that self-continuity after forced migration is not fixed, it varies depending on personal experiences, coping strategies, and the degree of change they faced.

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Eleven participants described their lives as a continuous story, made up of different phases, before migration, during displacement, and after arrival in France. They spoke about learning from past experiences and linking those to their current identities. Even when their environments changed, many still felt they were the same person at their core.

Bahar expressed this sense of continuity, "I am reminded every day… this is the journey I have… all the dots are very interconnected… one thing has led me to the next." Similarly, Maryam described her life as "a story with different parts but some are sad and some are happy moments." Rahman also emphasized continuity, stating, "My life has three parts: one in Afghanistan, the second in Turkey, and the third, which is now in France… So, they are one single story and has different meaningful parts."

However, three participants described their identity as more disrupted. They spoke of their lives as fragmented, where the past felt disconnected from the present. This was especially common among those who felt they had lost their dreams, stability, or sense of purpose.

Basit explained this feeling of fragmentation, "Normal life always has meaningful connections, but immigrant life is fragmented because I started from scratch in Afghanistan… But here, I started everything from scratch again… Hence, I feel it is not a single meaningful story." Anwar similarly reflected on a lost dream, "When I was young and going to school, I always wanted to become a pilot, but unfortunately, it didn't happen, and my life took a different direction and it is too late now to think about it."

Lexical analysis using IRaMuTeQ reinforced these interpretations. Class 1 consisted of 25 text segments (22.94%) and Class 4 included 18 text segments (16.51%) both featured high-association terms such as such as "past" (n = 16, χ^2 = 26.79, p < .001), "person" (n = 9, χ^2 = 20.68, p < .001), "present" (n = 8, χ^2 = 20.36, p < .001), and "change" (n = 7, χ^2 = 13.8, p < .001), "friend" (n = 9, χ^2 = 33.46, p < .001), "home" (n = 5, χ^2 = 26.49, p < .001), "memory" (n = 3, χ^2 = 15.6, p < .001), and "mother" (n = 4, χ^2 = 10.85, p < .001) and verbs like "remind" (n

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= 4, χ^2 = 11.58, p < .001), highlighting the affective ties and associative links that grounded participants in their pre-migration identities.

Although the lexical analysis distinguished two separate classes (Class 1 and Class 4), both were interpreted together under the sub-theme Self-continuity. This distinction simply reflects two complementary facets of the same phenomenon: Class 1 (Self-continuity A) emphasized internal and reflective aspects of identity continuity, whereas Class 4 (Self-continuity B) captured social and relational continuities, such as memories of family, friends, and cultural life. This differentiation was data-driven rather than intentional, and both classes collectively inform the interpretation of self-continuity as a unified experience.

These findings suggest that self-continuity after forced migration varies across individuals. For most participants, life was still seen as a meaningful, ongoing story, despite the disruptions of displacement. Their memories, values, and connections to the past helped them maintain a stable sense of self. However, for a few, the abrupt changes caused by migration made it difficult to see their life as a continuous whole. This difference reflects how migration can either support or strain one's ability to hold onto a coherent identity.

Sub-theme (ii). Suffering. Many participants described their migration not just as a physical journey, but as an emotionally painful and psychologically draining experience. For eleven participants, this suffering persisted beyond the journey, continuing to affect their mental health and daily lives in France. Their accounts showed that forced migration often came with long-term emotional consequences, from traumatic memories and grief to feelings of loss, helplessness, and isolation. Some participants described mental health struggles and deep emotional exhaustion Raza recounted:

It had a significant impact … I attempted suicide several times, but I gave up because of my family. I do not consciously think about the perils of migration, but unconsciously. Living

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in Sweden had a significant impact on my mental well-being. So far, nothing positive has happened." Maryam also reflected on the emotional toll of displacement:

> To be honest, the good life I had in Ukraine cannot be compared to what I have here. We never imagined that there would be a war… the war in Ukraine really shattered me… Starting from scratch is very challenging... I used to have a personal business in Ukraine, and I also worked in a beauty salon…I always think about the challenges in my migration journey. Emotionally, I wasn't ready before migrating to France.

Arezu described the fear she experienced at the beginning of her journey, "The three days I spent at the airport were truly terrifying. I can't even imagine how I could spend three days there." Similarly, Jamshid captured the fear of life-threatening danger, "God forbid, if we drown and no one is there to help."

These quotes show that the suffering described by participants was often related to feelings of fear, shock, and emotional unpreparedness. Even after surviving the journey, many still carried these feelings with them. Others reflected on grief, disconnection, and loss of identity. Echoing these experiences, Jamil shared:

> I went through a lot of hardships myself…Tomorrow is July 14, it's Bastille Day in France… But I am thinking about Afghanistan…we no longer have freedom. Every prosperity in this country reminds me of Afghanistan… The fall of Afghanistan had a profound impact on me, and I cried all night… The distance from my family is a significant loss… I think a lot about the perils I encountered… When I go to sleep … Economically, everyone relies on me, and I couldn't help them during the difficulties of migration.

Zaki similarly expressed the deep loss he felt after leaving Afghanistan:

> Leaving Afghanistan meant losing a lot for me, my life, job, family, and all amenities…Personally, being a family-oriented person, I always think about my family

and relate even the smallest things I see to my family. Focusing too much on them tends

to bring sadness... immediately changes my mood.

These participants highlighted how forced migration disrupted not only their safety but also

their sense of identity and belonging. The grief of leaving behind loved ones and a familiar life

stayed with them long after arrival.

Lexical analysis using IRaMuTeQ supported this sub-theme through Class 3 consisted

of 27 text segments (24.77%), which captured key terms such as "migration" (n = 14, χ^2 = 48.78,

$p < .001$), "peril" (n = 12, χ^2 = 36.13, $p < .001$), "journey" (n = 9, χ^2 = 21.37, $p < .001$),

"encounter" (n = 5, χ^2 = 15.92, $p < .001$), and "remember" (n = 9, χ^2 = 15.66, $p < .001$), "impact"

(n = 6, χ^2 = 7.33, $p < .001$), and "hardship" (n = 5, χ^2 = 5.62, $p < .001$). These terms appeared

in participants' narratives when they spoke about the lasting emotional effects of their journey,

often in the context of unresolved pain or loss.

This sub-theme highlights that migration, for many, was not something they could

emotionally leave behind. The journey affected not only their bodies but their minds and

identities. Feelings of fear, grief, and emotional exhaustion continued long after they reached

safety, shaping how they experienced everyday life in France. These stories show that even

when the physical dangers ended, the psychological suffering endured.

Sub-theme (iii). Uncertainty. Uncertainty was a common thread running through

participants' accounts, particularly in how they understood their current lives and futures. For

most, this uncertainty was not just about paperwork or bureaucracy, it was both practical and

emotional, affecting how they planned, made decisions, and imagined what might come next.

Twelve participants described living with uncertainty about their legal status and

employment prospects. Four said they had considered leaving or were unsure about staying in

France. This hesitation was often linked to delayed asylum processes, cultural isolation, or

being separated from loved ones. While a few tried to hold on to short-term goals or hope, most

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felt they had limited control over what lay ahead. Several participants described uncertainty linked to legal and political instability. This sense of instability was further articulated by Anwar, who reflected on the unpredictability of immigration systems, stating:

> I don't know what the future brings. The French government's systems change and every new government makes new laws for refugees. Perhaps a new government may not accept me despite the previous government's acceptance. This always stays in my mind.

Raza described his future as depending entirely on the outcome of his asylum claim:

> If I am accepted…I will be like a bird that can fly…. Life looks like an unknown path…The certainty of the future also depends on the confirmation of my asylum request. Hence, if I get accepted, I will have a better life.

Maryam also expressed emotional withdrawal and uncertainty, saying, "… but after the war and losing everything, I stopped planning and left everything to destiny…. we'll see what happens next." In a different context, Jamil linked his uncertainty to family separation, explaining, "About my life and future, many things are unknown. I think this is because my family is not with me… Sometimes, I think about going back to Afghanistan, but only if the situation there becomes stable"

These accounts show that bureaucratic uncertainty and emotional instability often worked together. Without legal clarity or family support, it was difficult for participants to feel grounded or secure enough to think long-term.

Yet despite these challenges, eight of the same participants who expressed uncertainty due to above reasons, also demonstrated a clear sense of awareness and purpose, especially around education, family responsibilities, and long-term plans to remain in France. These narratives reflected practical optimism even within uncertain conditions. Aziz expressed confidence in his direction and commitment to France:

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> I know what is happening in my life, and I move forward by my own will… I don't feel
> uncertain and have no doubts about my life today. I plan to stay here… now, things have
> changed since I brought my family here. I cannot leave this place even if it's not my
> homeland but it is for my children, as they were born here, studied here, and their future
> is connected to France.

Maryam shared a similar determination to build a stable life for her family, explaining, "We have to learn the language to find a job…I can do something or have my own business. I do not think about leaving France. I don't want to put my children in trouble again. "

Arezu described her educational and professional aspirations:

> Now I understand society and the work environment… The sooner we learn the
> language, the sooner we can integrate into the community. Next year, I plan to do a
> Master's in Global MBA because I have experience in management fields …I am
> optimistic about the future… I have a career aspiration and I want to have a business

Raza also expressed forward-looking goals, saying," I am an educated person… If I get accepted, I will continue my studies and pursue the same field… I have not thought about leaving France and settling somewhere else"

These quotes show a different kind of certainty, not necessarily rooted in having everything resolved, but in making intentional choices about the future. Even while dealing with legal or emotional stress, participants like Aziz and Arezu had built a vision for what was possible, especially for their children and careers.

Lexical validation from IRaMuTeQ supported this sub-theme through Class 2 included 39 text segments (35.78%), with frequent terms such as "face" (n = 10, χ^2 = 19.76, p < .001), "challenge" (n = 10, χ^2 = 16.18, p < .001), "year" (n = 5, χ^2 = 9.41, p < .001), "help" (n = 6, χ^2 = 8.12, p < .001), "god" (n = 5, χ^2 = 8.12, p < .001), "refugee" (n = 4, χ^2 = 7.45, p < .001), and

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"goal" (n = 4, χ^2 = 7.45, p < .001).These words appeared frequently in participants' stories of struggle and uncertainty, especially in relation to hope, faith, and aspirations.

This sub-theme shows that uncertainty was part of nearly every participant's story, but it didn't always mean helplessness. For some, uncertainty created fear and emotional paralysis; for others, it sparked a renewed focus on education, stability, or long-term goals. Whether hopeful or hesitant, all participants had to navigate a future that felt unclear, showing how deeply uncertainty shaped their psychological responses and decisions about integration.

Overall theme 2 highlighted how participants' psychological responses, shaped by their sense of self, emotional pain, and uncertainty, played a crucial role in how they experienced forced migration and tried to rebuild their lives. Some held on to a strong sense of self-continuity, drawing strength from cultural memories, values, or routines, while others felt fragmented or disconnected, which made adjusting to their new context more difficult. Many carried deep emotional suffering, not only from the journey itself but from what was lost along the way such as family, stability, and identity.

Uncertainty, especially about legal status, future plans, and belonging, added further emotional weight. Yet, responses varied: some were immobilised by fear or grief, while others used hope and clear goals as coping mechanisms. These internal processes acted as mediators, shaping how individuals interpreted their circumstances and moved toward or away from integration.

Theme 3: Integration-Related Psychological Responses

This theme captures how Afghan refugees' psychological responses, shaped by interactions with the host environment, influence their integration processes in France. These responses reflect internal adaptations to external realities, including societal attitudes, cultural differences, and institutional encounters. Through this lens, integration is understood not

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merely as a legal or economic milestone, but as a deeply personal and psychological journey of adjustment, belonging, and identity negotiation.

The theme is explored through four interconnected sub-themes:

(i) Wellbeing, focusing on emotional and psychological health in the post-migration context.

(ii) Attitudes toward the host society, capturing trust, acceptance, or disillusionment with the receiving society.

(iii) Acculturation, reflecting how individuals adapt to or resist aspects of French culture while negotiating their own.

(iv) Social identity, emerging as a new sub-theme under this theme, reflecting how participants redefined or maintained their sense of belonging and group affiliation in light of their migration and integration experiences.

Lexical analysis using IRaMuTeQ supported the internal coherence of this thematic structure. The corresponding corpus included 523 text segments, of which 479 segments (91.59%) were successfully classified. This low segment loss of 8.41% suggests a high degree of lexical cohesion, consistent with the interpretive standards outlined by Pélissier (2016). The Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) yielded six (see Figure 4.4) distinct lexical classes, each contributing to one or more of the sub-themes that follow.

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Figure 4.4

Dendrogram of Lexical Classes for Integration-Relevant Psychological Responses

classe 5	*classe 1*	*classe 3*	*classe 4*	*classe 2*	*classe 6*
acculturation (A) *14.2%*	acculturation (B) *19.2 %*	Attitude toward host(A) 11.1%	Attitude toward host Country 17.8%	Wellbeing *18.6 %*	Attitude toward host (B) 19.2%
celebrate	integrate	question	find	happy	receive
eid	afghan	good	language	concern	english
festival	society	attitude	pursue	future	support
holiday	part	general	job	life	lady
celebration	french	realize	plan	challenge	speak
tradition	opinion	exist	significant	start	sleep
man	aspect	behaviour	leave	family	month
comfortable	level	bad	system	homeland	camp
pleasant	adapt	respect	accept	problem	night
party	value	person	settle	upset	card
occasion	positively	bite	reach	brother	road
nowruz	community	world	mention	school	euros
kiss	fully	sociable	place	study	de
invite	culture	immigrant	enter	difficulty	office
day	view	feel	effort	current	response
afghan	individual		waste	cause	permit
soup					arrive

Note. Percentages indicate the share of 479 classified text segments assigned to each lexical class during Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) in IRaMuTeQ. For instance, Class 1 ("Acculturation B") represents 19.2% of the segments, showing that a substantial portion of the discourse related to experiences of integration and adaptation. Keywords listed under each class are the most statistically significant terms. The two Acculturation classes (A and B) reflect distinct but related dimensions of cultural adaptation, with Class A emphasizing the expression and maintenance of Afghan traditions and Class B focusing on integration within the host society. Both are interpreted together in the corresponding sub-theme section. Similarly, the two Attitude toward Host classes (A and B) represent distinct but related aspects of participants' perceptions of the host society, with Class A reflecting general evaluations of French people and Class B describing direct experiences of help and institutional support. Both are discussed together in the corresponding sub-theme section.

Sub-theme (i). Wellbeing. Wellbeing was often described through the lens of happiness, and the majority of participants shared that they felt happy due to safety, freedom, or family reunification in France. However, despite these positive feelings, their wellbeing was still shaped by ongoing struggles such as separation from loved ones, uncertainty about the future, or emotional distress. Even when participants expressed satisfaction or gratitude, they also pointed to persistent sources of worry or sadness.

This pattern, being happy while still feeling unhappy about other aspects of life, was a common experience across nine narratives. Anwar captured this duality, stating, "With the help of God, I have a good and happy life now… However, no matter how good it gets, it can never

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be like your homeland, as you're far from family and friends." Arezu also described mixed emotions about her wellbeing:

I feel both happy and unhappy… It's a good thing when I see my family safe and happy. I'm happy that they are happy… I see a bright future for them… In France, as a woman, you can have your freedoms… But at the moment, I am only worried about professional integration… My main concern is having a job.

Basit emphasized both appreciation and loss, saying, "Of course, I am happy… I am happy in France because they respect human rights… when we are far from family, brothers, and sisters, it becomes very difficult." While also describing happiness mixed with sadness, Zaki shared, "I am happy to have come to France and settled here… But I am not happy because I am far from my family… Being here while my family lives in distressing conditions is very upsetting."

While a majority of participants described mixed feelings, five other participants spoke only of happiness when reflecting on their well-being. Their sense of contentment came from personal safety, family reunification, improved living conditions, or emotional stability. These individuals did not mention ongoing emotional distress or dissatisfaction, instead focusing on positive aspects of their current lives.

Aziz expressed his satisfaction with stability and family life, stating, "I am happy because my wife and children are with me. I have my documents, no problems, and I feel integrated into society." Nimat also described his happiness, linking it to social differences, "Yes, of course, I am happy. The people here are different from Sweden and that makes me feel better." Similarly, Jamil emphasized the joy he found in supporting his children, saying, "I am very happy now. Helping my children and seeing them study brings me joy. Their happiness makes me happy."

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Lexical analysis supported this sub-theme. Class 2 consisted of 89 text segments (18.58%), and closely aligned with narratives of wellbeing, featuring key emotional and cognitive markers. High-frequency terms included "happy" (n = 21, χ^2 = 47.56, p < .001), "concern" (n = 10, χ^2 = 44.75, p < .001), "future" (n = 14, χ^2 = 30.94, p < .001), and "life" (n = 22, χ^2 = 30.16, p < .001).

Participants' reflections on wellbeing revealed that emotional and psychological adjustment was not defined solely by their external circumstances. Even when they described safety, freedom, or family reunion, many also carried quiet worries about their future or ongoing pain related to separation and uncertainty. These layered responses show that wellbeing was not a fixed state but a dynamic balance between gratitude and grief. For some, the presence of family, improved living conditions, or emotional calm allowed them to feel settled. For others, happiness coexisted with sorrow, especially when thinking about family left behind or difficulties yet to be resolved. This sub-theme shows that wellbeing in the post-migration context was both fragile and deeply personal, shaped by the push and pull between what had been gained and what remained unresolved.

Sub-theme (ii). Attitude toward host society. Participants' perceptions of the host society were often complex and layered, reflecting both positive encounters and moments of cultural distance or disappointment. Eight participants expressed dual attitudes toward the host society, shaped by both supportive encounters and moments of disillusionment. On one hand, they described the French people as kind, respectful, and helpful, particularly when locals showed interest in Afghan culture, offered assistance, or encouraged integration. Interactions with neighbors, social workers, teachers, or community members often contributed to a sense of welcome and belonging. On the other hand, participants also recounted experiences of cultural misunderstanding and subtle discrimination. In this context, Rahman described mostly positive experiences but also noted feelings of distance:

> Personally, I haven't faced any unpleasant behaviour so far. Their behaviour towards me has been good…I know a French family…used to be my French teacher. Sometimes they invite me to their houses so that we can talk about our cultures and traditions. French people are polite but hard to trust… They seem reserved and individualistic… It's difficult to become familiar or emotionally close with them.

Anwar also emphasized kindness but pointed to cultural practices that made him feel like an outsider:

> I believe that the French people are very kind… I realized that the French people are positive and open-minded towards most immigrants… There might be some who are not welcoming, but the French individuals I encountered have always been helpful and cooperative... Some practices of French people are not positive from my point of view… They seem indifferent to their families… They kiss women without asking, and this makes me feel like an outsider.

Similarly, Aziz described appreciation for French values but highlighted cultural differences he struggled to accept:

> Receiving help from French people has a very positive impact on a foreigner who has just arrived in France… French people have many good values, for example, in terms of education and work…Some are a bit racist… I cannot accept certain cultural values, like telling children to leave home at 18. In Afghan culture, we stay together and care for our parents.

A similar dual perspective was expressed by nine participants in relation to France as a country. While they appreciated the country's openness to refugees, institutional support, and legal freedoms, they also highlighted shortcomings such as bureaucratic inefficiency, inequality, or unmet expectations. These views often combined recognition of what had been

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gained with frustration over what remained difficult or unfair, as illustrated by Raza, who described both appreciation and frustration with integration:

> Moreover, the asylum process is easier here compared to other countries… But in France, the population is large, and there isn't as much support… there is no such system. In France, you have to integrate yourself and find your own way.

Arezu also reflected on France's freedoms but pointed to unequal treatment of refugees:

> I see France as a country with a responsive system… individual and social freedoms exist… I fully accept the positive aspects of French society… But when the Ukraine war happened, they were quickly able to obtain documents and were given homes in the best places.… this dual behavior exists.

Basit emphasized institutional shortcomings alongside some positive aspects:

> When I go to government offices, they tend to pay more attention to immigrants from other countries because they are fewer… We cannot say that all of France is good… France separates religion from politics… But the French education system is not acceptable for immigrants.

Amina similarly valued asylum acceptance but criticized restrictions on religious expression, stating, "It's a good country… They accepted our asylum case… But the fact that they don't allow hijab for women has created a problem for all Muslims."

In contrast, six participants described only positive experiences with the host society. Their narratives focused on kindness, helpfulness, and meaningful cross-cultural interactions, such as support at work, interest in Afghan music or traditions, and gestures of care that helped them feel valued and respected. Jamil described his experiences as consistently welcoming:

> People in France, in general, are good. Native French people show a lot of respect and even overlook the bad behavior of immigrants. I feel welcome by the people. I have French friends at work who help me. Their actions are very good and sincere.

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Building on this, Zaki also highlighted warmth and compassion from French families:

> People are kind. I feel that among the European Union countries, France has kind-hearted people and good behaviour… I lived with French families… One of the families requested me to play an Afghan song… I played Ahmad Zahir's song…they genuinely enjoyed it… When the lady of the house spoke to me, I felt like a child… on …Ramadan nights, she was very compassionate and I truly felt her motherly warmth…

Similarly, Maryam emphasized friendliness and sociability:

> The French people are more sociable, and I haven't seen any bad behavior from them…. we don't feel like outsiders… People don't think we came to their country to take their land or their belongings from them… I only have good interactions with the social workers who work with us, and I consider them as friends.

Along the same lines, five participants expressed a consistently positive view of France itself, praising the country's inclusive policies, education system, and respect for religious and cultural freedom. Jamshid highlighted France's long-standing role as a host country for refugees, noting, "France is home to many immigrants, for example, there were already Black refugees, and Afghan refugees have also been coming since 2010." Similarly, Zahra emphasized inclusivity and acceptance stating, "France is a good country because it accepts refugees… In France, anyone can live with any identity that they want, and no one interferes… The education system is good in general and even for the refugees." Maryam also stressed her positive assessment of France, focusing on education and state support:

> The French government accepted all migrants… It's an excellent place for refugees… The education and upbringing system in France is excellent… The government and social services provide numerous facilities, and there is no discrimination among them. Health insurance covers everything, and it's all free.

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Lexical validation from IRaMuTeQ supported this sub-theme through Class 3 consisting of 53 text segments, (11.06%), Class 4 with 85 text segments (17.75%), and Class 6 with 92 text segments (19.21%). Representative terms included "good" (n = 18, χ^2 = 32.88, p < .001), "attitude" (n = 4, χ^2 = 32.42, p < .001), "respect" (n = 6, χ^2 = 28.82, p < .001), "language" (n = 27, χ^2 = 40.33, p < .001), "support" (n = 12, χ^2 = 29.99, p < .001), and "receive" (n = 16, χ^2 = 69.63, p < .001) highlighting how participants evaluated their experiences both socially and institutionally.

Consistent with these lexical patterns, the analysis identified two distinct classes (Class 3 and Class 6), which were interpreted together under the sub-theme Attitude toward Host Society. The distinction reflects two complementary aspects of the same experience rather than separate analytical categories. Class 3 (Attitude toward Host A) captured participants' general perceptions of French people and society, focusing on openness, respect, and occasional experiences of distance or discrimination. Class 6 (Attitude toward Host B) represented more concrete experiences of support and assistance from individuals, organizations, and institutions that shaped feelings of welcome and belonging. Together, these two classes show how participants' attitudes toward the host society were formed both through general social evaluations and through direct encounters of help and inclusion. This distinction emerged from the lexical data rather than from an intentional analytical separation.

Taken together, these findings illustrate the nuanced and often ambivalent nature of participants' perceptions of life in France. Many recognized kindnesses in their daily interactions and support from institutions, yet simultaneously described moments of emotional distance, cultural tension, or unfair treatment. This complexity did not indicate rejection but rather a process of weighing and reconciling differing realities. For some, positive experiences built trust and belonging. For others, unresolved contradictions made full acceptance difficult.

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Ultimately, this sub-theme illustrates that integration is not simply about being received, it is about how that reception is felt, interpreted, and lived.

Sub-theme (iii). Acculturation. Acculturation preferences reveal how Afghan refugees see other Afghans integrating in France society, how they feel that they belong and how they experience cultural practices in French society. Participants expressed how they navigate the complex balance between preserving their cultural heritage and adapting to the norms of the host society. These preferences unfolded across three recurring patterns in the data: perceptions of social separation within the Afghan community, observations of efforts toward integration, and challenges related to maintaining Afghan cultural practices while engaging with French culture.

Thirteen participants shared mixed views on whether they see other Afghans in France as integrating community into the host society or remaining socially separate community. Many emphasized that the Afghan community tended to be inward-looking, citing factors such as cultural comfort, language barriers, and reliance on trusted networks. At the same time, some noted that others within the community were making active efforts to integrate, through language learning, employment, and participation in broader social life. Jamshid described this division as a clear contrast between two groups:

> One group of Afghans wants to adapt to French society and integrate. These people are more enlightened and try to establish connections with people here … The second group still has the same mindset they had in Afghanistan, and they don't want to adapt to French society…

Anwar also noted that "Afghans prefer to keep to themselves and do everything with their own community or other refugee communities…there might also be cultural differences contributing to this cultural and relationship distance."

Nimat highlighted uneven adaptation:

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Some Afghans quickly adapt and find themselves in the new community, while others have been here for almost 10 years but haven't changed at all, not even their language… this is mainly because some Afghan people need to work and support their families… some have limited knowledge…some Afghans … want to remain the way they were.

Bahar similarly observed:

I did not see them at all as integrated. That could be due to the reason …tend to stay with their own people…they also need a security in their network. Because of money issues. Because of housing. So, they can only depend on their own people.

Narratives in this section highlight how participants describe their sense of belonging as part of their integration experience. For nine participants, belonging was tied to feelings of being accepted and welcomed by French society, often supported by legal recognition, interpersonal relationships, and family presence. Some expressed an immediate sense of home, while others saw belonging as a gradual process influenced by language acquisition and social interactions. Zahra described this sense of recognition, saying, "It makes me very happy to feel accepted. they have given me permanent residence; hence."

Amina also linked belonging to family proximity, though she emphasized that language still shaped her sense of integration:

Most importantly, my parents also live in the same city …and I can see them whenever I want. France was not our main destination, but I wanted to be with my parents. I feel a sense of integration. I may gradually feel the belonging. I don't know the language …If I learn it, maybe I'll feel more a part of the community

Jamil further highlighted the importance of legal recognition in creating belonging, stating, "I work here, and I am recognized as a refugee. This makes integration into society much easier."

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However, three other participants expressed emotional distance and feelings of exclusion, even when formally integrated. These sentiments were often linked to cultural differences, social attitudes, or a persistent sense of being seen as "other." Bahar described this dissonance:

> The more you get into the French society the more you would realize that you are always going to be an outsider. Even if you would try to have really close friends the difference is always so vital in the friendships.

> Basit referred to cultural gaps, saying, "Our family system is a traditional system, but it is different here." Similarly, Anwar reflected on how introductions marked him as foreign, "When I attend French gatherings, the first question they ask is where I came from and which country I am from."

These reflections illustrate the varied and nuanced ways Afghan participants experienced belonging and inclusion in French society. For some, especially those with family reunification, legal status, or steady employment, integration was linked with feeling accepted, which nurtured a gradual or immediate sense of home. In contrast, others described a persistent sense of being on the margins even when legally recognized, often shaped by cultural differences, subtle social boundaries, and being reminded of their outsider status.

This tension between formal integration and felt exclusion highlights that belonging is not only structural but also deeply relational and emotional, depending on both external validation and internal connection.

Twelve participants emphasized the value of preserving Afghan traditions, particularly through celebrations such as Eid and other cultural festivals. These practices were viewed as meaningful anchors to their pre-migration identity and a way of passing cultural knowledge to the next generation. Cultural rituals, religious observance, and language use were also described

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as mechanisms for maintaining connection to their heritage. Jamshid reflected on this balance between preserving heritage and adapting to the host culture:

> I am 50% interested in adopting them, and 50% interested in preserving my own culture. All what they do as French people I cannot do everything the same… We can introduce Afghan culture to French people… When we say we are Afghan, it might trigger fear in the other person.

Anwar also described the difficulty of navigating between Afghan and French identities:

> I might not feel entirely comfortable in French gatherings. I do not usually go to French parties… I try to maintain my Afghan identity, but when I live in France, I must try to integrate into French society… it's nearly impossible to be exactly like a French person… Eid has become somewhat indifferent to me because I live in a country where Eid is not given much importance.

Aziz emphasized the importance of passing traditions on to his children while still engaging with French customs:

> I feel 100% comfortable celebrating Afghan festivals and practicing Afghan customs in France… We also celebrate Eids. We celebrate both French and our own country's traditions here. Living in France, I never thought of giving up on my Afghan identity and assimilating completely into being French. I strive to pass on our Afghan culture to my children… We have to teach them…

Bahar, however, expressed a more detached perspective, describing both loss and limitation in her cultural practice:

> For me the goal isn't to integrate 100% and only then I will be accepted… It's to understand those differences and accept them… You do your part to be respectful of the host country culture… I do not celebrate Afghan festivals…I don't have… community to celebrate with. But if there was a place or an occasion to go to! For sure why not but

I haven't had it. In my opinion a huge part of your identity that is your own national passport has been taken away from you…. But not a full access has been granted to the host society either.

In contrast, two participants described limited participation in cultural traditions, often due to personal detachment, absence of a local community, or shifting priorities. Even so, all participants, regardless of level of engagement, expressed some degree of openness toward French culture. For some, this openness was expressed through social interaction or celebration of local customs; for others, it was constrained by cultural distance or a sense of not fully belonging.

Several tried to keep their culture alive after moving to France. They did this by celebrating holidays, practicing religion, and speaking their language. This helped them stay connected to their past and share it with their children. Some managed to mix both cultures by keeping Afghan traditions while also joining in French life. Most were open to French culture, even if they didn't always feel accepted. In the end, their cultural identity was shaped by both their memories and their new lives in France.

Lexical validation from IRaMuTeQ supported this sub-theme through Class 1, which consisted of 92 text segments (19.21%), and Class 5 with 68 text segments (14.2%). hese two classes emerged directly from the analysis as distinct lexical patterns associated with the theme of Acculturation. They emphasized ritual continuity and symbolic identity preservation. High-frequency terms such as "integrate" (n = 21, χ^2 = 56.32, $p < .001$), "Afghan" (n = 39, χ^2 = 43.81, $p < .001$), "society" (n = 30, χ^2 = 37.74, $p < .001$), and "French" (n = 52, χ^2 = 31.01, $p < .001$), highlighted a strong statistical link to participants' reflections on cultural engagement with the host society. Other key terms like "celebrate" (n = 26, χ^2 = 137.99, $p < .001$), "eid" (n = 13, χ^2 = 80.77, $p < .001$), "festival" (n = 12, χ^2 = 74.39, $p < .001$), and "holiday" (n = 8, χ^2 = 49.17, $p < .001$.), captured symbolic practices used to preserve a sense of self.

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Consistent with these lexical patterns, the two classes revealed complementary dimensions of how Afghan participants experienced acculturation and negotiated belonging in France. Class 5 (Acculturation A) reflected participants' emphasis on cultural continuity, including the preservation of Afghan traditions, religious practices, and shared celebrations that reinforced a sense of identity and connection to home. Class 1 (Acculturation B) focused on adaptation and participation in the host society, where learning the language, engaging with French norms, and forming social relationships were viewed as important pathways to integration. Together, these classes highlight the dual nature of acculturation, where cultural maintenance and adaptation interact in complex ways within participants' lived experiences.

Although separated statistically, the two classes were interpreted together under the sub-theme Acculturation as interrelated expressions of the same adaptive process. Participants' accounts indicated varying degrees of both cultural preservation and adaptation to French society, sometimes overlapping and at other times appearing in tension. The distinction was therefore treated as data-driven rather than conceptual, with both classes collectively illustrating acculturation as a unified experience shaped by processes of cultural continuity and social adjustment.

Taken together, this sub-theme shows that Afghan refugees in France experience acculturation as a complex and personal journey. While some focused on learning the language, working, and feeling accepted, others still felt distant or left out. Many tried to stay connected to their culture through traditions, religion, and community ties, which helped them feel grounded. A few spoke about social identity, showing how they balanced being Afghan and adapting to French life.

Sub theme (iv) Social identity. In the section on acculturation, ten participants talked about how they were still shaping, maintaining, or changing their social identity. Because of this, we included social identity as a new sub-theme. However, the data on this was limited, as

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it was not explored through a dedicated section or direct question in the interviews. For the same reason, and given the overall focus of the acculturation question, social identity did not emerge as a separate class in the IRaMuTeQ analysis. Therefore, we kept it under acculturation but made it clear that the following stories specifically relate to social identity.

Five participants said they still celebrated Eid, Nowruz, or prayed with others from their religious or cultural background, which helped them feel close to their roots. Three said they couldn't take part in these traditions or preferred to distance themselves from Afghans because they didn't have family in France or lacked community support. The other two shared more profound struggles with identity change, including converting to a new religion or seeking friendships mainly with Europeans rather than Afghans. Aziz explained this briefly, noting, "My colleagues we go to the mosque and perform our prayers."

Maryam also described how collective celebrations reinforced her sense of belonging:

I was mostly with Ukrainians for the past 7 to 6 months, so I haven't had much contact with Afghans here in France. We are honored by Aqa Khan (spiritual leader of the Shia Ismaili Muslims) …there are 4 places where Ismailis, Indians, and Pakistanis all come together and celebrate on every Eid and Nowruz…we enjoy celebrating them.

In contrast, Raza emphasized distance from Afghans, saying, "...I don't have much contact with them (Afghans)... I choose those who have lived in Europe and share similar behavior with me." Nimat also described his disconnection, linking it to a change in faith, "I don't have much connection with Afghans here... I don't celebrate those events anymore because I converted to Christianity in 2015... some close friends I had before all distanced themselves from me when I converted."

These reflections highlighted how social identity is shaped not only by cultural maintenance but also by processes of change and disconnection. This variety of experiences shows that social identity is not fixed; it is reshaped through access to community, personal

beliefs, and the challenges of fitting into a new culture while holding on to or redefining one's roots. While some participants managed to stay connected through traditions and group celebrations, others felt cut off due to isolation or lack of support, and a few actively redefined their identity by converting to a new religion or aligning more closely with European ways of life. Overall, these stories remind us that maintaining or developing social identity after forced migration is a personal and ongoing journey, influenced by both internal choices and external conditions.

In addition to adjusting socially and culturally, several participants also spoke about the personal strategies they used to cope with the difficulties of migration. Ten participants described how they managed emotional and psychological stress through different means. These included spiritual practices, goal setting, and even humor. For many, faith in God provided strength and comfort. Others found motivation in planning for the future or tried to reframe their challenges in a more positive light, as Aziz explained, "You must remain hopeful, have faith in God, and make efforts." Arezu also emphasized the importance of planning, noting, "One overcoming strategy due to perils that I faced is having goals and plans. I have my own goals and plans."

Jamil combined spirituality with resilience, saying, "I used the hardships of migration as a lesson… I always prayed to God." However, Bahar described a different approach, explaining, "I have learned my mechanism has been humor…That is the way I deal with my problems by developing a sense of humor about it."

These personal coping strategies were part of how individuals adapted to life in France, showing that acculturation is not only about learning a new culture but also about building inner strength during the process.

This sub-theme showed how Afghan participants adjusted to life in France in different ways. Some said the Afghan community mostly stayed among themselves, while others noticed

efforts to take part in French society through work, language, or social life. Feeling welcome was often linked to having legal papers, family nearby, or good social connections, though a few still felt excluded. Most participants tried to keep their cultural traditions, such as celebrating festivals or teaching their children about Afghan customs, while also being open to French ways. Some also shared how they coped with stress through faith, humour, or personal goals, which helped them manage challenges after migration.

Overall, Theme 3 showed that integration was not just about learning the language or getting legal status. It was also about how Afghan refugees felt, adapted, and stayed connected to who they were. Their emotional wellbeing played a big part as many felt happy to be safe or reunited with family, but still struggled with sadness, loss, or worry about the future. Their attitudes toward French society were mixed: they appreciated kindness and support but also noticed cultural differences and moments of exclusion. Some joined French life more easily, while others felt like outsiders. In responding to these challenges, participants adopted different ways of managing stress and maintaining balance. They relied on prayer, humor, or personal goals as means of emotional regulation and resilience. In the end, this theme shows that integration is both a social and emotional journey, shaped by culture, relationships, and how welcome or connected someone feels in their new life.

Theme 4: Integration outcomes

This theme captured Afghan refugees' experiences with structural domains that represent tangible outcomes of the integration process in France, including education, employment, housing, public services, and mental health support. These sub-themes reflect the practical, material dimensions of integration, offering insight into how systemic structures shape everyday life for displaced individuals. While many participants expressed appreciation for legal protection and basic opportunities, their accounts also revealed persistent struggles, ranging from administrative barriers to unmet social and psychological needs.

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The theme was organized into five sub-themes:

(i)   Access to Education

(ii)   Employment Conditions

(iii)   Accommodation

(iv)   Access to Public Services and Support,

(v)   Access to Mental Health Support.

Together, these sub-themes highlighted the layered and often inconsistent nature of settlement experiences, showing how integration is not simply a matter of physical relocation but a multifaceted and ongoing challenge involving social systems and personal adaptation.

Lexical analysis using IRaMuTeQ supported the internal coherence of this theme. The thematic corpus included 110 text segments, of which 90 were successfully classified, resulting in a segment loss of 18.2%. According to Pélissier (2016), this classification rate reflects a sufficiently coherent discourse structure. The Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) identified five distinct lexical classes (see Figure 4.5), corresponding closely to the five sub-themes and capturing both structural engagement and subjective interpretation.

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Figure 4.5

Dendrogram of Lexical Classes for the Theme Integration Outcomes
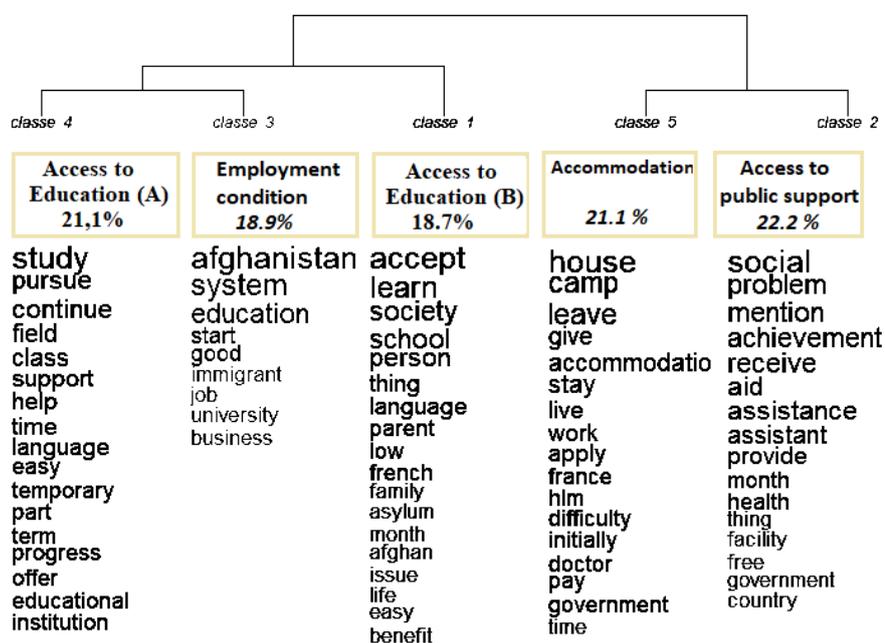
Note. Percentages show the share of text segments grouped into each lexical class during Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) in IRaMuTeQ. Each class reflects a distinct theme, with keywords representing the most significant terms. For example, Access to public support accounts for 22.2% of the classified segments. The two Education classes (A and B) reflect related aspects of participants' educational experiences. Class A focused on access to formal education and training, including university study, vocational courses, and language programs, while Class B emphasized language learning and early integration, shaped by asylum status and social acceptance. Although identified separately in the analysis, both were interpreted together as interconnected dimensions of educational inclusion.

Sub-theme (i). Access to education. Participants had diverse experiences with the French education system. Eight participants accessed opportunities such as French language classes, vocational training, or university programs, often supported through scholarships or special refugee schemes. These individuals described education as a gateway to integration and personal development. However, five others shared that they faced serious barriers to accessing education, especially due to their age, missing support, or rigid administrative systems. Several participants observed that younger refugees had better access, while older adults were often overlooked or lacked tailored support. In line with this Aziz emphasized both opportunities and limitations, particularly for older refugees:

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Education and facilities are available, and it's the best opportunity for Afghan refugees under the age of 18 … I have learned more about my profession, farming … Beyond the age of 35 is the time when a refugee needs a lot of help in terms of pursuing education, but unfortunately, the French government does not provide support. Hence, it is difficult for me to resume my studies.

Zahra also described barriers to access, explaining, "I have not yet been provided any French language classes by the government. OFFI hasn't yet offered me civic-law courses or language classes, which are mandatory for asylum seekers and refugees." By contrast, Arezu highlighted positive experiences, saying, "Fortunately, I have received the equivalent of my educational documents… in the *Diu Passerelle* program at *Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne*, where I learned the French language. The Department of Languages provided really good theories."

Other participants expressed frustration due to personal and linguistic barriers. Jamil shared, "since I never studied in Afghanistan and don't know any Latin languages, studying here is not useful for me, and it's a challenge because I don't understand the language."

Across the accounts, the ability to speak French was both a pathway and a challenge. Participants who had access to language learning were more likely to feel confident navigating the system. For others, limited or no language support made it hard to access even the basic steps of formal education. Socioeconomic pressures also influenced educational choices. For many adults, the need to work or support their families made studying a lower priority or even impossible. Some mentioned delays or failures in government provision of required courses, which made their progress even more difficult.

Lexical validation from IRaMuTeQ reinforced this sub-theme through Class 4 consisting of 19 text segments (21.11%), and Class 1 with 15 text segments (16.67%), including key terms such as "study" ($\chi^2 = 27.73$, $p < .001$), "pursue" ($\chi^2 = 15.64$, $p < .001$), "language"

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($\chi^2 = 6.85$, $p = .009$), "help" ($\chi^2 = 7.12$, $p = .008$), "accept" ($\chi^2 = 32.14$, $p < .001$), "learn" ($\chi^2 = 29.43$, $p < .001$), and "school" ($\chi^2 = 20.57$, $p < .001$).

While the lexical analysis identified two distinct classes (Class 4 and Class 1), both were interpreted together under the sub-theme Access to Education. Class 4 (Access to Education A) reflected participants' engagement in formal learning and vocational opportunities, alongside institutional and administrative barriers. In contrast, Class 1 (Access to Education B) captured experiences related to language learning, early adaptation, and the role of social acceptance in educational access. Although these classes were statistically distinct, participants' accounts often intertwined both aspects, showing that language proficiency, institutional support, and personal motivation were deeply interconnected in shaping educational inclusion.

Overall, the findings suggest that while some participants found meaningful educational pathways in France, many others struggled due to administrative limitations, age-based exclusion, or lack of adequate support. Language stood out as a central factor that determined whether education became an opportunity for empowerment or remained a source of frustration and exclusion.

Sub-theme(ii). Employment condition. Participants shared a wide range of experiences related to employment, shaped by unstable work conditions and challenges navigating the French labor market. Only four participants were currently employed, mostly in short-term or low-skilled jobs that did not reflect their qualifications or previous experience. Ten others were not working, and among them, four were actively searching, involved in internships, or making future plans. This mix of employment and unemployment revealed how difficult it was for many to find stable and meaningful work.

Jamshid described his work history in France as inconsistent, noting, "I have done various jobs here, such as plumbing and working in a carrefour market. But now I am waiting

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for a job in Normandy." Anwar emphasized how social connections often determined employment prospects:

> If you have networks here, your work gets done sooner, or you enter the workforce more quickly. However, if you lack networks and don't know anybody, it's a problem. It means you need an intermediary to enter the job market quickly…I have a job

Arezu, who was completing an internship, reflected on the gap between her education and her opportunities in France:

> Currently, I am doing an internship at the *Fontenay City Hall*. I am thinking about how to enter the job market and find work. My employment status is not according to my educational experiences…If I want to get the job, I have to study more even though I have a master degree.

Building on this theme of mismatch between qualifications and available work, Zaki shared that although he had found employment, the position was very different from his prior experience:

> It's a governmental company. The job I have now presents a new challenge. What I'm doing here is very different from what I used to do, and if I want to find my desired job, I'll have to undergo a training period.

> Across the interviews, limited access to professional networks, unfamiliarity with the job search process, and language difficulties were seen as major obstacles. Some participants with higher education found that their degrees were not easily transferable or valued in France. Others had to accept jobs far below their skill level to survive. The gap between qualifications and available opportunities led many to feel disconnected from the professional life they had before migration.

> Lexical analysis from IRaMuTeQ provided partial validation through Class 3 including 17 text segments (18.89%), with key terms such as "Afghanistan" ($\chi^2 = 32.59$, $p < .001$),

"system" ($\chi^2 = 26.82$, $p < .001$), and "education" ($\chi^2 = 19.74$, $p < .001$). This suggests that employment narratives were often rooted in comparisons between past and present systems, underscoring the challenges of adapting to a new labor market.

These findings highlight how employment was a critical but often frustrating part of the integration journey. While a few participants made progress, most faced a complex mix of bureaucratic, linguistic, and social barriers that kept them from achieving economic stability or career continuity.

Sub-theme(iii): Accommodation. Participants described a variety of housing situations, ranging from refugee camps, host families, and shared spaces to temporary accommodations such as hotels or student residences. Eight participants reported living in unstable or inadequate housing, including camps, overcrowded spaces, or living with friends or strangers due to a lack of alternatives. Some described being moved between locations, staying in containers, or facing poor conditions in shared environments.

Three participants were in transitional or institutional housing, such as student residences, temporary low-cost housing, or hotels provided by support services. These arrangements were usually described as short-term or pending a more permanent solution.

Three participants reported more stable living conditions through access to HLM (social housing) or family housing, though their accounts also included mention of administrative steps and earlier periods in refugee shelters.

Jamshid highlighted this instability, explaining, "It's been a long time since I didn't have my own home, and now I'm living with a friend and paying rent. Before receiving the asylum response, they gave me accommodation in Paris in a refugee camp." Aziz also described moving from a camp to more stable housing, noting, "Initially, I was in the refugee camp …I was working, they provided me with an HLM house." Zahra, however, continued to struggle with housing insecurity:

I have a lot of difficulties with housing. It's challenging to find a good house here. Though my husband came in 2019, the government has not given us a house, and we are staying in a camp; hence, we have difficulties with housing.

Lexical validation from IRaMuTeQ affirmed this sub-theme through Class 5 consisting of 19 text segments (21.11%). Prominent terms like "house" ($\chi^2 = 26.52$, $p < .001$), "camp" ($\chi^2 = 19.78$, $p < .001$), and "accommodation" ($\chi^2 = 11.6$, $p = .001$) reflected the centrality of material housing conditions in participants' integration journeys.

Overall, housing was a source of instability for many. While a few participants eventually reached more secure arrangements, the majority described a housing path marked by uncertainty, temporary setups, and ongoing difficulty in finding a permanent home.

Sub-theme(iv): Access to public service and public support. Access to social support and public services varied significantly across participants. Six participants reported receiving support such as financial aid, health insurance, or assistance from social workers and institutions like the *Caisses d'Allocations Familiales* (CAF), particularly once they had legal refugee status. Anwar reflected positively on this experience, noting, "In France, the French government provided everything. After three months, my asylum situation progressed, and they provided a place for me…and they also addressed my health issues." Basit described similar support in greater detail:

There are lots, for example, there is health insurance, and any problem I had, my social assistant cooperated with me…even if you don't know the language, just telling your problem to the social assistant is enough; later, they collaborate or provide a translator to solve the problem.

At the same time, five participants, reported receiving little to no support, despite being legally recognised or still in the asylum process. These accounts often pointed to delays, procedural barriers, or eligibility issues. Some explained that they were working and therefore not entitled

to aid, while others were still waiting on paperwork or legal status. Aziz explained how employment made him ineligible for support:

> Until now, I haven't received any social assistance, like CAF (RSA) or housing allowance. The reason I did not get the help was because I was working and earning enough. I didn't pay much attention because I had a good income, and I wasn't entitled to any assistance due to my earnings.

Similarly, Nimat described depending on non-governmental organizations while waiting for legal recognition:

> During this time, I found a Christian organization for support … participating in some activities organized by this organization. They didn't provide me with the social rights I deserved, and they still didn't give me a work permit, saying that I was Dublin and had to wait for 6 months to receive the work permit.

> Two participants relied mostly on religious organizations or NGOs instead of the state. Their support included access to activities, practical help, and sometimes emotional relief. One participant did not mention receiving or not receiving any form of support.

> These accounts reflect how access to public services varied based on legal status, employment, and system navigation. While some described clear and helpful pathways, others experienced gaps in support, leaving them to depend on non-government sources or cope without assistance.

> Lexical validation from IRaMuTeQ supported this sub-theme through Class 2 with 20 text segments (22.22%). Frequent terms like "social" ($\chi^2 = 29.9$, $p < .001$), "receive" ($\chi^2 = 17.7$, $p < .001$), and "aid" ($\chi^2 = 14.65$, $p < .001$) captured how formal support systems were central to participants' ability to navigate resettlement.

> Across the five sub-themes, participants described uneven access to essential services and structural resources that shaped their integration journeys in France. While some were able

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to benefit from education, employment, housing, and public support, many encountered persistent challenges including legal restrictions, bureaucratic delays, lack of tailored support, or language barriers. These difficulties were especially evident among older adults, those without legal status, or those with limited networks. Access to mental health care appeared particularly limited, often overshadowed by more immediate needs like housing and paperwork. Taken together, it appeared that integration was not only about willingness or resilience but also closely tied to the practical realities of navigating complex systems with varying levels of support.

Sub-theme(v): Access to mental health support. Participants shared a wide range of experiences and perspectives on mental health care. Only one participant described receiving psychological help and noted gradual improvement after speaking with a counsellor. Raza reflected on this experience, saying, "Later, I talked to a psychologist, and gradually, things got better, as I got used to it."

In contrast, three others said they had not received any mental health services, usually due to barriers such as lack of availability, long waiting lists, or language difficulties. Jamil highlighted both systemic neglect and the way practical priorities overshadowed emotional needs:

No, I didn't ask for a psychologist. I also see many other refugees struggling with depression, but it seems mental health is not a priority in the refugee system. The refugees and the assistants only focus on paperwork and housing. I also think that when you have your papers and a place to live, you will feel more comfortable mentally.

Similarly, Basit acknowledged the existence of refugee therapy services but emphasized delays, noting, "Yes, I know, there are some organizations that offer therapy for refugees, but they are overwhelmed. You have to wait for months before getting an appointment."

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Additionally, six participants did not seek support at all. Some felt uneasy about speaking to a professional, while others pointed to cultural stigma or the belief that emotional distress did not justify therapy. For many, mental health concerns were not a priority compared to more pressing challenges like housing, legal papers, or financial survival. Aziz illustrated this reluctance, stating, "Even if there was help (mental health support), I don't know if I would feel comfortable asking for it."

Mental health did not appear as a distinct lexical class in the IRaMuTeQ analysis. This is likely because it was explored through brief follow-up questions rather than as a core interview topic. Participants' responses were often short and emotionally cautious, limiting the lexical richness needed for thematic classification. This suggests both the sensitive nature of the topic and the structural marginality of mental health in refugee narratives.

To summarize, the four main themes (perceived forcedness and migration perils, psychological mediators, integration-related psychological responses, and integration outcomes) show that the migration journeys of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers were long and complex processes shaped by many layers of hardship and adaptation. From being compelled to leave Afghanistan, through the dangers of the journey, to the struggles of starting over in France, participants' stories revealed how closely connected the psychological, social, and practical sides of migration are. Figure 4.6 presents the thematic map, which synthesizes the findings by summarizing the coding system and showing the relationships between antecedent experiences, mediating processes, and integration related outcomes.

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Figure 4.6

Thematic Map Developed Using Braun and Clarke's (2021) Approach to Thematic Analysis

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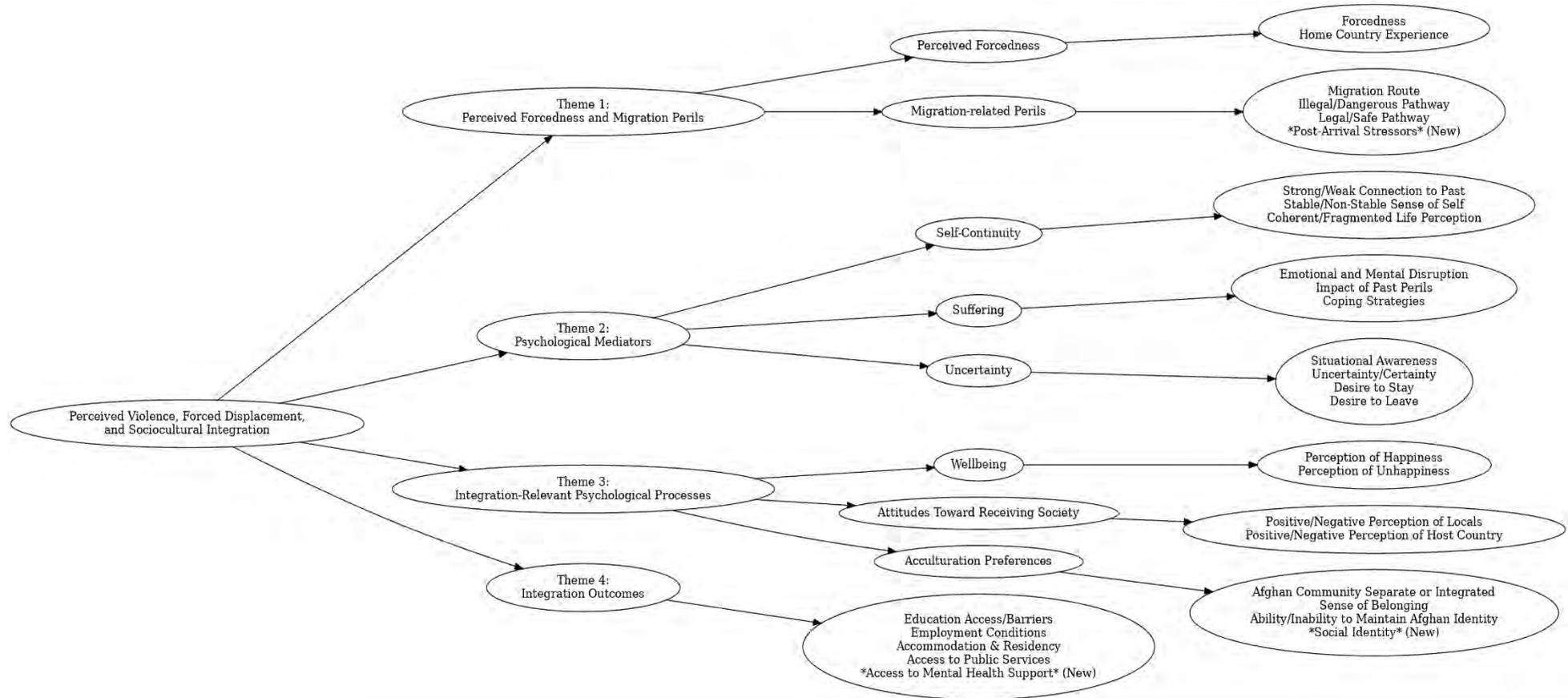
Discussion

This section presents the findings of the qualitative phase in relation to the three central research questions and the theoretical frameworks that guided the analysis. It focuses on: (1) how Afghan refugees experience the process of sociocultural integration and how this relates to their overall wellbeing; (2) how refugees' perception of being forcibly displaced, together with their experiences of violence and danger, shaped their psychological adjustment and their capacity to integrate structurally into French society; and (3) the role of self-continuity in shaping both integration outcomes and psychological wellbeing after resettlement.

The discussion is guided by the Psychological Antecedents of Refugee Integration (PARI) model (Echterhoff et al., 2020), the self-continuity perspective (Sedikides, 2023), and the Social Identity Model of Traumatic Identity Change (SIMTIC) theory (Muldoon et al., 2020). It views the emerging themes not as separate results but as connected elements that together explain how Afghan refugees adapt, find meaning, and rebuild their sense of identity in a new cultural environment.

Theme 1: Perceived Forcedness and Related Perils (Pre-migration and Early Post-arrival)

This theme showed that perceived forcedness was central to participants' experiences. Most participants described leaving Afghanistan as involuntary. Thirteen out of fourteen gave forcedness the highest possible scores, citing threats, persecution, insecurity, education bans, and collapse of services. One participant rated forcedness as moderate due to economic pressures. These accounts were consistently signaled through terms such as "leave," "force," "due," and "security."

Migration-related perils were also widespread. Ten of fourteen travelled via irregular routes involving illegal border crossings, long foot journeys, hiding in trucks, detention, and maritime risks. Reports included violence at borders and forced fingerprinting. Four used more formal routes but still faced distress from chaotic evacuations, discrimination in transit, and

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prolonged uncertainty. These experiences were echoed in language marked by terms such as "water," "boat," "route," "Turkey," and "smuggle."

Post-arrival stressors in France were another major source of difficulty. Thirteen of fourteen reported serious difficulties after arrival, including long asylum procedures (often tied to Dublin), housing precarity, financial insecurity, and language barriers. Several described sleeping in public spaces or shelters and taking informal work to survive. These stressors were reflected in expressions such as "job," "work," "money," "French," and "education."

Theme 2: Psychological Mediators (Self-continuity, Suffering, Uncertainty)

Psychological Mediators, highlighted the inner processes linking forced migration with adaptation outcomes. Self-continuity, as a psychological mediator under this theme, varied across participants: five reported strong continuity, six indicated weaker links, and two placed themselves at a moderate level. One participant did not score. Continuity was often expressed through culture, language, food, and memories, while disconnection reflected forced migration disruptions and adaptation to new contexts. Eleven participants also described their lives as coherent narratives, while three viewed their experiences as fragmented or disjointed. These dynamics were often expressed through words such as "past," "person," "present," "change," "friend," "memory," "mother," "remind," and "home."

Suffering also functioned as a psychological mediator within this theme. Eleven participants described significant emotional and psychological suffering linked to forced migration and resettlement. This included grief, fear, helplessness, identity loss, and trauma related to family separation, asylum rejection, or violence. Suffering persisted into daily life, but ten participants also reported using coping strategies such as prayer, humor, positive thinking, and goal-setting to manage distress and maintain resilience. These experiences were marked by terms such as "migration," "peril," "journey," "encounter," "remember," "impact," and "hardship."

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Uncertainty likewise featured strongly as a psychological mediator. Twelve participants reported uncertainty about their future, shaped by legal insecurity, family separation, and unclear life prospects. some mentioned doubts about remaining in France long-term. At the same time, these participants beside uncertainty about future reported certainty in present education, work, and desire to remain in France, reflecting a coexistence of insecurity and goal-oriented clarity. These tensions were articulated in terms such as "face," "challenge," "year," "help," "goal," and "refugee."

Theme 3: Integration-Relevant Psychological Processes (Wellbeing, Attitudes, Identity, Coping)

The theme integration-relevant psychological processes, emphasized how emotional wellbeing, attitudes, identity, and coping influenced adjustment. Wellbeing appeared ambivalent: most participants described mixed feelings: they felt happy due to safety, freedom, or family reunification, yet still worried about separation, the future, or emotional strain. These ambivalent accounts were reflected in nine narratives. Another five participants spoke only of happiness, citing security, family presence, improved conditions, or emotional stability. The tension between positive adjustment and lingering concerns was reflected in terms such as "happy," "concern," "future," and "life."

Attitudes toward the host society varied widely. Participants expressed a wide range of views toward French people and institutions. Eight reported dual attitudes toward everyday encounters, describing kindness and support alongside cultural misunderstanding, subtle discrimination, or bureaucratic frustration. Nine emphasized both appreciation and criticism of France's systems, recognizing access to services but noting delays or inequalities. Six recalled only positive experiences with French people, while five described a consistently positive view of France's structures and freedoms, focusing on safety, democracy, and opportunities. These

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mixed evaluations were often captured in terms such as "good," "attitude," "respect," "language," "support," and "receive."

Acculturation was another complex dimension of psychological response. Thirteen participants offered mixed views on Afghan integration vs. social separation; most emphasized a largely self-contained community, while some noted clear integration efforts (language, work, participation). Belonging was reported by nine (acceptance, legal status, relationships, family presence), while three described feeling like outsiders. twelve emphasized maintaining Afghan identity via festivals/traditions and transmitting them to children; two reported limited participation. Barriers to identity expression included family separation, limited community, lack of official holidays, small networks, cultural stigma, and perceived pressure to conform. The language used to describe these dynamics often revolved around "integrate," "Afghan," "society," "French," "celebrate," "Eid," "festival," and "holiday."

Social identity also evolved across contexts. Overall, participants' accounts of social identity revealed three distinct patterns. Five participants sustained their Afghan identity by celebrating traditions such as Eid and Nowruz or practicing religion with others from similar backgrounds, which helped them feel rooted and connected. Three participants described being unable to take part in these practices, often due to lacking family or community ties in France, which led them to distance themselves from Afghan cultural life. Two participants reported more profound shifts in identity, either through religious conversion or by seeking stronger ties with Europeans rather than Afghans, leaving them more isolated from their heritage. These varied experiences highlight how social identity was actively negotiated in the integration process, shaped both by opportunities for cultural continuity and by circumstances that disrupted or transformed traditional identity ties.

Coping mechanisms further illustrated resilience and captured the other side of the psychological responses. Ten participants described strategies to manage ongoing emotional

strain: meditation, prayer, faith, forward-looking goals, humor, deliberate forgetting/avoiding distressing memories, and drawing on past roles/resilience (e.g., military background).

Theme 4: Integration Outcomes (Education, Work, Housing, Services, Mental Health)

This theme described how integration manifested in practical life areas. Access to education was uneven: eight participants accessed opportunities such as language courses, vocational training, or university programs, often supported by scholarships or integration initiatives. Five encountered barriers, including age limits, lack of institutional support, delayed courses, or economic pressures that forced them to prioritize work over study. Language was both a key pathway and a major obstacle. Education was seen as central to integration but unequally accessible depending on age, resources, and legal status. These dynamics were often expressed through terms such as "study," "pursue," "language," "help," "accept," "learn," and "school."

Employment conditions were similarly constrained. Four participants were working, mainly in low-skilled or temporary jobs unrelated to their qualifications. Ten were unemployed, with four actively seeking work or engaged in internships. Barriers included weak networks, limited French proficiency, and non-recognition of prior qualifications. Employment was described as precarious, survival-oriented, and often mismatched with aspirations, though some pursued entrepreneurship or retraining. These accounts were often framed in terms such as "Afghanistan," "system," and "education," underscoring the tension between past experiences and present opportunities.

Accommodation remained unstable for most: eight participants reported unstable housing, such as camps, shared spaces, or overcrowded conditions. Three were in transitional housing like hotels or student residences. Three had more stable housing, including HLM or family accommodation, but usually after long delays. Housing instability, administrative barriers, and discrimination were common, often affecting well-being and autonomy.

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Participants frequently referred to conditions using terms such as "house," "camp," and "accommodation."

Access to public services and support also varied. Six participants received support like financial aid, health insurance, or social assistance once recognized as refugees. Five reported little or no support due to Dublin procedures, pending asylum cases, or lack of awareness. Two relied mainly on NGOs or religious organizations. Support was described as inconsistent, fragmented, and heavily dependent on legal status and local networks. These reflections were often signaled through words such as "social," "receive," and "aid."

Finally, access to mental health support was extremely limited. Only one participant reported receiving psychological help, while three noted barriers such as language or overwhelmed systems. Six did not seek support, citing stigma, mistrust, or the belief that distress was normal. Mental health was overshadowed by more immediate needs such as housing, legal papers, and financial stability, leaving psychological care marginal within integration structures.

Taken together, these four themes show that Afghan refugees' journeys of integration are shaped by many connected factors. Their past migration experiences, emotional responses, and the systems they enter in France all work together to affect their wellbeing and ability to rebuild their lives.

Connecting Forced Migration to Psychological Wellbeing (Path C)

This path links Theme 1, about forcedness and migration perils, with Theme 3, about psychological responses during integration. It speaks directly to the first research question by showing how Afghan refugees experience integration and how their emotional responses to displacement shape their wellbeing during this process.

Nearly all participants described their departure from Afghanistan as involuntary. Many had faced threats, violence, or political instability, which left a deep emotional impact. Even

after arriving in France, several still carried sadness, fear, or anxiety. Their stories confirm earlier findings showing that refugees often experience psychological stress long after gaining physical safety (Servan-Mori et al., 2014).

Some participants spoke about feeling emotionally stable, especially when they had support from family or the local community. Zaki, Amina, and Aziz shared that housing stability and social support improved their wellbeing. Others, like Bahar and Raza, continued to feel emotionally unsettled, mainly due to family separation or uncertainty about the future. These mixed feelings are also reflected in Salley's (2024) work, which highlights how the loss of social bonds affects refugees' wellbeing.

To cope with these challenges, many participants used strategies like prayer, staying hopeful, and setting personal goals. These approaches helped them manage their emotions and adapt to life in France. The importance of such coping methods is also shown in other studies, which emphasize how cultural and social practices help refugees build resilience (de Jong, 2022; Nguyễn-Nalpas, 2023; Salley, 2024).

One key part of the integration experience was social identity. Several participants said they felt disconnected from who they were before migrating, especially when they lost contact with their community or couldn't take part in cultural or religious traditions. Others found ways to stay connected, such as celebrating festivals or joining social gatherings. This sense of social identity continuity has been described as a protective factor following trauma (Muldoon et al., 2020) and has also been found to reduce distress and improve wellbeing (Panagiotopoulos et al., 2022; Panagiotopoulos & Pavlopoulos, 2023).

Participants also described different ways of adjusting to French society. Many tried to maintain their Afghan traditions while taking part in new routines. For example, Maryam, Aziz, and Basit celebrated Eid and Nowruz, taught their children cultural values, and kept using their native language. Others, like Jamil and Zahra, mentioned mixed feelings: they appreciated

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French values like freedom and education but still felt somewhat distant. These experiences illustrate the process of integration as described in Berry's (1997, 2005) acculturation framework, where individuals attempt to participate in the host society while preserving elements of their heritage culture. Consistent with this, recent evidence from Tohme et al. (2024) supports that maintaining cultural continuity alongside active engagement with the host community is associated with greater wellbeing and smoother sociocultural adjustment among refugees.

Some participants fully embraced both cultural identities. Jamil and Basit felt proud to be both Afghan and part of French society. Others struggled with disconnection, like Raza and Bahar, who found it hard to fully fit in. These cases highlight that integration is not one path, but many. It depends on personal experiences, available support, and how people make sense of their new life.

A few participants, such as Zahra and Raza, wanted to keep their traditions but felt unable to do so because of isolation or the absence of family support. Even so, they still found small ways, at least at times, to preserve their sense of identity through daily rituals, shared values, or meaningful memories. This finding is consistent with the work of Binder et al. (2025), who reported that young refugees often blend elements of their past and present identities to remain grounded during difficult transitions.

Overall, while everyone in the qualitative interviews experienced forced migration, their psychological responses and integration paths varied. Some felt welcomed and emotionally secure. Others struggled with disconnection and loneliness. This supports the PARI model's (Echterhoff et al., 2020) view that emotional reactions after displacement depend on how people process trauma and find support. When people were able to connect with others, keep parts of their identity, and find meaning in their journey, they were more likely to feel well and integrate successfully.

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Linking Psychological Responses with Practical Outcomes (Path D)

Another important connection in the PARI model is described in Path D, which links Theme 3 (psychological responses after migration) with Theme 4 (practical outcomes such as education, work, housing, and civic participation). This path addresses the second research question, which explores how emotional and mental reactions to forced displacement influence the ability of Afghan refugees to integrate into French society.

Participants' stories clearly showed that how they felt emotionally had a strong effect on their ability to move forward. For example, Jamshid went through a very difficult migration and later experienced emotional instability and homelessness. These challenges made it hard for him to access education or housing. But when he started using coping strategies like meditation and reflection, his motivation improved and he began reconnecting with society.

Aziz and Zaki also faced early emotional struggles due to violence and family separation. Over time, with the help of hope, faith, and social support, they started recovering emotionally. This made it easier for them to find jobs, settle in housing, and make plans for their education.

Some participants, however, remained emotionally overwhelmed. Raza shared that leaving Sweden left him feeling exhausted and unable to focus on education. Nimat, who was rejected multiple times in the asylum process, lost motivation and struggled to make plans for the future. These examples show how ongoing emotional distress can block progress in education, work, and other areas of life.

At the same time, others like Maryam, Rahman, and Anwar showed strong emotional resilience. Even after difficult experiences, they stayed hopeful, learned French, and worked toward stability. Their ability to keep going, even while struggling, helped them make positive steps in integration.

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The PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020) explains that psychological factors like motivation, coping, and emotional balance have a direct impact on structural outcomes. This is supported by Larios (2024), who found that people who can manage their emotions and stay motivated are better able to set goals, enter education, or seek work. On the other hand, emotional distress such as anxiety or depression can lead people to withdraw and avoid challenges (Brea Larios, 2024; Walther et al., 2021).

Across the qualitative interviews, participants described different psychological responses related to integration during traumatic situations. Some relied on coping strategies such as prayer, faith, or cultural practices. Others found strength in their communities, either by maintaining their social and cultural identity through Afghan networks or by developing a new sense of identity through friendships with local people. These connections helped them access housing, learn the language, and feel emotionally supported (de Jong, 2022; Nguyễn-Nalpas, 2023; Salley, 2024).

In short, the findings show that emotional recovery often came before practical progress. When participants were able to deal with their emotions, they were more ready to engage with school, work, or housing. Emotional wellbeing played a key role in helping them rebuild their lives in France.

The Mediating Role of Self-Continuity (Path M1)

The other relationship is referred to as Path M1. This pathway addresses the third research question by examining how experiences of forcedness and migration perils (Theme 1) affect Afghan refugees' psychological wellbeing (Theme 3) and integration outcomes (Theme 4) through the mediating role of self-continuity (Theme 2). The data show that participants' ability to maintain or reconstruct a coherent sense of self played a key role in how they coped with displacement and adapted to life in France.

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Their narratives reveal distinct ways in which self-continuity shaped psychological outcomes. In the following section, I outline patterns based on the strength and development of self-continuity over time. These patterns range from deeply fractured identities to gradually reconstructed and sustained forms of continuity, reflecting varying capacities for psychological adaptation. To explore these pathways, I begin with participants whose sense of identity was most fractured by their migration experience.

Fragmented Self-Continuity and Psychological Disconnection

Nimat and Raza experienced highly forced journeys, encountered serious perils, and traveled under difficult conditions. These experiences disrupted their connection to their pre-migration identity. As a result, they viewed their lives as fragmented and lacked a coherent narrative. This break in personal continuity left them feeling emotionally unanchored. It played a central role in shaping their psychological wellbeing after arrival in France.

Although both described their lives as continuous stories at some point, their accounts revealed emotional disconnection and difficulty imagining their future.

Raza, for example, went through a deep identity crisis. He felt ashamed of being Afghan and saw his life as a refugee as a story with no clear ending. After leaving Sweden, his emotional struggles worsened. While he began forming some social ties in France, his weak sense of self continued to hinder his recovery.

Nimat, on the other hand, is attempting to rebuild. He also struggles with low self-continuity and legal instability. Although a French family gives him some emotional support, repeated rejection in the asylum process has left him tired, unmotivated, and unable to study or plan ahead.

This shows that when self-continuity is weak or fragmented, the psychological effects of forced migration become more severe. The combination of trauma, loss of familiar roles, and cultural dislocation can severely weaken identity foundations, leading emotional disconnection,

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instability, and identity confusion (de Jong, 2022; Groen et al., 2018; Habermas & Köber, 2015). These disruptions, however, were not universal; other participants showed signs of gradually rebuilding a sense of connection to their past.

Reconstructing Continuity and Gradual Integration

The experiences of Anwar, Bahar, Rahman, Maryam, and Zaki illustrate a partial or evolving sense of self-continuity, as their identities were disrupted by forced migration but gradually reconstructed through ongoing connections to the past. While their sense of identity was disrupted by forced migration and resettlement, they retained meaningful links to the past and demonstrated gradual efforts to reconstruct coherence in their life narratives.

Anwar reported emotional detachment from his earlier life, noting he was "neither the same as before nor completely changed." His past no longer shaped his current experiences, yet he frequently reflected on it, imagined alternative life paths, and recognized personal growth, such as increased openness to diversity. Despite the challenges, his changing sense of identity helped him adjust to life in France. He built social connections, learned the language, and stayed emotionally stable, even though he still did not feel a full sense of belonging to the new culture.

Bahar and Rahman showed low emotional attachment to their pasts, but their life stories remained structured and future-oriented. Bahar felt stuck between identities due to legal uncertainty and exclusion from both Afghan and French societies, which negatively affected her wellbeing.

Rahman adopted a logical, detached stance toward his journey, allowing for emotional stability, but with limited relational depth or belonging. These cases show that feeling excluded or uncertain about one's social position can reduce the positive effects of partial self-continuity.

Maryam and Zaki demonstrated clearer ties to their past identities. While their sense of self had changed, they stayed connected to their culture and clearly remembered their past experiences. This continuity supported resilience in the face of stressors like parenting, family

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separation, and integration challenges. Both viewed their lives as coherent, evolving stories, which helped sustain hope and emotional strength.

These moderate cases suggest that holding on to elements of one's identity, even after disruption, supports emotional adjustment. Although identity may shift over time, an ongoing narrative or sense of personal direction helps people manage stress and find meaning. In some cases, long periods between departure and resettlement may have weakened this connection, but the ability to reconstruct a sense of self still offered psychological protection. These findings closely reflect the theoretical concept of self-continuity, which underscores the importance of preserving a coherent sense of identity over time, even in the face of major life disruptions (Sedikides et al., 2023).

However, maintaining this inner sense of continuity is not only an individual process but also relies on social validation and connection. Becker et al. (2018) emphasize that constructing a coherent self-narrative depends not only on individual reflection but also on the opportunity to express identity in a socially supportive context. As they note, "constructing narratives is a profoundly social process; stories have to be told, and thus shared, before they can be internalized" (p. 289). This highlights that even when identity is partially preserved like the case of Bahar, emotional wellbeing may still suffer in the absence of social recognition and belonging.

In contrast to these transitional cases, some participants gradually built a new but stable sense of identity. Jamshid and Aziz both faced high and moderate levels of forced migration, respectively. Despite traveling through legal routes, they encountered significant dangers along the way.

Jamshid described his life as a connected narrative and mentioned maintaining ties to his past through practices like cooking Afghan food. Still, he rated himself low on self-

continuity. His narrative, however, showed retained links to the past and signs of psychological recovery. He expressed pride in overcoming hardship and contentment with his present life.

Similarly, Aziz also rated his self-continuity as low and felt he was no longer the same person. Yet, his story reflects a gradual reconstruction of identity. By focusing on personal growth and future goals, he created a coherent life narrative and found emotional stability. Balancing his Afghan identity with a growing sense of belonging in France, he came to see France as home and appreciated the support he received during integration.

These cases highlight that identity can be rebuilt through meaning-making and reflection. Whether by maintaining links to the past or forming a new identity narrative, the ability to reinterpret one's journey plays a central role in emotional recovery and integration. This pattern supports Becker et al.'s (2018) view that people seek coherence through culturally shaped strategies like stability, narrative formation, or symbolic associations. Likewise, Motivated Identity Construction Theory (Vignoles, 2018) emphasizes that self-continuity is not fixed but actively maintained or reconstructed to preserve identity and psychological balance.

Sustained Continuity as a Source of Resilience

Finally, a few participants entered resettlement with a strong and continuous identity. Their life stories reflected deep emotional and narrative ties to who they were before migration. These cases show how a preserved identity can act as a buffer against the psychological challenges of displacement.

Jamil held on to his family role and religious values, which gave him emotional stability. Basit used his identity as a former soldier to stay grounded and to carry forward a sense of pride and structure. Amina found support in her daily routines and strong family ties, which helped her maintain balance despite the emotional weight of trauma. Zahra remained closely connected to her identity as a teacher and her supportive upbringing. She described herself as the same person with added experiences, and reflected on her life as a meaningful story with different

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parts. Arezu retained a strong sense of self built on her education, professional background, and cultural values. Even when facing challenges related to social acceptance, she stayed motivated and saw her journey as a coherent narrative rather than a rupture.

These participants showed how a stable identity foundation provides emotional strength and resilience. Staying connected to one's past identity gave participants emotional strength, supported their motivation, and helped them adapt to life in France. It also made it easier to form new relationships, manage stress, and imagine a stable future. Most of the participants within this pattern, had left Afghanistan recently, often after 2020, which may have helped preserve their memories and social roles. This suggests that when refugees are able to carry their identity with them, they are better prepared for the emotional and social demands of resettlement.

These findings align with our theoretical framework and are supported by existing research. Sedikides et al. (2023) emphasize that a strong sense of self-continuity supports emotional stability, resilience, and a clear sense of purpose, all of which contribute to successful integration. Similarly, Ballentyne (2024) found that among Sudanese and South Sudanese asylum seekers in Australia, those with a coherent and continuous sense of self experienced higher wellbeing, including life satisfaction, self-esteem, and the ability to manage adversity.

Together, these three patterns of fragmented, reconstructing, and sustained continuity illustrate the mediating role of self-continuity in refugee adaptation. Across varying levels of continuity, participants' sense of identity shaped how they coped with forced migration and integration challenges. Consistent with Path M1 in the PARI model, maintaining or reconstructing self-continuity served as a key psychological bridge between past disruption and successful adjustment in the host country.

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Chapter conclusion

This chapter examined how Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in France experience psychological and sociocultural integration. Using the PARI model and the concept of self-continuity as guiding frameworks, the qualitative findings revealed that migration was experienced not as a single event but as a prolonged process shaped by forcedness, danger, and ongoing adaptation.

Participants' narratives highlighted deep emotional impacts of displacement, including fear, uncertainty, and loss. Yet, many also demonstrated resilience through coping strategies such as faith, humour, and goal setting. Self-continuity emerged as a key psychological resource: those who maintained or reconstructed a coherent sense of identity reported greater wellbeing and engagement with life in France, while those who experienced identity fragmentation often struggled with emotional instability and social disconnection.

Integration was shown to extend beyond employment or legal status, encompassing belonging, wellbeing, and identity negotiation. While participants valued safety and opportunity in France, they also described cultural distance, bureaucratic barriers, and limited access to education or mental health care. These challenges underscored that integration depends on both internal psychological processes and external structural conditions.

Overall, the findings portray integration as a multidimensional and non-linear process shaped by continuity of self, emotional resilience, and social recognition. By foregrounding refugees' lived experiences, this qualitative phase provides the conceptual basis for the quantitative phase that follows, which examines the relationships among forcedness, self-continuity, and integration outcomes in a broader sample.

Chapter 5 - Quantitative Analysis of Forcedness, Self-Continuity, Social Identity, and Sociocultural Integration Among Afghan Refugees in France

Overview and Hypotheses

The quantitative phase represents the second step in a Sequential Exploratory Mixed Methods Design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017), building on findings from qualitative interviews. Survey items were developed using both the emerging themes from the qualitative phase and established standardized scales, enabling this phase to test and extend earlier insights on a broader, more generalizable level.

Guided by the PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020), the concept of self-continuity (Sedikides et al., 2023), and SIMTIC (Muldoon et al., 2020) this quantitative phase aimed to statistically assess how pre- and post-migration stressors, including perceived forcedness, migration-related perils, experiences of violence, and discrimination affect the integration-relevant psychological outcomes, specifically sociocultural integration, social identity processes (identity maintenance and gain), and migration-related regret and how self-continuity mediates these relationships.

Specifically, this study sought to explore the association between perceived forcedness, related migration perils and post arrival stressors with integration-relevant psychological responses, specifically sociocultural integration (acculturation) and social identity processes (identity maintenance and gain) and regret; to assess the impact of perceived forcedness and related perils on sociocultural integration through the mediating role of self-continuity; to investigate whether self-continuity mediates the relationship between perceptions of forcedness and related perils and social identity processes; and to investigate the effect of post-arrival stressors (discrimination) on migration-related regret, with self-continuity as a psychological mediator.

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To address these objectives, the hypotheses were developed based on our theoretical framework, which follows a triangular mediation model structure commonly used in psychological research, as outlined in Chapter 2. This structure, grounded in the PARI model, allowed us to examine both direct and mediated effects between predictor, mediator, and outcome variables. Figure 5.1 provides a summary of the adapted PARI model as discussed in Chapter 2, where social identity is introduced as an integration-relevant psychological response and self-continuity is positioned as the central mediator.

Figure 5.1

Summary of the Adapted PARI Model
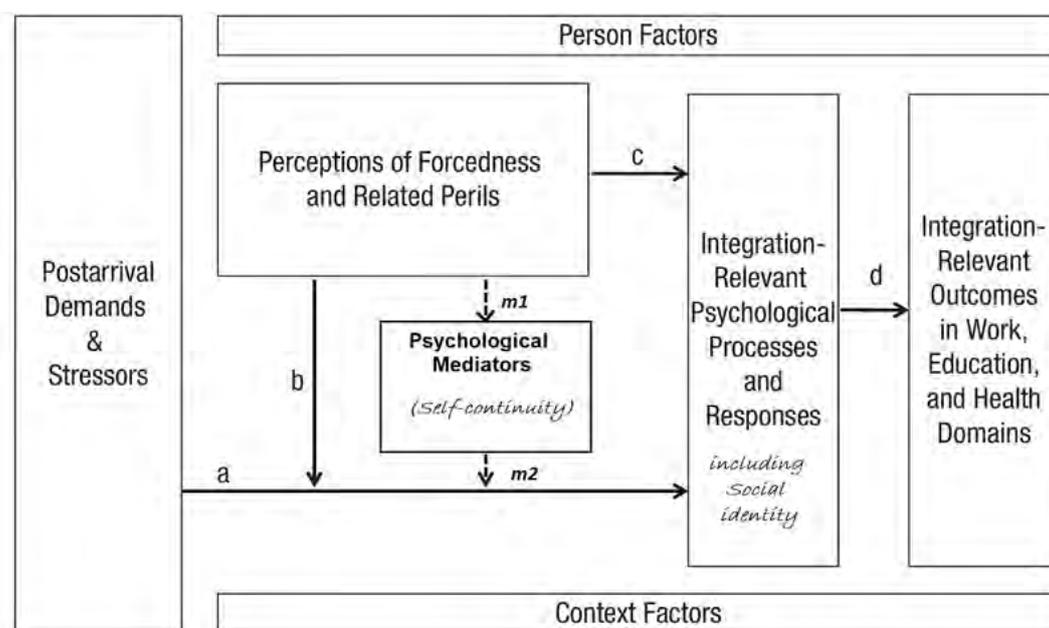
Note. The figure presents the proposed conceptual framework linking post-arrival demands and stressors, perceptions of forcedness and related perils, and integration-relevant psychological responses and outcomes. Path *a* represents the direct effects of post-arrival demands on integration-relevant psychological processes and responses. Path *b* illustrates the influence of perceptions of forcedness and related perils on the relationship between post-arrival demands and integration-relevant psychological responses. Path *c* shows how perceptions of forcedness directly affect integration-relevant psychological processes and responses. Path *d* reflects the influence of these psychological responses on broader integration outcomes in work, education, and health domains. Paths m_1 and m_2 indicate the mediating role of psychological mediators, specifically self-continuity, between perceptions of forcedness, post-arrival demands, and integration-relevant psychological responses, including social identity processes.

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Hypothesis 1a: Refugees who report higher perceived forcedness, more migration perils, and greater experiences of violence will show lower levels of sociocultural integration.

Hypothesis 1b: Refugees who report higher perceived forcedness, more migration perils, and greater experiences of violence will report weaker social identity processes (both identity maintenance and identity gain).

Hypothesis 1c: Afghan refugees who report higher discrimination will show higher regret.

Together, these hypotheses captured the direct effects from post-arrival demands to integration-relevant psychological responses (see Figure 5.1, path a).

Hypothesis 2: Afghan refugees who have experienced more violence, felt more forced to migrate, and faced greater migration-related perils will report lower sociocultural integration. This effect will be mediated by self-continuity.

This hypothesis captured effect of perception of forcedness on integration-relevant psychological responses (socio-cultural integration) via self-continuity (see figure 5.1, Paths m1 and m2).

Hypothesis 3: Afghan refugees who have experienced more violence, felt more forced to migrate, and faced greater migration-related perils will report weaker social identity processes (both maintenance and gain), and this relationship will be mediated by self-continuity.

This hypothesis captured the effect of perception of forcedness and related perils on integration-relevant psychological responses (social identity maintenance and gain) via self-continuity (see figure 5.1, Paths m1 and m2).

Hypothesis 4: Afghan refugees who experience more discrimination will report greater migration-related regret, and this effect will be mediated by self-continuity.

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This hypothesis captured the effect of discrimination as post arrival stressor on integration-relevant psychological responses specifically regret via self-continuity (see figure 5.1, Paths a and m2).

Methodology

Participants

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design, collecting data at a single point in time. A total of 101 Afghan refugees aged 18 to 62 years (M_{age} = 32.6, SD_{age} = 9.04) responded to the online survey which was administered from May 2024 to April 2025. Of these, 64 were male, 32 were female, and 2 identified as another gender. However, not all participants answered every question. For some analyses, I included only the 98 participants who completed all relevant items. For other analyses, where all 101 participants had provided responses, I used the full sample. All participants were living in France at the time of the study.

Participants reported diverse educational backgrounds, both in Afghanistan and in France. Table 5.1 presents a summary of their highest educational qualifications and fields of study.

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Table 5.1

Educational Background and Qualifications of Participants

Category	Subcategory / Field	% of Participants	Notes / Examples
Education in Afghanistan	Secondary school completed	23.5	—
	Vocational training	3.1	—
	University degree	38.8	Fields included medicine, economics, computer science, psychology, journalism, photography, law and political science, international relations, civil and industrial engineering, architecture, Persian language and literature, Islamic studies, poultry farming, geology, French language and literature, history, civil engineering, management and marketing, and hydro-technical engineering (hydraulics).
	Not graduated	18.4	—
	Other	16.3	—
	Years of schooling	—	Range: 1–19 years; most common durations: 13 years (15.7%), 17 years (17.1%), and 19 years (10%).
Qualifications obtained in France	Master's degree	25.6	—
	Vocational qualification (CAP)	20.5	—
	Undergraduate degree	12.8	—
	Primary and secondary -level education	10.3	—
	Vocational diploma (BTS/DUT)	5.1	—
	Other	15.4	—

Note. Percentages for education in Afghanistan are based on the total sample (N = 101). Percentages for qualifications obtained in France are based on the subsample of participants who reported obtaining additional education in France (39.8% of the total sample).

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Measures

Experiences of Violence

Experiences of violence were measured using a custom-developed 3-item scale, designed based on themes from the qualitative phase. The items assessed participants' exposure to violence in Afghanistan, including discrimination based on political or religious identity, direct experience with war, and displacement caused by conflict. Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree), with higher scores reflecting greater perceived exposure. Sample items included: "I experienced a lot of violence (e.g., based on political beliefs, religious affiliation, or language) in Afghanistan before leaving," and "I have directly witnessed war in Afghanistan." The full list of items is presented in Appendix 5A, with the Persian translation provided in Appendix 5B and the Pashto translation in Appendix 5C. All items were positively phrased, and no reverse-coding was applied. Internal consistency for the scale was poor (Cronbach's α = 0.583), according to commonly used benchmarks (George & Mallery, 2019).

Perceived Forcedness

Perceived forcedness was assessed using two items adapted from Knausenberger et al. (2022). Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree"), with higher scores reflecting greater agreement. The items were: "I was forced to leave my country" and "I had the choice to stay in my home country" (reverse-coded). These items were designed to capture participants' subjective sense of whether their migration was voluntary or compelled. As the scale consisted of only two items, internal consistency was assessed using Spearman's correlation coefficient rather than Cronbach's alpha. The correlation between the items was ρ = .34, p < .001, indicating a weak-to-moderate positive association. Due to this limited coherence, only the first item "I was forced to leave my country" was retained for analysis, based on clearer interpretability and stronger face validity.

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Migration-Related Perils

Migration-related perils were measured using 10 items adapted from Knausenberger et al. (2022). The items assessed perceived danger, emotional distress, and restricted autonomy before and during migration. Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree"), with higher scores indicating greater perceived perils. Sample items included: "I felt threatened before I left my home country," "During my journey I feared for my life," and "During the journey, my freedom of movement was restricted." The full list of items is presented in Appendix 5A, with the Persian translation provided in Appendix 5B and the Pashto translation in Appendix 5C. Reverse-coding was applied to positively worded items to ensure consistent directionality in scoring. Internal consistency for the 10-item migration-related perils scale was acceptable (Cronbach's α = 0.780), suggesting a reasonably high level of internal reliability (George & Mallery, 2019).

Sense of Self-Continuity

Sense of self-continuity was assessed using four items adapted from Breakwell et al. (2022), originally developed by Sedikides et al. (2016). Participants rated each statement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree"). The items were designed to measure individuals' perceived consistency between their past and present self. Sample items include: "My past and present flow seamlessly together" and "There is continuity between my past and present." The full list of items is presented in Appendix 5A, with the Persian translation provided in Appendix 5B and the Pashto translation in Appendix 5C. Higher scores reflected a stronger sense of self-continuity. Internal consistency for the 4-item self-continuity scale was acceptable (Cronbach's α = 0.770), indicating a good level of reliability (George & Mallery, 2019).

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Social Identity (Maintenance and Development)

Social identity processes were measured using the Exeter Identity Transition Scales (EXITS), developed by Haslam et al. (2008). The scale consists of 8 items, divided into two subscales: identity maintenance (4 items) and identity development (4 items). All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree"). The identity maintenance items assessed the extent to which participants retained membership and involvement in pre-migration social groups (e.g., "I still belong to the same groups as I did before"). The identity development items measured the formation of new group ties post-migration (e.g., "I have joined one or more new groups"). Higher scores indicated stronger connection to maintained or newly formed social groups.

Internal consistency for both subscales was high. The identity maintenance subscale demonstrated excellent reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.915$), while the identity development subscale also showed strong reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.879$), indicating high internal consistency across items in both domains (George & Mallery, 2019).

Sociocultural Integration

Sociocultural integration was assessed using the Revised Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) developed by Wilson et al. (2017). The scale consists of 11 items measuring participants' self-rated competence in various behaviors required to function effectively in a new cultural environment (e.g., "Building and maintaining relationships," "Dealing with the bureaucracy," "Reading and writing the host language"). Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Not at all competent") to 5 ("Extremely competent"), with higher scores indicating greater sociocultural integration competence. Internal consistency for the 11-item sociocultural integration scale was high (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.882$), indicating strong reliability (George & Mallery, 2019).

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Discrimination

Perceived discrimination was assessed using a 11-item scale adapted from Knausenberger et al. (2022), capturing the frequency of daily discriminatory experiences. Participants rated how often they encountered specific forms of unfair treatment (e.g., "You are treated with less courtesy than other people," "You are threatened or harassed") on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 ("Almost every day") to 6 ("Never"). Items were reverse-coded where necessary so that higher scores reflected higher levels of perceived discrimination. Internal consistency for the 9-item discrimination scale was high (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.910$), indicating excellent reliability (George & Mallery, 2019).

Migration-Related Regret

Migration-related regret was assessed using 2 items adapted from Knausenberger et al. (2022), designed to capture emotional responses regarding the decision to leave one's country. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree"). One item was reverse-coded and then adjusted to align with the direction of the other. However, due to poor internal consistency and a negative correlation between items, only the second item ("I regret leaving my country") was retained. The measure was thus treated as a single-item indicator of regret. As a single-item measure, internal consistency could not be meaningfully assessed.

Sociodemographic

Participants reported their age, gender, and marital status, as well as education (years of schooling, highest qualification in Afghanistan, and additional degrees obtained abroad). Further items assessed legal status in France, employment status, monthly income, housing situation (type of accommodation and cohabitation), number of financial dependents, and length of residence in France.

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Procedure

This study used a self-administered online survey designed in Qualtrics, available in three languages: Farsi (completed by 76 participants), Pashto (10 participants), and English (15 participants). A language selection option was provided at the top of the form to ensure accessibility for participants of diverse linguistic backgrounds. On average, the survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

The questionnaire was structured by scale (e.g., perceived forcedness, related perils, self-continuity, social identity, integration), with each scale presented as a separate block. Within each block, item order was randomized for each participant using the Qualtrics randomization function to reduce potential order effects.

To reach participants effectively, data collection took place over a period of 11 months. The survey link, presented on a flyer with a QR code (see Appendix 5D for the English version, Appendix 5E for the Persian version, and Appendix 5F for the Pashto version), was distributed in all three languages through community organizations, Afghan shops, refugee support networks, and WhatsApp groups. A snowball sampling technique was also employed, with participants encouraged to share the survey with others who met the eligibility criteria.

Upon accessing the survey, participants were presented with an information sheet outlining the study's purpose, confidentiality, voluntary nature, and data protection measures. Participants were required to provide informed consent before proceeding.

Following consent, the survey began with screening questions to ensure that only eligible individuals could participate. Respondents were required to confirm that they were: (1) of Afghan origin, (2) aged 18 or older, (3) currently residing in France, and (4) holding refugee or protection status. Those who did not meet these criteria were automatically disqualified from continuing. To the built-in screening process, I applied further filters during data cleaning to ensure data quality and eligibility. First, participants who did not provide informed consent

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were filtered out automatically on the platform. Second, participants who failed to respond the screening questions were excluded (automatically on the platform). Third, participants who completed less than 30% of the survey were not retained for analysis. This last filter brought us to exclude 54 participations, with progress ranging from 8 to 22 % of the survey (M = 11%, SD = 3.99). Among remaining participants, 93 had completed the full survey (100%) and 8 participants had completed between 38 and 49%.

Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Université Fédérale de Toulouse (see Appendix 5G), reference number 2024_831. Special ethical care was taken due to the sensitive nature of working with refugees, including the following measures:

Informed consent: Participants received detailed study information and consent forms in Persian, Pashto, and English. They were required to provide informed consent by selecting an option online before proceeding with the survey.

Confidentiality and anonymity: All responses were collected anonymously, and no personally identifiable information was requested. The data were accessible only to the researcher and the supervisory team.

Right to withdraw: At the end of the survey, participants were provided with a unique participation code, which they could use to request withdrawal from the study. However, no participants exercised this option.

Analysis strategy

All statistical analyses were conducted using Jamovi (The jamovi project, 2025), an open-source software based on R. The GAMLj3 module was used for hypotheses focusing on direct effects (i.e., those that did not include mediation). The jAMM module in Jamovi was used to estimate the hypothesized mediation models via path analysis. Based on the sample

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size, the study had sufficient statistical power (80%) to detect effects of moderate size, following recommendations by Lakens (2022).

The analytic process was organized into five stages. First reliability analysis was conducted to evaluate the internal consistency of all multi-item scales using Cronbach's alpha the details of which are presented in the measurement section. Second, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and distribution characteristics) were calculated for all key variables, and composite scores were computed in a way that retained participants with partial responses. Third, correlation analyses were performed using Spearman's rho to explore bivariate associations among predictors and outcomes.

Fourth, to evaluate the proposed hypotheses, I conducted a series of statistical analysis. General Linear Model (GLM) via the GAMLj3 module was used to test direct effects of predictor variables on outcome variables. For hypotheses involving a mediation variable, I used the GLM Mediation analysis (via the jaMM module), which estimates indirect effects, in the present case testing the mediating role of Self-Continuity in the relationships between key predictors and outcomes.

Finally, I conducted an exploratory analysis to identify potential meaningful patterns in the data that were not captured by the original model. For this purpose, I performed a Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) using Jamovi, via the snowRMM module. I followed the approach recommended by Akogul and Erisoglu (2017), which involves comparing models with different numbers of latent groups (or "classes") based on several statistical fit indices. These include the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), and entropy, among others. According to their framework, the best-fitting model is typically one with low BIC and AIC values, and a high entropy value, indicating that the classes are clearly and reliably separated.

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Results

Descriptive analysis

Overall, all variables demonstrated approximately normal distributions. On average, participants reported high levels of perceived violence and forcedness, moderate to high exposure to migration-related perils, moderate self-continuity and sociocultural integration, and moderately low identity maintenance alongside higher identity development. Perceived discrimination was high, while migration-related regret was low. These patterns suggest variability in participants' psychological and social adjustment experiences post-migration. Detailed descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5.2.

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Table 5.2

Descriptive Statistics for Main Study Variables (Means, Standard Deviations, and Distribution Characteristics)

	Experience of violence_	Forcedness	Perils	Self-continuity	Social identity maintenance	Social identity development	Sociocultural integration	Discrimination	Regret
N	93	98	97	96	98	97	98	98	97
Missing	8	3	4	5	3	4	3	3	4
Mean	3.95	4.11	3.75	3.05	2.58	3.37	3.12	4.52	2.07
Median	4.00	4.00	3.80	3.00	2.50	3.50	3.18	4.78	2.00
Standard deviation	0.993	0.794	0.651	0.873	0.962	0.860	0.704	1.12	0.919
Minimum	1.00	2.00	1.80	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.27	1.00	1.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	6.00	5.00

Note. Higher scores indicate greater exposure to violence, perceived forcedness, migration-related perils, self-continuity, social identity maintenance, social identity development, sociocultural integration, discrimination, and regret.

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Correlation Analysis

Bivariate associations between key variables were assessed to explore initial relationships among predictors (e.g., experiences of violence, migration-related perils, perceived forcedness) and outcomes (e.g., sociocultural integration, social identity maintenance, social identity development). Pearson correlation coefficients (r), with 95% confidence intervals and exact p-values, were calculated for all pairwise associations

Correlation Matrix: Predictors

A moderate positive relationship was found between forcedness and violence exposure (r = .41, 95% CI [.23, .57], $p < .001$), suggesting that participants who felt more forced to migrate also reported higher levels of violence exposure. Similarly, forcedness was moderately positively correlated with migration-related perils (r = .29, 95% CI [.10, .46], $p = .004$), indicating that those who felt forced to leave their country also experienced greater danger or hardship during migration. However, the association between violence and perils was weak and not statistically significant (r = .11, 95% CI [−.10, .30], $p = .310$), suggesting no strong evidence of a direct link between these two forms of adversity in this sample.

Correlation Matrix: Outcomes

No significant association was found between integration and identity development (r = .14, 95% CI [−.06, .33], $p = .171$), suggesting that forming new social group ties was not strongly linked to participants' sense of integration into the host society. Likewise, no significant association was observed between identity maintenance and integration (r = .05, 95% CI [−.15, .25], $p = .604$) or between identity maintenance and identity development (r = .15, 95% CI [−.06, .34], $p = .153$), indicating that retaining ties with pre-migration groups was not strongly related to integration outcomes in this sample.

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Hypothesis Testing

The following results are organized by hypothesis and model type, and include effect sizes, confidence intervals, and significance levels for both direct and mediated effects.

Hypothesis 1a

The GLM tested whether Afghan refugees' experiences of forcedness, migration-related perils, and exposure to violence were associated with lower levels of sociocultural integration. The model was not statistically significant, $F(3, 89) = 0.77$, $p = .52$, indicating that the predictors together did not reliably explain differences in integration levels. The R^2 value was .03, meaning that only about 3% of the variation in sociocultural integration was explained by these migration-related stressors. At the individual level, none of the predictors showed statistically significant effects. This suggests that these forms of adversity were not meaningfully associated with how well participants felt integrated into the host society. Thus, Hypothesis 1a was not supported. A detailed summary of the results is presented in Table 1 (Appendix 5F).

Hypothesis 1b

The GLM tested whether Afghan refugees' experiences of forcedness, migration-related perils, and exposure to violence were associated with weaker social identity maintenance and development.

The model was not statistically significant, $F(3, 89) = 0.86$, $p = .47$, indicating that the predictors together did not explain meaningful variance in participants' maintenance of pre-migration social identities. The R^2 value was .03, suggesting that only about 3% of the variation in identity maintenance was accounted for by these predictors. Detailed results are presented in Table 2, located in Appendix 5F.

Similarly, the model predicting social identity development was not statistically significant, $F(3, 89) = 1.01$, $p = .39$, indicating that the predictors did not reliably explain differences in identity development. The R^2 value was .03, meaning that only about 3% of the

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variation in social identity development was accounted for by these predictors. Full results are presented in Table3 in Appendix 5F.

None of the predictors in either social identity maintenance or social identity development showed statistically significant effects (all $p > .05$). This suggests that these forms of adversity were not meaningfully associated with the extent to which participants retained or developed social identity ties. Therefore, Hypothesis 1b was not supported.

Hypothesis 1c

GLM tested whether Afghan refugees who reported more discrimination also reported feeling more regret about migrating. The model was statistically significant, $F(1, 95) = 8.65$, $p = .004$, indicating that perceived discrimination helped explain differences in regret levels. The R^2 value was .08, meaning that approximately 8% of the variation in regret was accounted for by levels of perceived discrimination.

However, while the relationship was significant, it was in the opposite direction of what I expected. The regression coefficient was negative, $\beta = -0.29$, $p = .004$, meaning that participants who reported higher levels of discrimination actually reported lower levels of migration-related regret. Thus, Hypothesis 1c was not supported. Full results are presented in Table 4 in Appendix 5F.

Hypothesis 2

A mediation analysis was conducted to test whether experience of violence, perception of forcedness, and related perils were linked to lower sociocultural integration because they disrupted refugees' sense of self-continuity, or their feeling of being the same person over time.

With the experience of violence as predictor, the indirect effect was not statistically significant, $\beta = -0.002$, $p = .78$. The path from experiences of violence to self-continuity was also non-significant, $\beta = -0.04$, $p = .73$, as was the path from self-continuity to integration, $\beta = 0.05$, $p = .65$. Confirming the test of H1a, the direct effect of violence on integration remained

non-significant, $\beta = -0.01$, $p = .93$, and the total effect was similarly non-significant, $\beta = -0.01$, $p = .92$.

With forcedness as predictor, the indirect effect was not statistically significant, $\beta = .00$, $p = .96$. The path from forcedness to self-continuity was also not significant, $\beta = -0.01$, $p = .96$, and the path from self-continuity to integration was similarly non-significant, $\beta = 0.04$, $p = .70$. Confirming the test of H1a, the direct effect of forcedness on integration remained non-significant, $\beta = 0.10$, $p = .33$.

The mediation analysis with migration-related perils as the predictor showed that the indirect effect on sociocultural integration through self-continuity was not statistically significant, $\beta = -0.002$, $p = .78$. The path from perils to self-continuity was also not significant, $\beta = -0.05$, $p = .60$, nor was the path from self-continuity to integration, $\beta = 0.03$, $p = .74$. Confirming the test of H1a, the direct effect of perils on sociocultural integration was nonsignificant, $\beta = -0.09$, $p = .36$.

Taken together, these results indicate that self-continuity did not mediate the relationships between experiences of violence, perceived forcedness, or migration-related perils and sociocultural integration. While each of them was tested as a potential predictor, none showed a significant indirect effect through self-continuity. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not supported. See Tables 5, 6, and 7 and Figure 1 in Appendix 5F for the complete mediation results and the conceptual diagram illustrating the tested pathways between experiences of violence, forcedness, migration-related perils, self-continuity, and sociocultural integration.

Hypothesis 3

A mediation analysis was conducted to test whether experiences of violence, perceived forcedness, and migration-related perils were associated with weaker social identity maintenance and development, because they disrupted refugees' sense of self-continuity, or their perception of being the same person across time.

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First, I conducted the mediation analysis with experiences of violence, perceived forcedness, and migration-related perils as predictors of social identity maintenance via self-continuity. The results are presented below.

For violence, the indirect effect via self-continuity was not statistically significant, $\beta = -0.01$, $p = .73$. The path from violence to self-continuity was also non-significant, $\beta = -0.04$, $p = .73$, indicating that exposure to violence did not meaningfully affect individuals' sense of self-continuity. Although the path from self-continuity to social identity maintenance was significant, $\beta = 0.33$, $p < .001$, the direct effect of violence on identity maintenance was not significant, $\beta = -0.05$, $p = .59$, and similarly the total effect, $\beta = -0.07$, $p = .53$.

For forcedness, the indirect effect via self-continuity was not statistically significant, $\beta = -0.002$, $p = .96$. The path from forcedness to self-continuity, $\beta = -0.01$, $p = .96$, indicated that perceived forcedness did not meaningfully impact individuals' sense of self-continuity. Although the path from self-continuity to social identity maintenance was significant, $\beta = 0.34$, $p < .001$, the direct effect of forcedness on identity maintenance was not significant, $\beta = -0.05$, $p = .63$, as for the total effect, $\beta = -0.04$, $p = .66$.

Similarly, for migration-related perils, the indirect effect via self-continuity was not statistically significant, $\beta = -0.02$, $p = .61$. The path from perils to self-continuity was also non-significant, $\beta = -0.05$, $p = .60$, suggesting that experiencing more migration-related perils did not meaningfully influence individuals' sense of self-continuity. Although the path from self-continuity to social identity maintenance was significant, $\beta = 0.33$, $p < .001$, the direct effect of perils on identity maintenance was not significant, $\beta = -0.14$, $p = .13$, as for the total effect, $\beta = -0.16$, $p = .10$.

Overall, the results showed that none of the three predictors (violence, forcedness, or migration-related perils) were linked to identity maintenance through self-continuity. While self-continuity itself was a significant positive predictor of maintaining one's pre-migration

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identity, the stressful migration experiences did not seem to affect self-continuity in a meaningful way. This means that the expected mediation was not supported, and Hypothesis 3 was not confirmed. The complete mediation results are presented in Tables 8, 9, and 10, and the conceptual diagram illustrating the tested pathways between experiences of violence, forcedness, migration-related perils, self-continuity, and sociocultural integration is shown in Figure 2, all located in Appendix 5F.

Next, I conducted the mediation analysis with experiences of violence, perceived forcedness, and migration-related perils as predictors of social identity development via self-continuity.

For violence, the indirect effect via self-continuity was not statistically significant, $\beta = -0.01$, $p = .73$. The path from violence to self-continuity was also non-significant, $\beta = -0.04$, $p = .73$, indicating that exposure to violence did not meaningfully affect individuals' sense of self-continuity. However, the path from self-continuity to social identity development was statistically significant, $\beta = 0.25$, $p = .01$, suggesting that participants with a stronger sense of self-continuity were more likely to report gains in new social identities. The direct effect of violence on identity development was not significant, $\beta = 0.15$, $p = .12$, and the total effect was also nonsignificant, $\beta = 0.14$, $p = .17$.

The indirect effect of perceived forcedness on the development of new social identities through self-continuity was not statistically significant, $\beta = .00$, $p = 1.00$. The direct effect was also not significant, $\beta = 0.12$, $p = .23$. The path from forcedness to self-continuity was extremely close to zero and not significant, $\beta = .00$, $p = 1.00$, indicating no meaningful relationship between perceived forcedness and sense of self-continuity. However, the path from self-continuity to social identity development was statistically significant, $\beta = 0.26$, $p = .009$, suggesting that self-continuity was positively related to the development of new social identities.

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For social identity development, the indirect effect of migration-related perils via self-continuity was not statistically significant, $\beta = -0.01$, $p = .58$. The path from perils to self-continuity was also not significant, $\beta = -0.06$, $p = .57$, indicating that perils did not meaningfully impact participants' sense of self-continuity. However, the path from self-continuity to identity development was statistically significant, $\beta = 0.26$, $p = .01$, suggesting that self-continuity was positively related to the development of new social identities. The direct effect of perils on social identity development was also not significant, $\beta = -0.04$, $p = .71$, and the total effect was similarly non-significant, $\beta = -0.05$, $p = .60$.

The full mediation analysis results are presented in Tables 11, 12, and 13, and the conceptual diagram illustrating the tested mediation pathway, showing the relationships between experiences of violence, forcedness, migration-related perils, self-continuity, and sociocultural integration, is shown in Figure 3, all in Appendix 5F.

Overall, these findings indicate that none of the three migration-related stressors (violence, perceived forcedness, or perils) were significantly associated with the development of new social identities through self-continuity. Although self-continuity itself was a significant positive predictor of identity development, it did not serve as a mediating pathway for the effects of these adversities. Therefore, the proposed mediation model was not supported, and Hypothesis 3 was not confirmed.

Hypothesis 4

A mediation analysis was conducted to examine whether self-continuity mediated the relationship between perceived discrimination and migration-related regret. The indirect effect of discrimination via self-continuity was not statistically significant, $\beta = 0.01$, $p = .52$. The path from discrimination to self-continuity was not significant, $\beta = -0.17$, $p = .10$, and the path from self-continuity to regret was also not significant, $\beta = -0.07$, $p = .48$, indicating that perceived discrimination did not influence regret through changes in self-continuity.

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However, the direct effect of discrimination on regret remained significant, $\beta = -0.31$, $p = .002$, and the total effect was also statistically significant, $\beta = -0.29$, $p = .003$. These findings suggest that higher levels of discrimination were directly associated with lower levels of migration-related regret, independent of self-continuity. Therefore, the proposed mediation was not supported. Full mediation results are presented in Table 14, and the mediation models of self-continuity linking discrimination and regret are illustrated in Figure 4, both located in Appendix 5F.

Exploratory analysis results

To explore whether distinct subgroups of participants could be identified, I conducted a latent profile analysis (LPA) using the full set of outcome and mediator variables: social identity maintenance, social identity development, sociocultural integration, regret, and self-continuity. This means that the classes reflect how participants were doing in these psychological and integration-related domains at the time of the study, rather than differences in pre-migration predictors or sociodemographic characteristics.

To determine the most appropriate class solution, I tested models with 2, 3, and 4 latent classes. The fit statistics for each model are presented in the Table 5.3.
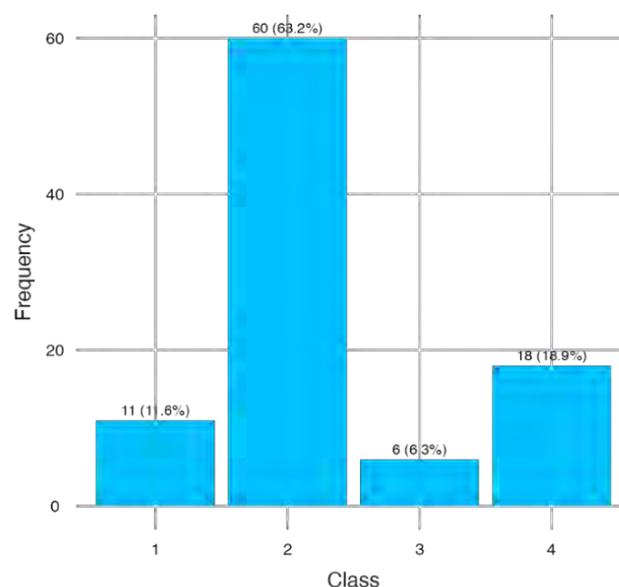
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Table 5.3

Model Fit Statistics for Latent Profile Solutions with 2, 3, and 4 Classes

Model	Classes	LogLik	AIC	AWE	BIC	CAIC	CLC	KIC	SABIC	ICL	Entropy
1	2	-585	1203	1362	1243	1259	1172	1222	1193	-1246	0.965
1	3	-578	1200	1420	1256	1278	1157	1225	1186	-1272	0.816
1	4	-561	1178	1459	1250	1278	1124	1209	1161	-1268	0.843
2	2	-581	1204	1415	1258	1279	1164	1228	1192	-1268	0.852
2	3	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN
2	4	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN
3	2	-582	1216	1477	1282	1308	1165	1245	1200	-1296	0.775
3	3	-570	1204	1526	1286	1318	1142	1239	1185	-1306	0.791
3	4	-547	1170	1552	1267	1305	1096	1211	1147	-1276	0.911
6	2	-565	1211	1624	1316	1357	1131	1255	1187	-1322	0.888
6	3	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN
6	4	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN

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After testing models with two, three, and four latent classes, I selected the 4-class solution from Model 1 based on statistical fit criteria. This model demonstrated the lowest BIC (1249.63) and AIC (1178.12), along with a high entropy value (0.8426), suggesting a strong balance between overall model fit and classification accuracy (Akogul & Erisoglu, 2017). Based on these indicators, the 4-class model was retained for further analysis.

Figure 5.6 illustrates the distribution of participants across the four latent classes, showing that the majority of participants were classified in Class 2, followed by smaller groups in Classes 1 and 4, and the smallest in Class 3. The four profiles that emerged reflect distinct configurations across the five included variables. The following section outlines each profile's defining characteristics, based on estimated class means.

Figure 5.2

Distribution of Participants Across the Four Latent Classes

Profile Descriptions

In Class 1 (n = 11.6%, see figure 5.6), participants reported low levels of self-continuity (M = 2.46, SD = 0.76), social identity maintenance (M = 2.29, SD = 0.77), and social identity

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development (M = 1.71, SD = 0.51), along with low regret (M = 1.77, SD = 0.84). Despite these low identity-related scores, they showed relatively high sociocultural integration (M = 3.58, SD = 0.54). Class 2 (n = 63.2%, see figure 5.6), was the largest among the four classes. Participants in this class reported moderate levels across all identity and integration dimensions, including self-continuity (M = 3.05, SD = 0.76), social identity maintenance (M = 2.70, SD = 0.77), social identity development (M = 3.35, SD = 0.51), and moderate sociocultural integration (M = 2.82, SD = 0.54). They further reported low regret (M = 2.29, SD = 0.84).

Class 3 (n = 6.3%, see figure 5.6), represented a small group that exhibited very high scores across most measured variables: self-continuity (M = 4.42, SD = 0.76), social identity maintenance (M = 4.28, SD = 0.77), social identity development (M = 4.35, SD = 0.51), and sociocultural integration (M = 4.20, SD = 0.54). They reported a moderate level of regret (M = 2.54, SD = 0.84). Class 4 (n = 18.9%, see figure 5.6), consisted of participants who reported low identification with their pre-migration groups, social identity maintenance (M = 1.71, SD = 0.77), but high identification with the new groups, social identity development (M = 4.15, SD = 0.51). They also showed moderate self-continuity (M = 2.85, SD = 0.76), low regret (M = 1.39, SD = 0.84), and high sociocultural integration (M = 3.58, SD = 0.54).

These distinct profiles are illustrated in Figure 5.7, which displays the estimated means of the four classes across self-continuity, social identity maintenance, social identity development, regret, and sociocultural integration.

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Figure 5.3

Latent Profile Plot Displaying Estimated Means Across Identity and Integration Variables
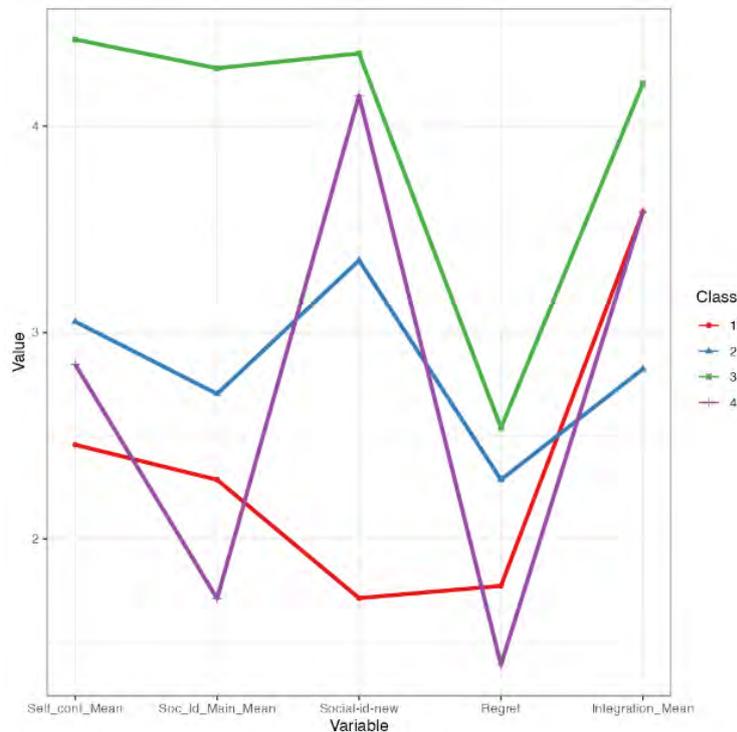
Discussion

Overview of the Findings and Initial Interpretations

This study aimed to examine how migration-related stressors (forcedness, exposure to violence, and migration-related perils) influence Afghan refugees' identity processes and sociocultural integration, and whether these relationships are mediated by self-continuity. Although the statistical analyses did not provide support for the hypothesized pathways, the findings nonetheless offer valuable insights into the complexity of refugee adjustment and the diverse ways individuals adapt after forced migration. While none of the hypothesized effects reached statistical significance, this does not necessarily mean that meaningful relationships are not present in the data. As noted in the analysis strategy, the sample size provided sufficient power to detect effects of moderate size, which strengthens confidence in the robustness of the

findings (Lakens, 2022). However, it is possible that the actual effects hypothesized in this study were smaller than that, and therefore too small to detect with our sample.

Moreover, the nature of mediation testing introduces additional complexity, as such analyses often have reduced statistical power. This occurs because predictors and mediators tend to be correlated, which makes it harder to separate their unique contributions. In addition, measurement error in the mediator can make its influence look smaller than it really is and the predictor's direct effect look larger (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Consistent with this reasoning, Lakens (2022) emphasizes that non-significant results, particularly in studies involving small or hard-to-reach populations such as in the case for Afghan refugees in France, should not be taken as evidence against a theoretical model, since true effects may simply be small or vary across individuals.

To add further context to these null results, our descriptive findings offer insights into the participants' lived experiences. On average, participants reported high levels of perceived violence and forcedness, along with moderate to high exposure to migration-related perils. Despite these challenges, average levels of self-continuity and sociocultural integration were moderate, suggesting that many individuals were managing to adapt functionally to life in the host country. However, identity maintenance was moderately low on average, while identity development was higher, indicating a tendency to form new group ties rather than preserve pre-migration social identities. Notably, average perceived discrimination was relatively high, yet levels of migration-related regret were generally low. Overall, these patterns reflect a diverse range of adjustment experiences and coping responses within the sample.

This variability was further reflected in the results of the Latent Profile Analysis (LPA), which identified four distinct subgroups based on participants' identity and integration patterns. These groups demonstrated differing combinations of self-continuity, social identity, regret, and sociocultural integration, underscoring the heterogeneity within the sample. I will discuss

these subgroups further on. For now, it is important to note that these findings help explain why statistically significant effects were not detected in the overall models, as averaging across such diverse experiences can mask meaningful subgroup differences.

Methodological and Design Considerations

Next, I turn to study design and theoretical issues that might explain why the hypothesized relationships were not detected. In this study, I used a cross-sectional design. However, the PARI model suggests that to fully understand how forced migration affects refugees, researchers should use a longitudinal design that tracks changes over time (Holland et al., 2017). This type of design helps show how early experiences, such as perceived forcedness and post-arrival stress, lead to longer-term outcomes like identity and wellbeing. According to Echterhoff et al. (2020), longitudinal designs are more suitable for studying complex pathways that involve both psychological mediators and external factors. Because our study only captured a single point in time, it may have missed these longer-term effects. Thus, the lack of statistically significant results in our hypothesized paths may reflect limitations in the timing of data collection, rather than the absence of real effects.

Another possible reason for the non-significant results relates to measurement. An important methodological consideration is that some of the standardized instruments used in this study may not fully capture the culturally specific ways in which Afghan refugees experience distress, identity, and integration. As noted in the theoretical framework chapter, scholars such as Alemi et al. (2023) and Theisen-Womersley (2021) have criticized the reliance on Western-developed psychological tools, arguing that these often fail to account for the collective, relational, and culturally embedded dimensions of refugee identity and trauma. The potential mismatch between the instruments and participants' lived experiences may have contributed to the non-significant findings in some parts of the model. This underscores the need for culturally grounded assessment tools in refugee research. In future work, adapting

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standardized scales to better reflect the cultural and contextual realities of specific refugee groups may offer a more accurate and meaningful understanding of refugee integration.

Taken together, these limitations suggested that meaningful effects might have been present, but our study was possibly unable to detect them due to a combination of small sample size, hard-to-reach population, heterogeneity among participants, cross-sectional design, and measurement constraints.

Theoretical Reflections on Self-Continuity and Refugee Integration

Building on the earlier discussion of non-significant findings, the lack of significant effects in the mediation analysis should also not be interpreted as contradicting the theoretical framework. The PARI model highlights that refugee adjustment is shaped not only by objective experiences like forcedness or violence but also by how individuals interpret and make sense of these experiences in specific social contexts (Echterhoff et al., 2020). In our findings, violence, forcedness and related perils did not significantly predict self-continuity, but self-continuity itself was a strong predictor of both identity maintenance and identity development. This supports the theoretical claim that a coherent sense of self across time plays a crucial role in helping refugees adapt psychologically and socially. As outlined in the theoretical framework, Sedikides et al. (2023) and Camia and Zafar (2021) highlight self-continuity as a buffer against psychological fragmentation and a foundation for emotional resilience and social engagement following forced displacement.

Person-Centered Perspectives: Identity and Integration Profiles

Building on these findings, the Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) provided further insight into individual differences in integration by identifying subgroups of participants based on their post-migration psychological and social adjustment patterns. The analysis revealed four distinct profiles, each reflecting unique configurations of self-continuity, social identity, regret, and

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sociocultural integration. These patterns highlight the heterogeneity within the sample and are further interpreted in relation to existing research and theoretical frameworks.

For example, Class 1, which included 11.6% of the sample, consisted of individuals who were functionally integrated. However, they reported low levels of self-continuity and social identity. This means they were able to work, use services, and find their way in a new country but did not feel emotionally connected to their past or to a new cultural identity. The self-continuity framework (Camia & Zafar, 2021; Sedikides et al., 2023) explains that this kind of disconnect can happen when refugees go through big disruptions, such as forced migration. These events can break the link between someone's past and present sense of self, which is sometimes called a "biographical rupture." Even though people in this group seem to be doing fine on the surface, they may be focusing more on practical survival than on emotional or identity-related adjustment. This way of coping might work in the short term. However, research suggests that without some kind of reflection or identity support, low self-continuity can make it harder to stay emotionally strong over time (Ballentyne et al., 2021; Becker et al., 2018).

In contrast, Class 4, accounting for 18.9% of participants, showed high new identity development, low regret and social identity maintenance, and strong sociocultural integration, highlighting how forming new group ties can support deeper psychological recovery. These class patterns support the idea that refugee adjustment is not one-dimensional but unfolds in different ways depending on individual experiences, identity pathways, and levels of psychological connection to the past and present. This pattern is in line with the Social Identity Model of Traumatic Identity Change (SIMTIC), which proposes that post-trauma adaptation is often marked by successful identity gain and continuity (Muldoon et al., 2020). According to this model, these identity-based processes are not just outcomes but also indicators of psychological recovery, reflecting deeper emotional and social adjustment in the host society.

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This subgroup of our sample shows that forming new group ties can offer a strong foundation for psychological stability and belonging.

Classes 2 and 3 offer additional insights into the varied ways refugees adjust. Class 2, representing 63.2% of the group, showed moderate levels of identity, integration, and low regret, appears to reflect a group adjusting in a steady and balanced way. Both the PARI and SIMTIC models help explain this pattern. According to the PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020), this pattern may indicate manageable levels of stress and the presence of protective "person factors" such as resilience, coping strategies, or supportive social environments. According to the SIMTIC model (Muldoon et al., 2020), keeping old identities or building new ones after trauma can help people recover emotionally. Although identity change can sometimes be stressful, the model also suggests that it does not always have to be difficult, especially when people have support or feel safe in their new environment. This profile demonstrates that identity adaptation can unfold gradually and positively when post-migration conditions are relatively stable.

On the other hand, Class 3 representing 6.3% of the total sample, was characterized by strong identity commitment and moderate levels of migration regret. This combination highlights the complex emotional landscape that can accompany efforts to preserve cultural identity after displacement. In line with the SIMTIC model, maintaining or developing social identities following trauma may still involve internal tension and psychological costs (Muldoon et al., 2020). The fact that people in this group felt strongly connected to their cultural identity (pre-migration groups) but also showed moderate regret suggests that keeping a strong cultural identity can help with integration, but it may also come with emotional difficulties, especially when trying to balance two different cultures. This pattern shows that holding on to one's identity is not always emotionally protective and can involve a mix of feeling connected and still struggling with unresolved emotions about migration.

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Revisiting the Hypotheses

With these patterns in mind, I can now revisit the original hypotheses. None of the proposed direct or mediation models were statistically supported. Hypothesis 1a, which examined whether forcedness, migration-related perils, and exposure to violence predicted lower sociocultural integration, was not supported. In line with this, hypothesis 2 predicted that forcedness, violence, and related perils would influence sociocultural integration through self-continuity, but this indirect path was also not significant. Likewise, Hypotheses 1b and 3, which expected these variables to directly or indirectly weaken identity processes, were also not confirmed. However, self-continuity consistently emerged as a strong predictor of identity maintenance and development, supporting its theoretical role in refugee adjustment (Camia & Zafar, 2021; Sedikides et al., 2023). The latent profiles suggest that integration is experienced differently depending on how connected people feel to their past and present selves. For example, individuals in Class 3 had a strong sense of identity but still reported some regret about migrating. This highlights the complexity of emotional adjustment, as having a stable identity does not always bring emotional peace (Camia & Zafar, 2021).

Hypothesis 1c, which proposed that higher discrimination would lead to greater migration-related regret, was not supported. Instead, greater discrimination was associated with lower levels of regret. As shown in the descriptive results, participants had on average experienced significant pre-migration adversity and low regret, which may help explain this unexpected finding. This aligns with findings by Knausenberger et al. (2022), which shows that when refugees faced severe dangers during migration, they tended to report low regret, even if they later experienced discrimination. One explanation may be that, compared to earlier hardships, the discrimination felt less severe. Hypothesis 4 suggested that the relationship between discrimination and regret would be mediated by self-continuity, but this mediation path was also not significant. This could indicate that regret may be due to other reasons like

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unmet expectations, economic hardship, social isolation, or family separation, which are factors shown to influence regret in migration decisions (Mazzilli et al., 2024), which were not measured in this study.

Broader Theoretical and Practical Implications

Overall, the results of this study did not statistically confirm the hypothesized relationships, but they still provide important theoretical and practical insights. Self-continuity proved to be an important internal factor linked to identity outcomes, even though it was not directly influenced by migration-related stressors. The person-centered analysis also revealed that refugees experience identity and integration in different ways, showing the importance of looking beyond overall averages. These findings suggest that refugee adjustment is not the same for everyone, but rather shaped by a mix of psychological strengths, emotional reactions, and life circumstances.

The latent profile analysis identified meaningful patterns of adaptation that would not have been visible through hypothesis testing alone. Some individuals showed strong integration even with low identity continuity, while others experienced emotional conflict despite having a stable sense of identity. Together, these findings highlight the need for research approaches that capture the diversity and complexity of refugee experiences, rather than relying only on average group trends.

Chapter conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the quantitative phase, which aimed to statistically test relationships between forced migration stressors, self-continuity, and integration-relevant psychological outcomes among Afghan refugees in France. Guided by the PARI model, the analyses tested both direct and mediated pathways linking experiences of violence, forcedness, migration-related perils, and post-arrival discrimination to outcomes including sociocultural integration, social identity processes, and migration-related regret.

Chapter 5 – Quantitative Analysis

Overall, none of the hypotheses were statistically supported. Migration-related stressors did not significantly predict sociocultural integration, social identity maintenance, or development, either directly or indirectly through self-continuity. Likewise, self-continuity did not mediate the relationship between perceived discrimination and migration-related regret. However, self-continuity consistently emerged as a significant predictor of both identity maintenance and identity development, reinforcing its theoretical importance as a psychological resource in the integration process.

The latent profile analysis further revealed heterogeneous identity and integration patterns across the sample, identifying distinct subgroups with different psychological adjustment trajectories. These patterns underscore the complexity and individuality of refugee experiences and suggest that group-level analyses may obscure important within-group variation. Together, these findings highlight the importance of integrating both variable- and person-centered approaches when studying refugee integration.

Although the hypothesized mediation effects were not confirmed, the findings offer valuable insights into the lived experiences of Afghan refugees and point to important methodological and theoretical considerations. The next chapter will build on these results by integrating findings from the qualitative and quantitative phases to offer a more comprehensive understanding of refugee identity and adaptation.

Chapter 6 - Mixed Methods Discussion: Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Phases

Overview and Integration of Findings

The findings from both the qualitative and quantitative phases of this study together illuminate how Afghan refugees psychologically process experiences of forced displacement and how these processes shape their sociocultural integration in France. Taken together, these findings show how the two strands complement each other and offer a deeper understanding of the research questions, highlighting patterns, contrasts, and insights that would not have been visible through a single method alone. The discussion also reflects on the main limitations and challenges encountered during the research process, including methodological, cultural, and practical issues that may have influenced the findings.

The mixed-methods study began with a qualitative phase that explored the lived experiences of Afghan refugees through semi-structured interviews. These narratives revealed diverse and deeply personal pathways of integration, ranging from marginalization and separation to more balanced forms of integration and, in some cases, assimilation (Berry, 1997, 2005). They underscored the central role of trauma, coping strategies, and self-continuity in shaping both wellbeing and integration outcomes. Insights from this qualitative phase informed the subsequent quantitative phase, where hypotheses were developed and tested with a broader sample to examine these processes more systematically.

This thesis drew on the PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020), the concept of self-continuity (Sedikides et al., 2023), and the Social Identity Model of Traumatic Identity Change (SIMTIC) (Muldoon et al., 2020) to explore how psychological and identity processes shape refugee integration. These frameworks were useful at both stages of the research. In the qualitative phase, they guided the design of the interview framework and offered a lens for understanding participants' lived experiences of forced displacement and integration. In the

quantitative phase, they guided the development of hypotheses about the links between perceived forcedness, migration perils, discrimination, self-continuity, social identity processes, and integration outcomes. While the main hypotheses and the mediation model were not statistically supported, the exploratory Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) revealed distinct integration patterns. These patterns were consistent with the themes from the interviews and showed that Afghan refugees follow varied pathways of integration, reflecting the nuanced trajectories described in their narratives.

Quantitative Results in the Context of Theoretical Frameworks

To test the theoretical assumptions derived from these frameworks, a series of hypotheses were formulated to examine both the direct and indirect relationships among key variables. The following section summarizes these hypotheses and the corresponding results, highlighting how they relate to the study's broader conceptual aims.

Hypothesis 1a predicted that Afghan refugees' experiences of forcedness, migration-related perils, and exposure to violence would be associated with lower levels of sociocultural integration. This prediction was not supported, as none of the predictors significantly explained integration outcomes.

Hypothesis 1b proposed that forcedness, perils, and violence would weaken social identity maintenance and development. This was also not confirmed. However, self-continuity consistently emerged as a strong predictor of identity maintenance and development, highlighting its theoretical role in refugee adjustment (Camia & Zafar, 2021; Sedikides et al., 2023).

Hypothesis 1c suggested that higher discrimination would lead to greater migration-related regret. This expectation was not supported. Instead, greater discrimination was linked with lower regret. As shown in the descriptive results, participants had on average experienced significant pre-migration adversity and low regret, which may help explain this unexpected

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finding. This aligns with Knausenberger et al. (2022), who found that when refugees faced severe dangers during migration, they tended to report low regret even under conditions of discrimination. One explanation may be that, compared to earlier hardships, the discrimination felt less severe.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 focused on mediation via self-continuity. Hypothesis 2 predicted that forcedness, violence, and related perils would influence sociocultural integration through self-continuity, while Hypothesis 3 expected the same stressors to undermine social identity maintenance and development through this pathway. Neither of these mediation models was supported. Even so, self-continuity itself proved to be a strong predictor of identity outcomes, reinforcing its central role in refugee integration (Camia & Zafar, 2021; Sedikides et al., 2023).

Hypothesis 4 proposed that the relationship between discrimination and migration-related regret would be mediated by self-continuity. This mediation pathway was not supported. Although discrimination did show a direct effect on regret, self-continuity did not account for this association. As noted in the quantitative discussion, regret may instead be shaped by other factors such as unmet expectations, economic hardship, social isolation, or family separation, which were not measured in this study (Mazzilli et al., 2024).

Although the individual hypotheses did not receive statistical support, the subsequent Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) provided additional insight into the underlying dynamics of refugee adjustment. This analysis revealed distinct identity and integration profiles that closely reflected the qualitative findings, showing that the patterns identified in interviews were also present at the broader quantitative level. Together, these results bridge the gap between the qualitative and quantitative phases, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how Afghan refugees adapt and integrate in France.

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Convergence Between Qualitative Themes and Quantitative Profiles

Together, the qualitative and quantitative results offer a fuller picture of how Afghan refugees rebuild their identities, cope psychologically, and take part in sociocultural life. The results resonate with Berry's (1997, 2005) acculturation model, which shows that people can follow different strategies in adapting to a new society, and with wider research that sees integration not as one fixed path but as a multidimensional process shaped by trauma, cultural tensions, coping, and structural conditions (Brea Larios et al., 2023; Hovil, 2014; Lomba, 2010; Phillimore, 2011; Sabatier, 2008). Using a sequential design was especially valuable, as the interviews revealed the emotional and identity dimensions of integration, while the quantitative phase demonstrated how these same patterns appeared in a larger sample. Taken together, the two approaches show that integration is not only about practical participation in society but also about the inner work of coping with loss, maintaining continuity, and reshaping identity in a new context.

Pathways of Integration: Insights from Cases and Profiles

The first category of participants reflected a profile where integration appeared successful on the surface but was fragile beneath.

The stories of Nimat and Raza illustrate this clearly. Nimat tried hard to adapt to French society, but his journey was marked by a painful break with his past. His religious conversion and the insecurity of the asylum system left him feeling isolated, with little support to rebuild his sense of belonging. Raza also worked to integrate, learning French, building relationships, and engaging socially, but the weight of exclusion and ongoing psychological stress left him with a fragmented identity and constant emotional strain. Both cases show how integration can look convincing on the surface while inside it is fragile and unsettled.

These same patterns appeared in the first latent class. Participants in this group, at first glance, seemed to be adjusting well to life in France. They were learning the language,

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managing everyday routines, and taking part in social interactions. From the outside, this looked like successful integration. Yet the participants in this group reported low self-continuity and low social identity, which reflected their emotional fragility. They were, in effect, caught between two worlds without feeling a secure sense of home in either.

The PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020) helps make sense of this fragility. It highlights how forced migration undermines basic psychological needs for control, belonging, and coherence. Even when refugees manage to adapt outwardly, these inner resources remain shaken. Research on self-continuity echoes this. Camia and Zafar (2021) explain how forced migration often creates a "biographical rupture," breaking the thread between past and present. Sedikides et al. (2016) add that self-continuity grows stronger when people feel supported and connected, often through memory, nostalgia, and social ties. Without these supports, integration may take place, but it remains emotionally fragile and vulnerable to stress.

Berry's (1997) framework helps describe this profile as marginalization, where people have weak connections to both heritage culture and host society. But importantly, this was not a matter of personal choice. The evidence suggests that insecurity in the asylum process, social exclusion, and the trauma of forced displacement all pushed participants into this vulnerable position. On the surface, their integration might look like assimilation, as they were active in French society and scored highest on socio-cultural integration. Yet without emotional stability or identity coherence, shown by low social identity maintenance and weak self-continuity, this pathway lacks the grounding needed for long-term integration. Insights from social identity theory deepen this picture: when refugees lose continuity with past identities and also fail to establish new ones, they are left without the stabilizing and supportive functions of group membership, which are normally key sources of resilience (Greenaway et al., 2015; Muldoon et al., 2020).

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The second category of participants reflected a profile where integration was steady and balanced, combining practical integration with the preservation of cultural roots.

The stories of Jamshid, Anwar, Aziz, Bahar, Arezu, Zaki, and Maryam illustrate this profile. Jamshid described preserving Afghan pride while adapting to life in France. Anwar focused on stability and functional adjustment. Aziz felt belonging in both French society and Afghan traditions, while Bahar maintained a strong sense of identity even in the face of exclusion. Arezu showed optimism in engaging biculturally, Zaki remained firmly attached to Afghan identity while also beginning to feel at home in France, and Maryam, despite language struggles and repeated displacement, expressed gratitude for France, valued education, and kept Afghan traditions alive. Together, these accounts show a profile of balanced adjustment, where identity and social engagement develop at a steady pace.

These experiences were also reflected in the second latent class, which showed a steady and balanced pathway toward integration. This demonstrates how the qualitative themes were not only seen in individual cases but also confirmed in the broader sample. Participants in this group managed daily life, interacted socially, and adapted to French norms while still holding onto parts of their Afghan heritage. Their social identity was not fully reshaped, but neither was it deeply disrupted. Instead, they reported moderate levels of self-continuity, which suggests they were gradually rebuilding a sense of self and moving forward without carrying strong regret about migration.

The third category represented a more consolidated bicultural profile, where participants were thriving socially and psychologically but also carried emotional costs.

The cases of Basit, Amina, and Jamil bring this profile to life. Basit balanced Afghan roots with active participation in French society, though he carried grief over family separation. Amina combined Afghan traditions and religious identity with her plans for education and work in France, but her story also revealed the emotional cost of holding onto the past while building

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a new future. Jamil took pride in maintaining his Afghan identity while actively engaging with French society, yet he also felt deep pain from family separation and memories of Afghanistan. These examples show that bicultural integration is possible and enriching, but it is rarely free from emotional strain.

These cases were reflected in the third latent class which represents a smaller group who appeared to be thriving both socially and psychologically. This shows again how the qualitative insights were supported by the wider quantitative findings. Unlike the more moderate integration of Class two, these participants showed a strong sense of self-continuity and felt secure in belonging to both cultures. Their integration was not only practical but also emotionally grounded. Yet this came with sacrifice and regret about what had been left behind.

Seen through Berry's (1997, 2005) acculturation framework, Classes two and three reflect the strategy of integration, considered the most adaptive pathway. Class two illustrates what Berry (1997) called "adaptive pluralism," where continuity and change coexist, while Class three aligns with his description of "living successfully in two cultures." This is supported by Muldoon et al. (2020), who note that wellbeing after trauma depends on both continuity and new social gains, and by Panagiotopoulos and Pavlopoulos (2023), who found that sustaining both over time strengthens adjustment. At a personal level, participants in both groups were weaving past and present into a coherent life in France, showing the importance of self-continuity. As Sedikides et al. (2023) explain, stronger self-continuity supports emotional balance and purpose, making integration sustainable.

At the same time, our findings also point to the emotional costs of integration. Participants' regret and emotional strain show that even successful integration involves inner conflict and negotiation. This finding resonates with Knausenberger et al. (2022), who demonstrated that high perceived forcedness buffered refugees against regret, even under conditions of discrimination. In their study, regret increased only when perceived forcedness

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was low, which helps explain why participants in this research often expressed limited regret despite facing exclusion and trauma.

The PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020) adds another dimension. It reminds us that integration, even when balanced, is shaped by the scars of forced migration. Trauma undermines the needs for control, belonging, and meaning, leaving integration emotionally demanding. Research shows that refugees may appear well adapted on the surface and may even improve in areas such as language, social, and economic integration, yet trauma continues to affect wellbeing and leaves those with high distress vulnerable (Potter et al., 2024; Walther et al., 2021). This resonates with our findings, where participants in Classes two and three showed resilience but still carried emotional burdens.

The fourth category of participants showed a pathway where integration was strong in practical and social terms, but heritage identity was largely left behind.

The cases of Zahra and Rahman highlight this clearly. Both leaned toward French culture while stepping back from Afghan traditions. Rahman built new goals and relationships in France and spoke of a forward-looking identity centered on the present and future, consistent with his weaker sense of self-continuity. Zahra also adapted to French norms, valuing freedom and education, though in a more functional and emotionally reserved way. While she had limited cultural participation and few local ties, she carried a quiet connection to her heritage and pinned her hopes on education.

These stories were reflected in the fourth latent class which included participants who were well integrated into French society and felt a strong sense of belonging in their new environment. This reinforces how the qualitative cases aligned with the larger quantitative patterns. They were building new roles, relationships, and goals, showing visible progress in social identity development and sociocultural participation. At the same time, much of their Afghan cultural connection had faded. Heritage identity was no longer central, as shown in their

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low scores for social identity maintenance, and their sense of self-continuity was only moderate. They still carried some link to the past, but it no longer defined them. With little regret about migration, these participants appeared to have accepted their new life and were moving forward with confidence.

Placed in context, this group most closely aligns with Berry's (1997) assimilation strategy. In the latent profiles, participants showed high sociocultural belonging and low heritage maintenance, alongside little regret about migration. Berry argued that assimilation can be adaptive when voluntary and supported by the host society, and other studies confirm that supportive conditions such as education, family support, and host community acceptance strengthen this pathway (Giles et al., 2025; Safak-Ayvazoglu & Kunuroglu, 2021).

Yet our findings also show that assimilation is not always a matter of free choice. The PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020) reminds us that structural conditions and the perils of forced migration shape psychological responses. Rahman, excluded from Afghan associations and lacking family support in France, had little chance to sustain heritage ties. Zahra, living in a camp surrounded by French neighbours and cut off from Afghan peers, also found herself engaging more with the local society out of circumstance than preference.

Self-continuity played a key role here. Rahman's weak continuity left him detached from his past, making his adjustment dependent on building a new identity from scratch. Zahra, in contrast, carried a quiet but meaningful link to her Afghan heritage, which gave her some grounding even as she adapted to French norms. Her story shows that higher self-continuity can coexist with assimilation, even when it is modest. This supports Camia and Zafar's (2021) argument that refugees fare better when they can weave past and present into a continuous story, and echoes Sedikides et al.'s (2023) view of self-continuity as a resource for resilience.

The limits of this pathway also became clear. When self-continuity is modest, assimilation can appear smooth but leave people vulnerable to strain. Hack-Polay et al. (2021)

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describe how migrants often feel pushed to adopt host identities out of necessity rather than desire, while Yoon et al. (2022) found that refugees experience guilt and anxiety when cultural ties fade. This was evident for both Zahra and Rahman: while they valued safety and freedom in France, they also carried unresolved worry and grief for their families and homeland.

These cases connect with the Social Identity Model of Traumatic Identity Change (Muldoon et al., 2020). Wellbeing after trauma is strongest when new identities are balanced with heritage ones, a point also supported by Iyer et al. (2009). For Zahra and Rahman, assimilation was shaped by circumstance rather than balance, leaving their new identities somewhat fragile and emotionally strained.

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative findings show that assimilation can function as a constructive pathway, but it is not always freely chosen. While participants in this class rebuilt roles, relationships, and goals in the host society, their stories caution against assuming assimilation is purely voluntary. Instead, it often emerges from a mix of coping strategies, structural barriers, and available networks. In this way, Class four reflects the interplay between Berry's framework and the PARI model: assimilation may support progress and reduce regret, but it can also be marked by vulnerability when heritage ties are lost.

Broader Theoretical Implications

Looking across the four classes, most participants fell within Berry's (1997, 2005) strategy of integration. Many were working to maintain Afghan heritage while also building lives in France, even as their journeys were shaped by trauma and the challenges of forced migration. A smaller group reflected marginalization, where people felt disconnected both from their Afghan identity and from French society, often due to insecurity, exclusion, and the psychological scars of displacement. Another group followed the path of assimilation, showing strong adjustment to French society but little effort or opportunity to maintain Afghan cultural ties. What was notably absent in our sample was a clear case of separation: none of the

participants lived entirely within Afghan identity while avoiding engagement with French society. Instead, the pathways I observed involved either fragile integration without strong ties, assimilation shaped by circumstance, or various forms of integration.

Taken together, the two approaches show that integration is not only about practical participation in society but also about the inner work of coping with loss, maintaining continuity, and reshaping identity in a new context. These findings also provide an opportunity to reflect on how well the theoretical models used in this study explain the experiences of Afghan refugees.

Although Berry's (1997, 2005) acculturation model was not chosen as the main framework for this study, since as noted in the theoretical framework it does not account for the emotional instability of forced displacement, the findings nonetheless provided more support for it than originally expected. The latent profiles matched in many ways with Berry's strategies of integration, assimilation, and marginalization, showing that these categories are still useful for understanding refugee experiences. At the same time, the data also revealed complexities that Berry's model alone cannot explain, particularly around migration-related perils, regret, fragility, disrupted continuity, and also moments of healing and positive adjustment.

To capture these more complex aspects, the PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020) and the concepts of self-continuity (Sedikides et al., 2023) and SIMTIC (Muldoon et al., 2020) offered additional explanatory depth. While the mediation models based on PARI were not statistically supported, its key constructs, such as forcedness, perils, and psychological responses connected to integration (for example emotional wellbeing, coping strategies, sense of belonging, and attitudes toward the host society), proved meaningful in both descriptive results and classification. These highlighted not only the psychological scars left by displacement but also the signs of resilience and recovery. Self-continuity and SIMTIC also received clearer support as individual processes: both qualitative accounts and latent profiles

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showed how continuity and identity reconstruction were central to integration, even if not confirmed in mediation pathways. Overall, this suggests that although Berry's model was more applicable than expected, the combination of PARI, self-continuity, and SIMTIC remains essential for explaining both the challenges and the strengths that shape refugee integration.

Together, these frameworks demonstrate that Afghan refugees' adaptation was never only about external participation in society, but also about the inner psychological work of preserving identity, making sense of loss, and negotiating belonging across cultures. They show that integration is a multidimensional process that involves not only trauma and disruption but also resilience, recovery, and the gradual rebuilding of continuity and meaning.

Limitations and Challenges

Recruitment for this study proved challenging, as the Afghan refugee community in France tends to be relatively insular, and several potential participants expressed concerns about the confidentiality of their responses. Even after contacting many individuals, some found it difficult to use the online system, complete the questionnaire, and submit their answers. Representation was also uneven. Certain groups were less visible, particularly the Pashtun community. Only a few Pashtun women took part in data collection, which limited the diversity of perspectives.

Sampling bias also represents an important limitation in this study. Most participants were recruited through refugee associations, integration programs, and personal networks, which may have led to an overrepresentation of individuals already connected to community organizations or formal support systems. Refugees who were more socially isolated, less engaged with associations, or hesitant to participate in research may therefore be underrepresented. Consequently, the sample may reflect the experiences of those who are relatively better integrated or have greater access to resources, while overlooking individuals facing more severe social exclusion or psychological vulnerability. This limitation is common

in refugee studies, where access and trust barriers often restrict participation to those with existing community ties.

Methodologically, the mixed-methods design created additional challenges. It was challenging to decide which themes from the interviews should be included in the survey, and collecting and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data required significant time and effort. Bringing the two strands together was especially demanding, since it required examining cases one by one to trace connections across methods. Nevertheless, undertaking this integration offers valuable insight, as such mixed-methods approaches remain uncommon in this field and help bring a stronger quantitative perspective to refugee research.

Another aspect worth noting relates to Open Science practices, particularly the use of preregistration for study protocols and analytic plans. Although this research was not preregistered, both the qualitative and quantitative phases were reviewed and approved by the Toulouse Research Ethics Committee (CER) before data collection began. This process ensured methodological rigour, transparency, and accountability. As Lakens (2019) explains, preregistration not only enhances openness in research but also encourages researchers to reflect carefully on their hypotheses, design, and analytical decisions in advance. In this study, the ethical review procedure served a similar reflective function by requiring a clear articulation of objectives, methods, and potential risks. I considered this process an important step in ensuring ethical integrity and thoughtful planning, even in the absence of formal preregistration. The details of these approvals are presented in the Methodology sections of the respective qualitative and quantitative phases under the "Ethical Considerations" subsection. While formal preregistration might have further strengthened transparency, the ethics approval process supported many of the same principles of good scientific practice. It is also worth noting that the systematic review was preregistered, as previously described, to reinforce methodological transparency.

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Beyond ethical and procedural considerations, the research also encountered practical challenges in relation to tools and cultural context. Some of the survey instruments, such as those measuring self-continuity and social identity, were seen as complicated or unfamiliar. While interviews allowed space to clarify meanings, the quantitative measures felt less adaptable to participants' cultural backgrounds. These challenges highlight how standardized tools can be difficult to apply in cross-cultural refugee research, where concepts may not always translate easily across languages or experiences.

In addition to these methodological issues, cultural and emotional factors also shaped the research process. Cultural and emotional factors also shaped the process. Many male participants requested the presence of another man during interviews, which sometimes limited openness, and some hesitated to share personal or emotional details, especially around mental health. In Afghan cultural and religious contexts, it is often considered inappropriate for an unrelated man and woman to be alone together, which likely influenced participants' comfort during the interviews. One solution might have been to administer the survey at the same time as the interviews so that questions could be clarified immediately.

Additionally, language posed another limitation in this study. While the primary research materials were developed in English, most participants completed the interviews and surveys in Persian, and a few responded in Pashto. Translating both the responses and the measurement scales was challenging, and it is possible that some nuances or meanings were lost in translation, particularly in the Pashto and Persian versions.

These challenges highlight that while a mixed-methods design can provide rich insights, it also requires balancing research rigor with accessibility, cultural sensitivity, and participant comfort. They also underline the importance of designing tools and procedures that are both methodologically sound and genuinely responsive to the realities of refugee communities.

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Future Directions

This thesis opens several important avenues for future research on refugee integration, especially when it is understood as a complex and evolving psychological and social process.

First, future studies would benefit from using longitudinal designs to track how identity, wellbeing, and integration change over time. This would allow researchers to see how early experiences such as forced migration, trauma, and displacement shape later stages of integration. It would also help show how self-continuity works, since it can protect refugees but may also change depending on their experiences and surroundings. While this study could not fully test whether self-continuity mediates the effects of forcedness on integration, future longitudinal work could explore this question more directly.

Second, future research should include larger and more diverse samples, with greater balance across gender, legal status, and life stage. In this study, most participants were male. A future project could focus more closely on female refugees, whose experiences may differ because of gender roles, caregiving responsibilities, and exposure to different forms of trauma. Similarly, it would be useful to compare asylum seekers and recognized refugees. Following individuals from the asylum phase through their initial years of settlement could offer valuable insights into how identity and integration evolve during different legal and social stages.

Third, there is a need for measurement tools that are culturally and contextually sensitive. Many existing psychological instruments are based on Western assumptions and may not fully reflect how refugees from non-Western cultural backgrounds like Afghan refugees, think about identity, wellbeing, or continuity (Alemi et al., 2023; Theisen-Womersley, 2021). Co-designed or participatory approaches could make these tools more meaningful and relevant to the lived experiences of refugee populations.

Fourth, the qualitative side of refugee research could be strengthened by using narrative and ethnographic methods. Approaches such as life story interviews, digital storytelling, or

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community-based ethnographies allow refugees to share their experiences in their own words and on their own terms. These methods give a deeper picture of how people remember their past, connect it to their present, and find ways to rebuild identity after displacement. They also make it easier to see how identity is not fixed but shaped over time by relationships, memories, loss, and belonging.

Fifth, there is a clear need for intervention-focused research. Building on the findings of this thesis, future interventions could support identity reconstruction, strengthen self-continuity, and improve emotional wellbeing, all of which were shown to be central in refugees' integration. Interventions should aim not only to meet practical needs but also to address the psychological and emotional dimensions of integration. For example, group-based storytelling workshops could help participants reflect on their life journeys, give meaning to past experiences, and rebuild a coherent sense of self. Language programs could be designed in combination with culturally safe mental health support, so that refugees develop communication skills while also finding space to process trauma and express identity. Peer support groups are another promising direction, as they create opportunities for both social connection and identity validation, reducing isolation and fostering belonging. Such approaches would respond to the multidimensional nature of integration, recognizing that rebuilding a life in exile requires more than structural inclusion; it also depends on emotional recovery, identity continuity, and supportive social networks.

Finally, future studies could build directly on this research by using it as a basis and reference point for a step-by-step longitudinal design that follows refugees over several years. One approach could be to follow asylum seekers over several years, beginning with the early experiences of displacement, hardship, and uncertainty, then examining psychological and identity responses in the second year, and finally assessing integration at the structural level in the latest years through employment, education, and civic participation. This design would

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allow for a more detailed test of the PARI model and show how its key elements develop across different phases of refugee life.

In summary, future research should move beyond short-term or surface-level measures of integration and instead explore the deeper emotional, identity-based, and social transformations that shape refugee lives. Studies should also engage the host community and take into account personal and contextual factors as recommended by PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020). By adopting more inclusive, longitudinal, and participatory approaches, researchers can generate knowledge and interventions that better reflect the complexities of integration and support refugees in building coherent and meaningful futures.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this research demonstrates the value of bringing together three complementary frameworks: the PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020), the concept of self-continuity (Sedikides et al., 2023), and the Social Identity Model of Traumatic Identity Change (SIMTIC; Muldoon et al., 2020). Rather than simply restating these frameworks, the study shows how their integration deepens understanding of refugee adaptation by linking trauma, identity, and psychological continuity. Although the quantitative results did not statistically confirm the full mediation model proposed by PARI, the qualitative findings reflected many of its key processes, such as perceived forcedness, uncertainty, and the search for meaning following displacement. By combining PARI's attention to situational stressors with self-continuity's focus on personal coherence and SIMTIC's view of identity transformation, this research offers a more comprehensive perspective on how refugees reconstruct a sense of self in the aftermath of forced migration.

The study also shows that self-continuity is not something fixed, but a process that changes and develops over time. Refugees sought to hold onto coherence across major life changes, which echoes Sedikides et al.'s (2023) framing of self-continuity as a motivated effort

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to preserve identity during upheaval. The SIMTIC (Muldoon et al., 2020) model also found support in participants' accounts of both identity loss and renewal. Many described the challenge of maintaining ties to their past while also creating new roles and meanings in the host society. Those who succeeded in building a coherent sense of self, whether through continuity or adaptive change, were better able to integrate emotionally and socially. This confirms that social identity maintenance and transformation are not opposites but parallel goals in the integration process.

One unexpected finding was the reverse relationship between perceived discrimination and socio-cultural integration. While most theories suggest that discrimination hinders integration, several participants reported that discrimination pushed them to try harder to integrate. This may be a way of coping or pushing back, and it should be studied more, especially to see how it helps people keep their self-affirmation and reshape their identity in hard situations.

From a practical perspective, the study highlights the need for integration programs that take identity processes and emotional wellbeing as seriously as housing, work, and education. Refugees are not only adjusting to external systems, they are also reinterpreting their past, rebuilding identity, and imagining new futures. Programs should therefore prioritize psychological safety, cultural continuity, and emotional recovery. For example, initiatives that support cultural expression such as language preservation, religious practice, and storytelling can strengthen identity continuity. At the same time, inclusive mentorship programs and safe community spaces can support adaptive identity development and belonging in the host context.

Stakeholders at different levels can apply these findings in tailored ways. NGOs need to design services that recognize the diversity of refugee experiences, even among people from the same country. There is no single solution; programs must be flexible and responsive. Educators working with refugee students should create learning environments that are

supportive, non-judgmental, and attentive to emotional as well as academic needs. Social workers should see their clients not only in terms of vulnerability but also in terms of resilience and identity reconstruction, helping them to recover emotionally by validating personal histories and promoting agency. Policy makers should recognize that mental health is not secondary to integration but foundational. Early psychological assessments and interventions during the asylum and resettlement process could help prevent long-term distress and disengagement.

Finally, this research adds to the field by offering a more person-centered and time-sensitive understanding of integration. Rather than seeing integration as a fixed end point, the findings show it as an ongoing process of making sense of the past, navigating the present, and envisioning the future. Identity, meaning, and emotional stability are not just outcomes of integration but part of the work of integration itself. Refugee integration must therefore be understood as a deeply personal, context-dependent, and emotionally demanding journey. By centering identity, emotional recovery, and lived experience, I can better support refugees as they rebuild their lives and reconstruct a sense of self in new and often challenging environments.

Conclusion

This thesis shows that refugee integration is not a single or linear path, but a dynamic process shaped by both cultural orientation and psychological experience. The four latent classes captured a spectrum of strategies described in Berry's (1997, 2005) acculturation model. Class 1 reflected marginalization, where participants managed daily routines but felt emotionally fragmented and disconnected from both past and present identities. Class 2 reflected a steady, balanced form of integration, where individuals combined resilience with gradual integration. Class 3 represented a stronger, bicultural integration, where participants sustained their heritage identity while building belonging in France, even though this came with

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personal sacrifice and regret. Class 4 reflected assimilation, where participants built new lives and roles in France, often under structural constraints rather than through free choice, as seen in the experiences of Rahman and Zahra. Notably, a clear pattern of separation was not observed in this sample.

Taken together, these findings both support and extend Berry's model. The PARI framework (Echterhoff et al., 2020) helps explain why these patterns emerged by showing how forced migration and perils undermine basic needs for control, belonging, and meaning. The concept of self-continuity (Sedikides et al., 2023) clarifies how maintaining or rebuilding links to the past strengthens emotional stability and wellbeing. The SIMTIC model (Muldoon et al., 2020) offers insight into how trauma disrupts identity and how people rebuild it in new contexts. While Berry's framework provides a useful reference point, it was not the guiding framework for this study; in combination with PARI, self-continuity, and SIMTIC, it helps situate the findings within a broader psychological account of integration. Together, these frameworks highlight that integration is not only about external integration, but also about the inner work of identity reconstruction, meaning-making, and coping with trauma.

This research contributes to refugee studies by showing that integration is a deeply personal and ongoing journey. It is not only about learning the language, securing housing, or accessing services, but also about making sense of the past, reshaping identity, and imagining a future. For policy and practice, this means that supporting integration requires more than structural inclusion; it also requires attention to the emotional and psychological dimensions of displacement. Recognizing integration as both a social and psychological process is essential for designing interventions and policies that reflect refugees' lived experiences and support them in rebuilding coherent, meaningful lives.

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Chapitre 1: Introduction générale

La migration forcée constitue l'un des défis humanitaires, politiques et psychologiques les plus urgents du XXIe siècle (Bisht, 2024). Le déplacement n'est pas seulement un changement de lieu, mais une rupture de stabilité, de rôles sociaux et d'identité. Pour les réfugiés, l'arrivée dans un pays d'accueil ne met pas fin au parcours; elle ouvre un long processus d'adaptation, de négociation identitaire et de reconstruction psychologique. Les réfugiés afghans constituent un cas particulièrement important en raison de décennies de conflit et de vulnérabilité structurelle, et ils représentent l'une des populations déplacées les plus à risque en Europe, y compris en France (Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM), 2024). Cette thèse examine donc l'intégration des réfugiés afghans non seulement à travers les conditions sociales et institutionnelles, mais aussi à travers des processus psychologiques souvent moins visibles, notamment le traumatisme, les ruptures de continuité de soi et les efforts visant à reconstruire un sentiment cohérent de soi et d'appartenance.

Fondements juridiques et politiques de la protection des réfugiés

L'intégration des réfugiés est façonnée par des définitions juridiques et des droits institutionnels. Le fondement international repose sur la Convention de 1951 relative au statut des réfugiés (Nations Unies, 1951) et le Protocole de 1967 (Nations Unies, 1967), ancrés dans l'article 14 de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme (1948). Alors que la Convention de 1951 visait initialement les déplacements postérieurs à la Seconde Guerre mondiale en Europe, le Protocole de 1967 a supprimé les limites géographiques et temporelles, étendant la protection à l'échelle mondiale (Nations Unies, 2010). La Convention définit les réfugiés comme des personnes se trouvant hors de leur pays et ayant une crainte fondée de persécution en raison de leur race, religion, nationalité, appartenance à un certain groupe social ou opinions politiques. À l'inverse, les demandeurs d'asile sont des personnes en attente d'une décision ;

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bien que tous ne soient pas reconnus comme réfugiés, ils sont protégés pendant la procédure d'examen (Nations Unies, 2010).

Les principes clés incluent le non-refoulement, la non-discrimination et la reconnaissance du fait que les réfugiés peuvent entrer irrégulièrement afin de demander une protection (Nations Unies, 1951). La Convention établit également l'accès à des droits fondamentaux — éducation, emploi, protection juridique et assistance publique — ainsi que des protections liées à l'unité familiale, aux documents d'identité et de voyage, et à la participation sociale, toutes cruciales pour l'intégration à long terme (Nations Unies, 2010). Le HCR supervise la mise en œuvre et la coopération des États (Nations Unies, 2010).

L'Europe et la « crise des réfugiés » de 2015

La « crise des réfugiés » de 2015 a mis à l'épreuve la gouvernance européenne de l'asile et révélé de profondes divisions politiques. Plus d'un million de demandeurs d'asile — notamment en provenance de Syrie, d'Afghanistan et d'Irak — sont arrivés par des routes dangereuses, submergeant les États de première ligne tels que la Grèce et l'Italie et déclenchant d'intenses conflits sur le partage des responsabilités (Collett & Coz, 2018). Bien que l'Europe ait déjà géré d'importants flux de déplacements (par exemple, les Balkans dans les années 1990), l'ampleur et la rapidité de 2015 ont été sans précédent dans l'ère post-guerre (Krzyżanowski et al., 2018). Les réponses de l'UE ont souvent été fragmentées, davantage guidées par des décisions nationales que par une action coordonnée au niveau européen (Collett & Coz, 2018). Les pays ont divergé fortement, certains adoptant des approches plus ouvertes tandis que d'autres résistaient aux relocalisations ou contestaient l'intervention européenne (Krzyżanowski et al., 2018).

Parmi les initiatives figurent la Déclaration UE–Turquie (mars 2016) et l'approche dite des « hotspots » pour l'enregistrement et le traitement des demandes dans les États de première ligne. Si ces mesures ont offert une capacité de gestion à court terme, elles ont aussi mis en

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évidence les limites de la solidarité et de la gouvernance européennes (Collett & Coz, 2018).

La crise s'est déroulée dans un environnement médiatique hautement politisé, où les réfugiés

ont souvent été présentés comme des menaces plutôt que comme une responsabilité

humanitaire, et où les catégories (réfugié/demandeur d'asile/migrant économique) ont

fréquemment été confondues, renforçant des récits sécuritaires et contribuant à la xénophobie

et à l'islamophobie (Krzyżanowski et al., 2018). Bien que cette période ait produit certains

apprentissages institutionnels, les fractures révélées en 2015 continuent de structurer la

politique migratoire européenne (Collett & Coz, 2018).

Dynamiques mondiales et européennes du déplacement

Le déplacement forcé a augmenté de manière spectaculaire. Fin 2023, plus de 117

millions de personnes étaient déplacées de force dans le monde (Haut-Commissariat des

Nations Unies pour les réfugiés (HCR), 2023), sous l'effet de crises prolongées, notamment en

Afghanistan, parmi d'autres (Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM), 2024).

Dans les pays de l'OCDE, les migrations ont été perturbées par la COVID-19, mais les

demandes d'asile avaient augmenté auparavant, et la migration de travail s'est poursuivie dans

des secteurs caractérisés par des conditions difficiles et une surreprésentation des migrants

(Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques (OCDE), 2020). Ces

dynamiques montrent que le déplacement forcé se produit parallèlement à la migration

économique, générant des exigences politiques complexes, notamment en France (Bahar et al.,

2024; Martin, 2018).

Le déplacement n'est pas toujours un effet collatéral des conflits : la violence peut être

utilisée de manière stratégique pour forcer le déplacement des civils à des fins politiques ou

militaires (Gutiérrez-Sanín & Wood, 2017). De tels mouvements forcés détruisent les moyens

de subsistance, la sécurité et les structures communautaires (Sun, 2024), et l'instabilité qui en

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résulte affecte non seulement l'accès aux services, mais aussi la santé mentale, la continuité identitaire et le sentiment d'appartenance (HCR, 2023).

Modèles d'intégration et cadres culturels en Europe

L'intégration est de plus en plus comprise comme multidimensionnelle, impliquant le statut juridique et la participation économique, mais aussi l'adaptation culturelle et l'appartenance sociale. Les modèles européens varient. La France est souvent décrite comme assimilationniste et universaliste, mettant l'accent sur la langue, les normes civiques et la laïcité, avec une reconnaissance limitée des différences ethniques ou religieuses dans l'espace public (Choquet, 2017). Le Royaume-Uni est décrit comme plus multidimensionnel, mettant l'accent sur des domaines pratiques tels que l'emploi, le logement et la santé, et soulignant les liens sociaux et la participation (Ager & Strang, 2008 ; Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018). L'Allemagne est fréquemment présentée comme pragmatique et fondée sur les droits, priorisant l'apprentissage de la langue, l'accès au marché du travail et la sécurité juridique (Wolffhardt et al., 2019). Au niveau de l'UE, des cadres de comparaison évaluent des indicateurs tels que l'accès aux services et la participation, même si les approches nationales restent déterminantes (Wolffhardt et al., 2019).

Dans l'ensemble, une tension centrale consiste à équilibrer l'intégration culturelle et le respect de la diversité. En France, les normes républicaines et laïques peuvent produire des tensions autour des identités ethniques ou religieuses visibles, limitant la reconnaissance sociale et compliquant la négociation identitaire (Bertaux, 2016 ; Joppke, 2007). L'intégration est également façonnée par les contextes locaux, les rapports de pouvoir et l'agentivité des réfugiés, et doit être comprise comme une expérience vécue plutôt que comme un processus linéaire (Hovil, 2014). On observe un glissement plus large vers une gouvernance multiniveaux impliquant les autorités locales et la société civile (Scholten, 2012), ainsi qu'une conception de

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l'intégration comme processus à double sens nécessitant l'adaptation des sociétés d'accueil autant que celle des réfugiés (Cerna, 2019).

L'accueil des réfugiés en France et le cas afghan

Le système d'asile français est régi par ses engagements internationaux (Nations Unies, 1951, 1967) et encadré par la coopération avec le HCR (Nations Unies, 2010). Au niveau national, les demandes sont examinées par l'OFPRA et les recours par la CNDA. En 2022, l'OFPRA a reçu plus de 131 000 demandes d'asile, l'Afghanistan figurant parmi les principaux pays d'origine (OFPRA, 2022). Pendant la procédure, l'hébergement peut se faire dans des structures telles que les CADA, HUDA et CAES, mais de nombreux demandeurs d'asile n'ont pas accès aux dispositifs officiels et dépendent de l'hébergement d'urgence ou se trouvent sans abri (Delbos & Tripier, 2020 ; Fine, 2019). Même après l'obtention d'une protection, l'accès à un logement durable demeure difficile en raison de la faible disponibilité et de périodes de transition trop courtes (Gardesse & Lelevrier, 2020). Bien que les réfugiés aient des droits en principe, les délais administratifs peuvent entraver l'accès effectif au travail, aux prestations sociales et aux services (Delbos & Tripier, 2020).

L'intégration est coordonnée par l'OFII via le Contrat d'Intégration Républicaine (CIR), qui propose des formations linguistiques et civiques. Toutefois, le dispositif peut être rigide et insuffisamment adapté à la diversité des besoins, notamment en cas de faible alphabétisation, ce qui réduit son efficacité (Direction générale des étrangers en France (DGEF), 2020). Les ONG jouent donc un rôle majeur d'accompagnement à travers l'aide juridique, l'orientation vers le logement, le soutien linguistique et les programmes communautaires, même si les ressources et l'accès varient selon les régions (Delbos & Tripier, 2020 ; Fine, 2019 ; Fine et al., 2018 ; Fondation Croix-Rouge française, 2020 ; Jesuit Refugee Service, 2022).

La migration afghane vers la France s'inscrit dans la longue histoire de conflits et de déplacements en Afghanistan (Conseil européen sur les réfugiés et les exilés (ECRE), 2024 ;

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HCR & Banque mondiale, 2016). Les effectifs étaient faibles lors des décennies précédentes (Law Library of Congress, 1994), ont augmenté dans le contexte de la crise de 2015 (Leschi, 2025) et ont fortement progressé après la prise de pouvoir des Talibans en 2021 (ECRE, 2023 ; ECRE, 2024). Les réfugiés afghans sont divers, mais comprennent souvent de nombreux jeunes, et beaucoup arrivent via des routes dangereuses traversant plusieurs pays de transit (OIM, 2016). En 2024, certaines estimations suggèrent une population afghane importante en France répartie sur plusieurs statuts juridiques, incluant de nombreux titulaires de titres de séjour (Leschi, 2025). Ils font face à des défis persistants, notamment des obstacles administratifs et des difficultés d'accès au logement et à l'emploi, également façonnés par des dynamiques publiques et politiques plus larges (ECRE, 2024 ; De Coninck, 2023).

Dimensions culturelles, obstacles et lacune de recherche

Afin de saisir l'intégration comme processus psychologique et socioculturel, ce chapitre introduit des cadres culturels — les Dimensions culturelles de Hofstede (Hofstede, 2011) et les Valeurs humaines fondamentales de Schwartz (Gouveia & Ros, 2000 ; Schwartz, 2006) — largement utilisés pour étudier l'ajustement et l'identité chez les populations migrantes et réfugiées (Wach & Hammer, 2003). Faute de données directes sur l'Afghanistan, le chapitre s'appuie sur des recherches portant sur de jeunes Afghans instruits et sur des références régionales complémentaires (Rarick A et al., 2013; Spooner, 1985). Ces modèles permettent d'expliquer comment des écarts de valeurs (par exemple, autour de la hiérarchie, de l'autonomie, de la tradition, de la conformité, des rôles de genre et des attentes institutionnelles) peuvent générer incompréhensions, stress et difficultés d'appartenance lorsque les réfugiés s'adaptent au contexte d'accueil (Berry, 2005; Strang & Ager, 2010; Donini et al., 2016).

Les réfugiés afghans en France font face à des barrières structurelles, notamment la discrimination et l'islamophobie, en particulier autour de l'identité religieuse visible (Ahmadi-Montecalvo et al., 2024; Feinstein et al., 2022), ainsi qu'à des obstacles pratiques dans l'accès

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aux soins de santé liés à la langue, à la bureaucratie et à la stigmatisation (DGEF, 2020). Les écarts éducatifs et la faible reconnaissance des qualifications affectent l'emploi et la navigation institutionnelle (Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture (UNESCO), 2023; Insee, 2023; OCDE, 2020). L'incertitude juridique, notamment les risques liés à des procédures européennes telles que les transferts Dublin, peut prolonger l'insécurité et retarder l'intégration (ECRE, 2024).

Sur le plan psychologique, de nombreux réfugiés présentent une détresse liée au traumatisme (Ahmadi-Montecalvo et al., 2024; Sifat et al., 2024), et le déplacement peut perturber la continuité de soi et l'identité sociale, affaiblissant le bien-être et compliquant l'adaptation (Sedikides et al., 2023). Pourtant, une grande partie de la recherche sur l'intégration demeure centrée sur les politiques publiques ou la sociologie et prend insuffisamment en compte ces processus internes (Fazel et al., 2005; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010). Cette thèse répond à cette lacune en adoptant une approche de l'intégration informée par le traumatisme et sensible à l'identité, reliant les périls et stresseurs migratoires à des mécanismes psychologiques et à des résultats à long terme en matière d'appartenance et de bien-être (Ager & Strang, 2008; Gutiérrez-Sanín & Wood, 2017 ; De Jesus et al., 2023 ; Walther et al., 2021).

Objectifs, méthodologie et structure de la thèse

Cette thèse examine l'intégration socioculturelle et les réponses psychologiques chez les réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans en France, en se concentrant sur la perception de la contrainte, les périls liés à la migration et des construits psychologiques tels que la continuité de soi et la souffrance émotionnelle. Elle mobilise un devis mixte exploratoire séquentiel adapté aux construits complexes et encore peu explorés (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). La recherche se déroule en trois étapes : (1) une revue systématique de la littérature, (2) des entretiens qualitatifs semi-directifs avec analyse thématique afin d'identifier des médiateurs clés, et (3) une phase quantitative reposant sur un questionnaire informé par les résultats qualitatifs et des

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mesures validées, avec intégration des deux volets au stade de l'interprétation (Creswell &
Plano Clark, 2018). La thèse est structurée en chapitres théoriques (Chapitres 2–3), chapitres
empiriques (Chapitres 4–5) et une discussion intégrée (Chapitre 6), tandis que le Chapitre 1
établit le contexte juridique, politique, culturel et institutionnel et motive une approche
psychologiquement ancrée pour comprendre l'intégration.

Chapitre 2 : Cadre théorique

Ce chapitre présente le cadre théorique qui sous-tend les études empiriques de cette
thèse. La question de recherche directrice est la suivante : comment les réfugiés afghans traitent-
ils psychologiquement le déplacement forcé, et comment ces processus façonnent-ils leur
intégration socioculturelle en France ? Pour y répondre, ce chapitre passe en revue et intègre
des théories expliquant comment l'adversité liée à la migration se traduit en réponses
psychologiques et en résultats pertinents pour l'intégration. Un cadre clair est essentiel, car il
fonctionne comme le « plan directeur » de la logique de l'étude, des questions de recherche et
de l'analyse (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). Sans cet ancrage, les expériences des réfugiés risquent
d'être réduites à des indicateurs de surface, en négligeant des processus plus profonds tels que
la perception de la contrainte, l'exposition à la violence, la désaffiliation émotionnelle, la
rupture identitaire et les stratégies de coping.

Revue des théories existantes sur la migration et l'intégration

Le chapitre examine d'abord plusieurs théories influentes relatives à l'apprentissage, à
l'intégration, à l'acculturation et à la prise de décision migratoire, en évaluant leur pertinence
pour la migration forcée. La théorie socioculturelle met l'accent sur l'interaction sociale et le
contexte culturel dans l'apprentissage (Vygotsky, 1978), mais elle est principalement
développementale et offre une valeur explicative limitée pour les réponses liées au traumatisme
chez les réfugiés adultes. La théorie de l'intégration sociale se concentre sur la cohésion et les

normes partagées (Turner, 1990), mais n'aborde pas suffisamment les conséquences émotionnelles et identitaires du déplacement. Le modèle d'acculturation de Berry met en avant l'équilibre entre le maintien de la culture d'origine et la participation à la société d'accueil (Berry, 1997). S'il est utile pour conceptualiser l'appartenance, il suppose un contexte migratoire relativement volontaire et ne propose qu'un compte rendu général de l'identité, sans saisir l'instabilité psychologique souvent produite par le déplacement forcé. Le Modèle interactif d'acculturation ajoute les orientations de la société d'accueil et les dynamiques de politiques publiques (Bourhis et al., 1997), mais minimise de la même manière le traumatisme et la rupture identitaire. Enfin, la théorie néoclassique de la migration conçoit la migration comme un choix économique rationnel (Harris & Todaro, 1970), ce qui la rend peu adaptée aux contextes réfugiés où la coercition, la survie et le traumatisme sont des moteurs centraux. Dans l'ensemble, si ces modèles offrent des éclairages structurels et socioculturels, ils ne rendent pas suffisamment compte des mécanismes psychologiques internes qui sont au cœur de cette thèse.

Lacunes conceptuelles dans la recherche sur l'intégration des réfugiés

En s'appuyant sur cette revue, le chapitre identifie des limites majeures dans la recherche actuelle sur l'intégration des réfugiés. Premièrement, une grande partie de la littérature privilégie des indicateurs structurels tels que le statut juridique, l'emploi et le logement (Donini et al., 2016 ; D. Ryan et al., 2008), en négligeant souvent des mécanismes comme la détresse, la quête de sens et la réparation identitaire. Deuxièmement, la souffrance des réfugiés est fréquemment pathologisée, le deuil et la perte étant interprétés à travers des grilles cliniques occidentales et des outils non validés pour des groupes culturels spécifiques (Alemi et al., 2023). Des critiques connexes soulignent que les paradigmes dominants du traumatisme peuvent ignorer la rupture de l'identité collective et l'incertitude post-migratoire (Theisen-Womersley, 2021), tandis que les interventions peuvent rester insensibles au contexte, en intégrant insuffisamment le traumatisme, l'identité et les réalités socioculturelles (Murray et

al., 2010). Troisièmement, la rupture identitaire est souvent sous-théorisée. Les approches dominantes de l'acculturation se concentrent sur l'ajustement comportemental externe plutôt que sur des processus internes tels que la cohérence narrative et la continuité de soi (Berry, 1997), alors même que ces processus peuvent être centraux dans les contextes de déplacement forcé (Hosseini et al., 2024). Quatrièmement, la recherche montre de plus en plus que le traumatisme, la dépression et la confusion identitaire réduisent la capacité des réfugiés à s'engager dans l'éducation, l'emploi et d'autres domaines d'intégration (Schlechter, Kamp, et al., 2021; Schlechter, Wilkinson, et al., 2021 ; Walther et al., 2020). Enfin, la continuité de soi — la connexion perçue entre l'identité passée, présente et future — reste largement absente des modèles d'intégration malgré des preuves indiquant que le déplacement la menace et que sa préservation soutient la résilience et la santé mentale (Camia & Zafar, 2021; Sedikides et al., 2023; Groen et al., 2018).

Ensemble, ces lacunes justifient la nécessité d'un cadre psychologiquement ancré, culturellement sensible et explicitement centré sur l'identité.

Cadre théorique intégré adopté dans cette thèse

En réponse, la thèse adopte un cadre intégré combinant : (1) le modèle des Antécédents psychologiques de l'intégration des réfugiés (PARI) (Echterhoff et al., 2020), (2) la continuité de soi (Sedikides et al., 2023) et (3) le Modèle de l'identité sociale du changement identitaire traumatique (SIMTIC) (Muldoon et al., 2020). Chaque modèle apporte un angle distinct mais complémentaire sur l'adaptation des réfugiés.

PARI fournit la structure générale en soulignant que l'intégration est façonnée non seulement par les conditions structurelles, mais aussi par les expériences psychologiques subjectives des réfugiés. Une contribution centrale de PARI est son accent sur la perception de la contrainte — c'est-à-dire l'intensité avec laquelle les individus vivent leur migration comme imposée par la menace, la violence ou un danger systémique (Echterhoff et al., 2020). Le

modèle propose que la perception de la contrainte influence directement les réponses psychologiques et puisse aussi modifier la manière dont les stresseurs post-arrivée sont traités. Les exigences post-arrivée incluent l'incertitude juridique, des institutions inconnues, les barrières linguistiques, le chômage, la discrimination et la perte de statut social — autant de stresseurs qui menacent des besoins psychologiques fondamentaux et activent des réponses psychologiques pertinentes pour l'intégration (Echterhoff et al., 2020). Des travaux empiriques soutiennent des éléments de cette logique : la perception de la contrainte a été associée à des variations significatives des résultats psychologiques (Knausenberger et al., 2022) et la discrimination à des réponses émotionnelles négatives telles que le regret migratoire (Kahl et al., 2023). PARI met également en évidence des médiateurs psychologiques — tels que l'incertitude, la diminution du contrôle, le traumatisme, la souffrance et l'auto-efficacité — qui contribuent à expliquer comment les expériences de contrainte et les stresseurs influencent les résultats d'intégration (Echterhoff et al., 2020).

La continuité de soi est intégrée comme un mécanisme identitaire clé. Elle renvoie à la cohérence perçue reliant le soi passé, présent et futur (Sedikides et al., 2023). La migration forcée peut produire ce qui a été décrit comme une rupture biographique, perturbant la cohérence narrative et déstabilisant l'identité (Camia & Zafar, 2021). La recherche indique qu'une continuité de soi plus forte est associée à la résilience et à la stabilité émotionnelle (Sedikides et al., 2023), tandis que la quête de sens et les stratégies narratives autobiographiques peuvent soutenir le rétablissement et réduire la détresse (Habermas & Köber, 2015 ; Camia & Zafar, 2021). Des études suggèrent également que le rappel nostalgique et la mémoire culturelle peuvent renforcer des valeurs définissant l'identité et la continuité en situation de désaffiliation (Hong et al., 2022). Sur le plan conceptuel, la continuité de soi s'aligne sur l'accent de PARI sur le traitement psychologique subjectif et prolonge PARI en intégrant plus explicitement la cohérence identitaire dans la logique de médiation (Becker et al., 2018 ; Wildschut et al., 2019).

Résumé de la thèse en Français

SIMTIC ajoute la dimension de l'identité sociale dans le traumatisme et la récupération. S'appuyant sur les traditions de l'identité sociale et de l'auto-catégorisation, SIMTIC explique comment le traumatisme peut perturber les appartenances groupales qui procurent sens, appartenance et soutien (Muldoon et al., 2020). Le modèle met en avant des trajectoires telles que la continuité identitaire (maintien de liens valorisés avec des groupes préexistants), le gain identitaire (formation de nouvelles appartenances) et la revitalisation identitaire (renouvellement du sens et de la connexion à des groupes existants) comme des voies par lesquelles les personnes font face après un traumatisme (Muldoon et al., 2020). Des données issues de contextes réfugiés soutiennent ces trajectoires : le maintien de liens avec les groupes pré-migration a été associé à une détresse plus faible et à un meilleur bien-être, tandis que la formation de nouvelles affiliations dans le contexte d'accueil est associée à une meilleure intégration et à une plus grande satisfaction de vie (Panagiotopoulos et al., 2022 ; Panagiotopoulos & Pavlopoulos, 2023). Le soutien social fondé sur l'identité est également considéré comme particulièrement efficace lorsqu'il est culturellement et expérientiellement pertinent (Muldoon et al., 2020). Dans cette thèse, le maintien et le développement de l'identité sociale sont traités principalement comme des résultats pertinents pour l'intégration — des indicateurs d'adaptation psychologique et d'engagement socioculturel — plutôt qu'uniquement comme des médiateurs.

Utilisation du cadre dans la recherche empirique

Dans l'ensemble du devis mixte exploratoire séquentiel, le cadre intégré a fourni une structure cohérente pour relier des prédicteurs (p. ex., perception de la contrainte, périls liés à la migration, discrimination) à des mécanismes psychologiques (avec un accent particulier sur la continuité de soi) et à des résultats pertinents pour l'intégration (p. ex., orientation d'acculturation, réponses liées au bien-être et maintien/développement de l'identité sociale). Cela s'inscrit dans une logique de médiation couramment utilisée en psychologie sociale pour

tester des trajectoires de processus (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Shrout & Bolger, 2002) et soutient l'objectif de la thèse consistant à expliquer non seulement si l'intégration a lieu, mais comment elle est vécue psychologiquement et façonnée au fil du temps.

Conclusion du chapitre

En résumé, le Chapitre 2 soutient que les théories dominantes de la migration et de l'acculturation ne rendent pas suffisamment compte des réalités psychologiques du déplacement forcé, en particulier la détresse liée au traumatisme, la rupture identitaire et le travail de reconstruction de la cohérence et de l'appartenance. Pour répondre à ces limites, la thèse adopte un cadre informé par le traumatisme et sensible à l'identité, combinant PARI (Echterhoff et al., 2020), la continuité de soi (Sedikides et al., 2023) et SIMTIC (Muldoon et al., 2020). Ensemble, ces modèles offrent une manière structurée de comprendre comment les expériences de contrainte et les stresseurs post-arrivée des réfugiés afghans façonnent des mécanismes psychologiques et des résultats d'identité sociale centraux pour l'intégration socioculturelle en France.

Chapitre 3 : Revue systématique des impacts psychologiques et socioculturels de la violence et du déplacement forcé chez les réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans

Introduction

Les réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans ont été exposés de manière prolongée à la violence, au déplacement forcé et à l'instabilité socioculturelle, à la fois dans leur pays d'origine et à travers de multiples étapes de la migration. Ces expériences ont des conséquences profondes sur le bien-être psychologique et sur les résultats d'intégration à long terme. Comprendre ces processus exige d'examiner non seulement les schémas de violence et de déplacement, mais aussi les mécanismes psychologiques par lesquels ces expériences influencent l'adaptation dans les sociétés d'accueil.

Résumé de la thèse en Français

Ce chapitre présente une revue systématique d'études empiriques portant sur l'exposition des réfugiés afghans à la violence, les stresseurs liés à la migration, les réponses psychologiques et les résultats d'intégration. La revue est guidée par le modèle des Antécédents psychologiques de l'intégration des réfugiés (PARI) (Echterhoff et al., 2020) et par le concept de continuité de soi (Sedikides et al., 2023), qui fournissent ensemble un cadre permettant de comprendre comment les expériences de migration forcée se traduisent en processus psychologiques pertinents pour l'intégration. En synthétisant les preuves issues d'études qualitatives, quantitatives et mixtes, la revue identifie des tendances clés, des lacunes et des médiateurs qui façonnent l'adaptation des réfugiés afghans.

Contrairement aux revues narratives, les revues systématiques utilisent des procédures transparentes et reproductibles pour l'identification, la sélection, l'évaluation et la synthèse des études (Higgins et al., 2019 ; Mulrow, 1994). Cette approche réduit les biais et renforce la base probante des conclusions. Il est important de souligner que cette revue constitue la première phase du devis mixte exploratoire séquentiel de la thèse : elle informe le développement des phases qualitative et quantitative ultérieures en identifiant des variables centrales, des thèmes récurrents et des lacunes conceptuelles dans la recherche existante.

La revue répond à quatre questions de recherche:

— Quels problèmes psychologiques et sociaux les réfugiés afghans rencontrent-ils dans leur pays d'origine et durant la migration?

— Quels défis et quelles réponses psychologiques émergent pendant la procédure d'asile et la réinstallation précoce?

— Quels défis d'intégration à plus long terme les réfugiés afghans rencontrent-ils dans les pays d'accueil ?

— Quels médiateurs psychologiques influencent l'adaptation au fil des phases migratoires ?

Résumé de la thèse en Français

Violence mondiale et déplacement forcé : contexte général

Le déplacement forcé est un phénomène mondial principalement alimenté par les conflits, les persécutions et la violence structurelle. Les réfugiés subissent souvent des violences non seulement dans leurs pays d'origine, mais aussi durant le transit et après leur arrivée dans les pays d'accueil. À l'échelle mondiale, les populations fuyant des conflits en Syrie, au Myanmar, en Palestine, en République démocratique du Congo, au Soudan du Sud, en Éthiopie et en Afghanistan ont été exposées à des bombardements, des persécutions ethniques, des violations des droits humains et une insécurité prolongée (Faxon et al., 2015 ; Giovetti, 2019 ; Human Rights Watch, 2024).

L'Afghanistan représente l'un des contextes produisant le plus durablement des réfugiés dans le monde. Des décennies de conflit — incluant l'invasion soviétique, la guerre civile, le régime taliban, l'intervention post-2001 et la prise de pouvoir des talibans en 2021 — ont soumis les civils à des cycles répétés de violence, de persécution et d'instabilité (Jackson, 2009 ; Clark, 2023). L'UNAMA estime à plus de 47 000 le nombre de décès civils entre 2001 et 2021, les femmes et les enfants étant touchés de manière disproportionnée. Les violences envers les minorités ethniques et les femmes, y compris les restrictions à l'éducation et à l'emploi après 2021, ont déclenché un nouveau déplacement (UNHCR, 2021a).

Les trajectoires migratoires exposent elles-mêmes les réfugiés à des préjudices supplémentaires. Les réfugiés afghans rapportent fréquemment des violences physiques, l'exploitation, des violences sexuelles, la traite et la détention durant le transit, en particulier le long des routes passant par l'Iran, le Pakistan, la Turquie et les Balkans (Marchand et al., 2014 ; Torfa et al., 2022). Même dans les pays d'accueil, les réfugiés peuvent continuer à subir des violences émotionnelles, physiques et économiques, souvent liées à l'insécurité juridique, à la discrimination et à la vulnérabilité fondée sur le genre (Jensen, 2018).

Résumé de la thèse en Français

Ces formes de violence qui se chevauchent créent une vulnérabilité psychologique cumulative, renforçant la peur, la perte de contrôle et l'incertitude — des éléments clés mis en avant dans le modèle PARI comme antécédents des difficultés d'intégration.

Tendances migratoires afghanes et schémas de déplacement

La migration afghane s'est déroulée en vagues distinctes correspondant à de grands bouleversements politiques. De l'invasion soviétique (1978–1989) à la guerre civile, au régime taliban, à l'intervention post-2001 et à l'instabilité renouvelée après 2014, des millions d'Afghans ont connu des déplacements internes et externes (Schetter, 2012 ; Schmeidl, 2019). La prise de pouvoir des talibans en août 2021 a déclenché un exode de grande ampleur : plus de 123 000 personnes ont été évacuées par voie aérienne et des millions ont fui vers des pays voisins dans des conditions précaires (Amnesty International, 2021).

Les routes migratoires sont souvent irrégulières en raison du nombre limité de voies légales. Les Afghans fuient fréquemment vers l'Iran et le Pakistan avant de tenter une migration secondaire vers l'Europe via des routes terrestres et maritimes dangereuses. Les jeunes hommes migrent souvent seuls, tandis que les familles et les mineurs peuvent se déplacer collectivement afin d'assurer la sécurité et l'accès à l'éducation (Marchand et al., 2014). Les mineurs non accompagnés et les jeunes sont particulièrement vulnérables : ils entrent souvent précocement sur le marché du travail pour rembourser les dettes de migration et soutenir leur famille (Bozok & Bozok, 2019).

Ces schémas migratoires soulignent la nature persistante du déplacement afghan et la forte probabilité que les réfugiés aient subi des déplacements multiples, une incertitude prolongée et une exposition répétée au danger — des conditions au centre du fardeau psychologique examiné dans cette revue.

Fondements conceptuels : PARI et continuité de soi

Résumé de la thèse en Français

La revue systématique est structurée autour de composantes sélectionnées du modèle PARI (Echterhoff et al., 2020) : la contrainte et les périls liés à la migration, les stresseurs post-migratoires, les médiateurs psychologiques et les réponses psychologiques pertinentes pour l'intégration. Le concept de continuité de soi est intégré comme médiateur supplémentaire, reflétant les efforts des réfugiés pour maintenir une cohérence identitaire à travers des trajectoires de vie perturbées (Sedikides et al., 2023).

PARI conceptualise la migration forcée comme une expérience subjective caractérisée par la perte de choix, l'exposition au danger et l'incertitude. Ces expériences activent des médiateurs psychologiques — tels que la perte de contrôle, l'incertitude, le traumatisme et la souffrance — qui façonnent la régulation émotionnelle, la motivation, les stratégies de coping et, en fin de compte, les résultats d'intégration. La continuité de soi complète ce cadre en soulignant comment les perturbations de la cohérence identitaire peuvent fragiliser la résilience, la prise de décision et l'appartenance.

Méthodologie de la revue systématique

La revue a suivi les lignes directrices PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021) et a adopté un devis de revue systématique mixte selon l'approche JBI « Convergent Segregated » (Stern et al., 2021). Les recherches ont été menées dans PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES et Google Scholar pour des études publiées entre 2010 et 2024. Le protocole a été préenregistré sur l'OSF.

Au total, 23 études ont satisfait les critères d'inclusion (11 qualitatives, 10 quantitatives, 2 mixtes). Les études portaient sur des réfugiés ou demandeurs d'asile afghans adultes dans des pays d'accueil développés et examinaient la détresse psychologique, les défis d'intégration ou les expériences de déplacement forcé. L'évaluation de la qualité a été effectuée à l'aide du Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) (Hong et al., 2018). Globalement, les études présentaient une qualité méthodologique adéquate, bien que des limites aient été relevées, notamment des petits échantillons, des devis transversaux et une représentativité limitée.

Résumé de la thèse en Français

Synthèse narrative des résultats

Contrainte, périls et stresseurs post-migratoires

Dans les études quantitatives, les réfugiés afghans présentent une forte prévalence de traumatismes et de détresse psychologique. Les taux de TSPT variaient d'environ 49 % à plus de 60 % dans certains contextes d'accueil (Ahmad et al., 2020 ; Hamrah et al., 2021). Le chômage, l'insécurité du statut juridique, la séparation familiale et la discrimination étaient systématiquement associés à une détresse plus élevée (Walther et al., 2020 ; Andisha & Lueger-Schuster, 2024).

Les études qualitatives ont fourni des récits riches de contrainte et de danger à toutes les étapes de la migration. Les participants décrivaient une fuite « sans choix » face aux menaces des talibans, des parcours dangereux, et une insécurité persistante dans des camps surpeuplés et des logements instables (Belabbas et al., 2022 ; de Jong, 2022 ; Kohlbacher, 2020). La séparation familiale apparaissait comme un stresseur particulièrement puissant, générant culpabilité, anxiété et altération du fonctionnement (Wilmsen, 2013).

Pris ensemble, ces résultats indiquent que la contrainte et les périls cumulatifs constituent un arrière-plan persistant qui façonne la vulnérabilité psychologique des réfugiés longtemps après la réinstallation.

Médiateurs psychologiques

Seul un nombre limité d'études a testé explicitement des trajectoires de médiation. Les médiateurs identifiés incluaient les stresseurs post-migratoires, le soutien social et la dysrégulation affective (Ahmad et al., 2020 ; Andisha & Lueger-Schuster, 2024 ; Schiess-Jokanovic et al., 2022). Ces médiateurs s'alignent partiellement sur les mécanismes proposés par PARI, mais étaient souvent formulés différemment.

La continuité de soi n'a été testée formellement dans aucune étude. Toutefois, les résultats qualitatifs décrivaient de manière répétée des perturbations identitaires, des ruptures

Résumé de la thèse en Français

narratives et des difficultés à réconcilier le soi passé et le soi présent (Sharifi-Ahmadipour &
Sordé-Martí, 2024 ; Wehrle et al., 2018), ce qui met en évidence une lacune empirique
importante.

Réponses psychologiques pertinentes pour l'intégration

Les études quantitatives ont documenté des liens forts entre la détresse psychologique
et une participation réduite à l'emploi, à l'éducation et aux programmes d'intégration (Walther
et al., 2020 ; Gladwell, 2021). La discrimination, les barrières linguistiques et la pression
financière prédisaient la dépression et l'anxiété (Sifat et al., 2024).

Les études qualitatives ont montré comment la détresse était vécue et exprimée à travers
la rumination (« trop penser »), des symptômes somatiques, le retrait social et la perte d'espoir
(Alemi et al., 2016 ; Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012). En parallèle, les réfugiés manifestaient
de la résilience grâce à des stratégies de coping telles que la religion, l'engagement
communautaire, l'activisme, le soutien par les pairs et la reconstruction identitaire (Nguyễn-
Nalpas, 2023 ; Batool et al., 2024).

Ces résultats montrent que la détresse et l'agentivité coexistent : la souffrance
psychologique contraint l'intégration, mais les réfugiés cherchent activement du sens, de
l'appartenance et du contrôle.

Discussion et implications

Globalement, les preuves soutiennent les hypothèses centrales du modèle PARI : la
contrainte, les périls liés à la migration et les stresseurs post-migratoires fragilisent la stabilité
psychologique en érodant le contrôle, la sécurité et la certitude. Ces effets sont médiatisés par
la détresse émotionnelle et la rupture identitaire, façonnant les résultats d'intégration.
Cependant, la revue met aussi en lumière des lacunes importantes, en particulier l'absence de
tests explicites de médiateurs psychologiques tels que la continuité de soi.

Résumé de la thèse en Français

Les limites méthodologiques — notamment les devis transversaux et l'hétérogénéité des mesures — restreignent les inférences causales. Néanmoins, ces résultats soulignent la nécessité de recherches longitudinales, mixtes et guidées par la théorie, examinant explicitement des mécanismes psychologiques fondés sur l'identité.

Conclusion du chapitre

Cette revue systématique synthétise les preuves relatives aux impacts psychologiques et socioculturels de la violence et du déplacement forcé chez les réfugiés afghans. Les résultats montrent que l'exposition cumulative à la violence, à la contrainte et à l'exclusion structurelle produit une vulnérabilité psychologique persistante qui façonne les trajectoires d'intégration. Si les études existantes documentent la détresse et les stratégies de coping, des processus médiateurs clés — en particulier la continuité identitaire — restent insuffisamment explorés.

En identifiant ces lacunes, la revue fournit une base critique pour les phases empiriques de cette thèse. Elle confirme la nécessité d'une approche de l'intégration des réfugiés psychologiquement ancrée et sensible à l'identité, guidant les études qualitative et quantitative qui suivent.

Chapitre 4 : Exploration qualitative de l'intégration psychologique et socioculturelle chez les réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans en France

Aperçu et justification

Ce chapitre présente la phase qualitative de la recherche, conçue pour explorer les expériences d'intégration psychologique et socioculturelle des réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans en France. En s'appuyant sur la revue systématique présentée au Chapitre 3, l'étude qualitative répond à des lacunes majeures identifiées dans la littérature existante. Les recherches antérieures sur l'intégration des réfugiés se sont largement concentrées sur des indicateurs structurels tels que le statut juridique, l'emploi, le logement et l'accès aux services. Bien que

ces dimensions soient essentielles, elles offrent une compréhension incomplète de l'intégration lorsqu'elles sont examinées isolément, car elles négligent souvent des processus psychologiques tels que la disruption identitaire, la souffrance émotionnelle, l'incertitude et la reconstruction de soi à la suite d'un déplacement forcé.

Les recherches portant spécifiquement sur les réfugiés afghans ont rarement examiné la manière dont les individus donnent sens à leurs expériences migratoires ou reconstruisent leur sentiment de soi après le déplacement, en particulier dans le contexte français. Des concepts tels que la contrainte perçue, les périls liés à la migration, la continuité de soi et leur relation au bien-être et aux résultats d'intégration demeurent sous-explorés. Pour combler ces lacunes, cette phase qualitative adopte une approche fondée sur le récit, permettant aux participants d'exprimer leurs expériences avec leurs propres mots et depuis leurs propres perspectives culturelles.

La phase qualitative remplit également une fonction méthodologique dans le cadre plus large du devis mixte de la thèse. En identifiant des thèmes psychologiques clés, des processus et des relations, elle informe l'élaboration d'hypothèses et de stratégies de mesure pour la phase quantitative ultérieure.

Objectifs de recherche et questions

L'objectif central de cette phase qualitative était d'explorer comment les réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans en France vivent l'intégration socioculturelle et le bien-être, en portant une attention particulière aux processus psychologiques qui façonnent ces expériences. Trois questions de recherche ont guidé l'enquête :

Comment les réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans vivent-ils l'intégration socioculturelle en France, et comment cela se relie-t-il à leur bien-être ?

Comment la contrainte perçue du déplacement et l'exposition aux périls liés à la migration influencent-elles les réponses psychologiques et l'intégration structurelle ?

Résumé de la thèse en Français

Quel rôle la continuité de soi joue-t-elle dans la structuration du bien-être psychologique et des résultats d'intégration après la réinstallation ?

Bien que l'étude soit exploratoire, un ensemble d'hypothèses conceptuellement orientées a été élaboré pour guider la collecte de données et l'interprétation. Ces hypothèses portaient sur les niveaux d'intégration, l'impact de la contrainte et des périls sur le bien-être, ainsi que le rôle médiateur des processus psychologiques — en particulier la continuité de soi — dans la structuration des trajectoires d'intégration.

Approche méthodologique

Participants et échantillonnage

Quatorze réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans ont participé à l'étude. Les participants étaient âgés du début de l'âge adulte au début de la quarantaine et comprenaient des hommes et des femmes présentant des trajectoires migratoires, des statuts juridiques et des durées de séjour en France variés. Les participants vivaient en France depuis au minimum huit mois, ce qui leur permettait de réfléchir de manière significative à leurs expériences d'intégration.

Le recrutement a été réalisé en collaboration avec des organisations de soutien aux réfugiés afghans et via un échantillonnage par boule de neige. L'échantillon incluait des personnes arrivées par des voies migratoires régulières et irrégulières, et la saturation thématique a été atteinte après quatorze entretiens.

Collecte de données et éthique

Des entretiens semi-directifs ont été menés sur une période de trois mois. Les entretiens duraient entre 60 et 90 minutes et ont été conduits en persan, en pachto ou en anglais, selon la préférence des participants. Les entretiens exploraient les trajectoires migratoires, la contrainte perçue, les réponses psychologiques, la continuité de soi, le bien-être, l'acculturation et les résultats d'intégration.

Résumé de la thèse en Français

L'étude a reçu l'approbation éthique du comité d'éthique universitaire compétent et a respecté des standards éthiques stricts, incluant le consentement éclairé, la confidentialité et la prise en compte du bien-être des participants. Étant donné la nature sensible des sujets abordés, une attention particulière a été portée au fait que les participants puissent faire une pause ou se retirer à tout moment.

Analyse des données

Les données ont été analysées au moyen d'une analyse thématique réflexive suivant l'approche de Braun et Clarke, combinant un codage déductif informé par le cadre théorique avec un codage inductif ancré dans les récits des participants. Afin de renforcer la crédibilité, un second codeur a été impliqué, et un accord inter-codeurs substantiel a été obtenu.

Pour renforcer la rigueur analytique et la triangulation, une analyse lexicale complémentaire a été menée à l'aide d'IRaMuTeQ. Bien que l'analyse lexicale n'ait pas généré de nouveaux thèmes, elle a soutenu et validé la structure thématique en identifiant des régularités lexicales cohérentes à travers les récits.

Résultats

Les résultats sont organisés autour de quatre thèmes interreliés reflétant le modèle des Antécédents psychologiques de l'intégration des réfugiés (PARI) :

(1) Contrainte perçue et périls migratoires

(2) Médiateurs psychologiques

(3) Réponses psychologiques liées à l'intégration

(4) Résultats d'intégration

Ensemble, ces thèmes illustrent l'intégration comme un processus prolongé et multidimensionnel façonné par les expériences avant le départ, durant la migration et après l'arrivée.

Thème 1 : Contrainte perçue et périls migratoires

Résumé de la thèse en Français

Les participants ont très majoritairement décrit leur migration depuis l'Afghanistan comme involontaire. Treize participants sur quatorze ont déclaré s'être sentis fortement contraints de partir, évoquant des menaces sécuritaires, l'instabilité politique, la persécution, les interdictions d'accès à l'éducation et l'effondrement économique. La migration était présentée non comme un choix mais comme une nécessité pour la survie, la sécurité ou les perspectives d'avenir.

Les parcours migratoires étaient fréquemment décrits comme dangereux et traumatiques. La plupart des participants ont emprunté des routes irrégulières, impliquant des franchissements de frontières, des réseaux de passeurs, de longues marches, la détention et des traversées maritimes mettant la vie en danger. Même ceux ayant migré par des voies formelles ont rapporté une détresse liée à des évacuations chaotiques, à la discrimination dans les pays de transit et à une incertitude prolongée.

Fait important, les participants ont souligné que les difficultés ne s'arrêtaient pas à l'arrivée en France. Les stresseurs post-arrivée incluaient de longues procédures d'asile, la précarité du logement, l'insécurité financière, les barrières linguistiques et la complexité administrative. Beaucoup ont décrit le fait de dormir dans des centres d'hébergement ou dans l'espace public, de travailler de manière informelle pour survivre et de peiner à s'orienter dans des systèmes inconnus. Ces stresseurs post-arrivée ont renforcé les traumatismes antérieurs et ont façonné la manière dont les participants abordaient l'intégration.

Thème 2 : Médiateurs psychologiques

Ce thème recouvre les processus psychologiques internes reliant les expériences de migration forcée aux résultats d'intégration. Trois médiateurs clés ont émergé : la continuité de soi, la souffrance et l'incertitude.

Continuité de soi

Résumé de la thèse en Français

Les participants variaient quant au degré de connexion ressenti avec leur soi passé. Certains décrivaient une forte continuité, enracinée dans les pratiques culturelles, les rôles familiaux, les valeurs et les souvenirs. D'autres rapportaient une continuité affaiblie ou fragmentée, se sentant déconnectés de la personne qu'ils étaient avant la migration.

Pour beaucoup, la vie était décrite comme une histoire continue comportant différentes phases plutôt que comme une rupture totale. Maintenir des liens avec le passé — par l'alimentation, la langue, la religion ou les souvenirs — aidait à préserver un sentiment d'identité. Cependant, un groupe plus restreint vivait sa trajectoire comme fragmentée, en particulier ceux qui avaient le sentiment d'avoir perdu leurs rêves, leur statut ou leur sens du but.

Souffrance

La souffrance psychologique était largement répandue. De nombreux participants ont décrit la peur, le deuil, l'impuissance, l'épuisement émotionnel et des traumatismes liés aux expériences migratoires et à l'instabilité post-arrivée. La souffrance persistait souvent après l'arrivée, affectant le sommeil, la motivation et le bien-être émotionnel.

Malgré cela, les participants ont également décrit des stratégies de coping, incluant la foi, la prière, l'humour, la fixation d'objectifs et la relecture des difficultés comme une source de force. Ces stratégies ont joué un rôle clé dans le maintien de la résilience.

Incertitude

L'incertitude est apparue comme une expérience psychologique dominante. Les participants ont décrit l'incertitude concernant le statut juridique, l'emploi, le regroupement familial et l'appartenance à long terme. Pour certains, l'incertitude menait à une forme de paralysie et à un retrait émotionnel. Pour d'autres, elle coexistait avec l'optimisme et des objectifs tournés vers l'avenir, notamment liés à l'éducation, à l'avenir des enfants ou à des aspirations professionnelles.

Résumé de la thèse en Français

Thème 3 : Réponses psychologiques liées à l'intégration

Ce thème porte sur la manière dont les participants répondaient psychologiquement aux défis d'intégration en France.

Bien-être

Le bien-être était décrit comme ambivalent pour la plupart des participants. Beaucoup exprimaient un bonheur lié à la sécurité, à la liberté ou au regroupement familial, tout en éprouvant simultanément de la tristesse, de l'inquiétude ou un sentiment de perte liés à la séparation, à l'incertitude ou à la distance culturelle. Un groupe plus restreint décrivait un bien-être stable, souvent associé à un logement sécurisé, à un statut juridique ou à la présence de la famille.

Attitudes envers la société d'accueil

Les attitudes vis-à-vis de la société française étaient complexes et nuancées. Beaucoup décrivaient de la gentillesse, du respect et du soutien de la part de personnes et d'institutions, parallèlement à des expériences d'incompréhension culturelle, de distance émotionnelle ou de discrimination perçue. Certains exprimaient une forte appréciation des libertés et des valeurs françaises, tandis que d'autres soulignaient des inefficacités bureaucratiques ou des traitements inégaux.

Acculturation et identité sociale

L'acculturation était vécue comme une négociation entre le maintien de l'identité afghane et l'adaptation à la société française. Beaucoup insistaient sur la préservation de traditions telles que l'Aïd, Nowruz, la langue et les pratiques religieuses, en particulier pour leurs enfants. D'autres se sentaient contraints par l'isolement, l'absence de communauté ou une pression perçue à l'assimilation.

Le sentiment d'appartenance variait fortement. Certains se sentaient acceptés et « chez eux », tandis que d'autres continuaient à se percevoir comme des étrangers malgré la

reconnaissance légale. L'identité sociale était fluide : certains redéfinissaient leur identité à travers de nouvelles affiliations, un changement religieux ou une prise de distance vis-à-vis des communautés co-ethniques.

Thème 4 : Résultats d'intégration

Ce thème concerne les dimensions structurelles de l'intégration, en mettant en évidence un accès inégal et des obstacles persistants.

Éducation et employ

L'accès à l'éducation variait fortement. Certains participants ont intégré des cours de langue, des formations professionnelles ou des programmes universitaires, tandis que d'autres rencontraient des barrières liées à l'âge, aux retards administratifs, aux difficultés linguistiques ou aux pressions économiques. L'emploi était souvent précaire : beaucoup travaillaient dans des emplois peu qualifiés sans rapport avec leurs compétences, ou restaient au chômage faute de réseaux et de reconnaissance des diplômes.

Logement et services publics

L'instabilité résidentielle était fréquente, en particulier dans les premières phases de la réinstallation. Si certains ont finalement accédé à un logement stable, beaucoup ont subi une insécurité prolongée. L'accès aux services publics et au soutien social dépendait fortement du statut juridique : certains recevaient une aide substantielle, tandis que d'autres dépendaient d'ONG ou de réseaux informels.

Soutien en santé mentale

L'accès aux soins de santé mentale était extrêmement limité. Un seul participant a déclaré bénéficier d'un soutien psychologique. Pour la plupart, les besoins en santé mentale étaient relégués au second plan face à des préoccupations plus immédiates telles que le logement, le statut juridique et l'emploi. La stigmatisation culturelle et le manque de sensibilisation limitaient encore davantage le recours à l'aide.

Résumé de la thèse en Français

Discussion

Les résultats illustrent l'intégration comme un processus multidimensionnel et non linéaire, façonné par l'interaction entre les expériences de migration forcée, les processus psychologiques et les conditions structurelles. Conformément au modèle PARI, la contrainte perçue et les périls liés à la migration ont façonné des médiateurs psychologiques tels que la souffrance, l'incertitude et la continuité de soi, qui ont à leur tour influencé le bien-être et les résultats d'intégration.

La continuité de soi est apparue comme un mécanisme médiateur central. Les participants qui maintenaient ou reconstruisaient un sentiment cohérent de soi montraient une plus grande stabilité émotionnelle, une motivation accrue et un engagement plus important dans les opportunités d'intégration. À l'inverse, une continuité de soi fragmentée était associée à une détresse émotionnelle, un retrait et des difficultés à planifier l'avenir.

Les résultats d'intégration étaient étroitement liés à la préparation psychologique. Le rétablissement émotionnel précédait souvent les progrès en matière d'éducation, d'emploi et de logement, soulignant l'importance de traiter le bien-être psychologique en parallèle de l'intégration structurelle.

Conclusion du chapitre

Ce chapitre montre que les expériences d'intégration des réfugiés afghans ne peuvent pas être comprises uniquement à travers des indicateurs juridiques ou économiques. L'intégration est profondément psychologique : elle implique une négociation identitaire, une résilience émotionnelle et une construction de sens après le déplacement forcé. En mettant au premier plan les expériences vécues des réfugiés, les résultats qualitatifs soulignent le rôle central de la continuité de soi et des processus psychologiques dans la structuration du bien-être et de l'intégration socioculturelle. Ces éclairages constituent la base conceptuelle de la

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phase quantitative qui suit, laquelle examine de manière systématique les relations entre la contrainte, la continuité de soi et les résultats d'intégration.

Chapitre 5: Analyse quantitative de la contrainte, de la continuité de soi, de l'identité sociale et de l'intégration socioculturelle chez les réfugiés afghans en France

Aperçu et objectifs

Ce chapitre présente la phase quantitative de la thèse, constituant la deuxième étape d'un devis mixte séquentiel exploratoire. S'appuyant directement sur les résultats qualitatifs présentés au Chapitre 4, cette phase visait à examiner statistiquement comment des stresseurs liés à la migration — en particulier la contrainte perçue, l'exposition à la violence, les périls liés à la migration et la discrimination après l'arrivée — sont associés à des résultats psychologiques pertinents pour l'intégration chez des réfugiés afghans vivant en France.

Guidée par le modèle des Antécédents psychologiques de l'intégration des réfugiés (PARI), le concept de continuité de soi et le Modèle d'identité sociale du changement identitaire traumatique (SIMTIC), l'étude visait à tester si ces stresseurs liés à la migration prédisent directement l'intégration socioculturelle, les processus d'identité sociale (maintien identitaire et gain identitaire) et le regret lié à la migration, et si la continuité de soi fonctionne comme médiateur psychologique dans ces relations.

La phase quantitative visait ainsi à prolonger les éclairages qualitatifs en examinant des trajectoires théoriquement fondées à un niveau plus large et plus généralisable, tout en testant la logique de médiation proposée par le cadre PARI.

Hypothèses

Quatre ensembles d'hypothèses ont été testés. Premièrement, il a été supposé qu'une contrainte perçue plus élevée, une plus grande exposition à la violence et davantage de périls liés à la migration seraient associés à une intégration socioculturelle plus faible et à des

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processus d'identité sociale plus faibles, et qu'un niveau plus élevé de discrimination prédirait un regret lié à la migration plus important. Deuxièmement, il était attendu que la continuité de soi médie la relation entre les variables liées à la contrainte et l'intégration socioculturelle. Troisièmement, la continuité de soi était supposée médier l'association entre les variables liées à la contrainte et le maintien/développement de l'identité sociale. Enfin, la continuité de soi était censée médier la relation entre la discrimination perçue et le regret lié à la migration.

Ensemble, ces hypothèses suivaient une structure de médiation triangulaire cohérente avec le modèle PARI, en positionnant les stresseurs liés à la migration comme prédicteurs, la continuité de soi comme médiateur psychologique et les réponses psychologiques pertinentes pour l'intégration comme résultats.

Méthodologie

Participants et procédure

Les données ont été recueillies au moyen d'une enquête transversale en ligne administrée entre mai 2024 et avril 2025. L'échantillon final était composé de 101 réfugiés afghans et personnes bénéficiant d'un statut de protection, âgés de 18 à 62 ans, tous résidant en France au moment de la participation. Le questionnaire était disponible en persan, en pachto et en anglais afin d'assurer l'accessibilité linguistique, et a été diffusé via des organisations communautaires, des réseaux de soutien aux réfugiés et un échantillonnage par boule de neige.

Une autorisation éthique a été obtenue auprès du comité d'éthique universitaire compétent, et des procédures strictes ont été suivies afin de garantir le consentement éclairé, l'anonymat et le droit de retrait.

Mesures et stratégie analytique

L'enquête évaluait : les expériences de violence, la contrainte perçue, les périls liés à la migration, la discrimination perçue, la continuité de soi, le maintien et le développement de l'identité sociale, l'intégration socioculturelle et le regret lié à la migration, ainsi que des

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variables sociodémographiques. Des échelles établies ont été utilisées lorsque cela était possible, complétées par des items issus de la phase qualitative lorsque nécessaire.

Les données ont été analysées avec Jamovi, en mobilisant des analyses de corrélation, des Modèles Linéaires Généraux (GLM) et des analyses de médiation pour tester les hypothèses. En outre, une Analyse en Profils Latents (LPA) a été menée comme approche exploratoire centrée sur la personne, afin d'identifier des configurations distinctes d'ajustement psychologique et d'intégration au sein de l'échantillon.

Résultats

Tendances descriptives

Les analyses descriptives ont indiqué que les participants rapportaient en moyenne des niveaux élevés de contrainte perçue, d'exposition à la violence, de périls liés à la migration et de discrimination. Malgré ces adversités, les niveaux moyens de continuité de soi et d'intégration socioculturelle étaient modérés, tandis que le maintien identitaire était relativement faible et le développement identitaire comparativement plus élevé, suggérant une tendance à former de nouveaux liens sociaux plutôt qu'à maintenir des identités de groupe pré-migratoires. Le regret lié à la migration était globalement faible.

Ces tendances descriptives suggéraient déjà une image complexe où une forte adversité coexistait avec une adaptation fonctionnelle pour de nombreux participants.

Test des hypothèses

Contrairement aux attentes, aucun des effets directs ou médiatisés hypothésés n'a été statistiquement confirmé. Les expériences de violence, la contrainte perçue et les périls liés à la migration ne prédisaient pas significativement l'intégration socioculturelle ni le maintien ou le développement de l'identité sociale. De même, la continuité de soi ne médiatisait pas les relations entre ces stresseurs liés à la migration et les résultats d'intégration.

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La discrimination perçue était significativement associée au regret lié à la migration, mais dans la direction inverse à celle attendue : une discrimination plus élevée était liée à un regret plus faible. Cette relation n'était pas médiatisée par la continuité de soi.

Dans l'ensemble, les résultats indiquaient que les stresseurs liés à la migration n'étaient pas directement liés aux résultats d'intégration selon les modalités attendues dans cet échantillon, et que les voies de médiation proposées n'étaient pas empiriquement soutenues.

Analyse exploratoire en profils latents

Afin de mieux comprendre ces résultats nuls, une analyse en profils latents a été réalisée pour examiner si des sous-groupes significatifs pouvaient être identifiés à partir des profils de continuité de soi, de processus d'identité sociale, d'intégration socioculturelle et de regret.

L'analyse a identifié quatre profils distincts, révélant une hétérogénéité substantielle des trajectoires d'ajustement. Un groupe présentait une intégration socioculturelle relativement élevée malgré une faible continuité de soi et des liens d'identité sociale faibles, suggérant une adaptation fonctionnelle sans forte intégration psychologique ou identitaire. Un autre groupe, plus important, présentait des niveaux modérés dans tous les domaines, reflétant un ajustement graduel et équilibré. Un groupe plus restreint montrait une continuité de soi très élevée, un maintien et un développement identitaires forts, ainsi qu'une forte intégration, accompagnés d'un regret modéré. Un quatrième groupe présentait un développement identitaire et une intégration élevés, avec un maintien identitaire faible et un regret faible, soulignant le rôle du gain identitaire dans le rétablissement psychologique.

Ces profils indiquent que la moyenne calculée sur l'ensemble des participants masquait des différences individuelles importantes, ce qui aide à expliquer pourquoi les analyses centrées sur les variables n'ont pas détecté d'effets significatifs.

Discussion

L'absence de soutien statistiquement significatif pour les trajectoires hypothésées ne contredit pas nécessairement le cadre théorique. Plusieurs facteurs méthodologiques et conceptuels peuvent expliquer ces résultats. Premièrement, le devis transversal limite la capacité à saisir les processus dynamiques proposés par le modèle PARI, qui suppose que la contrainte, les médiateurs psychologiques et les résultats d'intégration se déploient dans le temps. Deuxièmement, les analyses de médiation sont statistiquement exigeantes et peuvent avoir manqué de puissance compte tenu de la taille modeste de l'échantillon et de la complexité du modèle.

Troisièmement, l'utilisation d'instruments psychologiques standardisés — largement développés dans des contextes occidentaux — peut ne pas capturer pleinement des expressions culturellement situées de l'identité, de la détresse et de la continuité chez les réfugiés afghans. Ce décalage de mesure peut avoir atténué les relations observées.

De manière importante, bien que la continuité de soi n'ait pas été influencée par les stresseurs liés à la migration, elle est apparue comme un prédicteur fort et constant du maintien et du développement de l'identité. Ce résultat est cohérent avec des travaux théoriques mettant l'accent sur la continuité de soi comme ressource psychologique clé soutenant les processus identitaires après un déplacement forcé. Les résultats centrés sur la personne renforcent en outre l'idée que l'intégration n'est pas un processus linéaire ou uniforme, mais se déploie plutôt à travers des voies psychologiques diverses.

L'association négative inattendue entre discrimination et regret pourrait refléter la sévérité des expériences pré-migratoires : pour des individus ayant enduré un danger extrême et un déplacement forcé, la discrimination dans le pays d'accueil peut être perçue comme relativement moins menaçante, réduisant le regret d'avoir quitté le pays.

Conclusion du chapitre

Résumé de la thèse en Français

Ce chapitre a examiné les relations quantitatives entre les stresseurs de la migration forcée, la continuité de soi et des résultats psychologiques pertinents pour l'intégration chez les réfugiés afghans en France. Bien qu'aucune des trajectoires directes ou médiatisées hypothésées n'ait été statistiquement confirmée, les résultats offrent néanmoins des éclairages importants.

La continuité de soi est apparue comme un facteur psychologique central lié aux résultats identitaires, même en l'absence d'associations claires avec les stresseurs liés à la migration. De plus, l'analyse en profils latents a révélé des configurations distinctes d'adaptation qui n'auraient pas été visibles au moyen des seules analyses centrées sur les variables, soulignant l'hétérogénéité des expériences d'intégration des réfugiés.

Ensemble, ces résultats mettent en évidence les limites des modèles de médiation linéaires pour saisir l'ajustement des réfugiés et soulignent l'intérêt d'approches centrées sur la personne et mixtes. Le chapitre suivant intègre les résultats qualitatifs et quantitatifs afin de développer une compréhension plus complète de l'identité, de la continuité de soi et de l'intégration à la suite d'une migration forcée.

Chapitre 6 : Discussion en méthodes mixtes : intégration des phases qualitative et quantitative

Aperçu et intégration des résultats

Ce chapitre intègre les résultats des phases qualitative et quantitative afin d'examiner la manière dont les réfugiés afghans traitent psychologiquement le déplacement forcé et comment ces processus façonnent l'intégration socioculturelle en France. En combinant des récits approfondis avec des analyses statistiques, le devis en méthodes mixtes a permis d'obtenir une compréhension plus riche et plus nuancée de l'intégration que chacune des méthodes prise isolément. La phase qualitative a mis en lumière les expériences vécues de traumatisme, de coping, de rupture identitaire et de continuité de soi, tandis que la phase quantitative a testé des

trajectoires théoriquement fondées et révélé des schémas d'ajustement plus larges grâce à des analyses centrées sur la personne.

L'étude s'est appuyée sur le modèle des Antécédents psychologiques de l'intégration des réfugiés (PARI), le concept de continuité de soi et le Modèle d'identité sociale du changement identitaire traumatique (SIMTIC). Ces cadres ont informé les deux phases de la recherche. Bien que les modèles de médiation hypothésés n'aient pas été statistiquement confirmés, l'intégration des résultats a révélé une convergence significative entre les thèmes qualitatifs et les profils quantitatifs, montrant que les réfugiés afghans suivent des trajectoires d'intégration diverses et psychologiquement complexes.

Résultats quantitatifs dans le contexte théorique

Aucune des hypothèses directes ou médiatisées n'a été statistiquement soutenue. Les stresseurs liés à la migration — contrainte perçue, exposition à la violence et périls liés à la migration — ne prédisaient pas directement l'intégration socioculturelle ni les processus d'identité sociale, et ces relations n'étaient pas médiatisées par la continuité de soi. De même, la continuité de soi ne médiatisait pas la relation entre la discrimination et le regret lié à la migration. Un résultat inattendu a montré qu'une discrimination plus élevée était associée à un regret plus faible, ce qui reflète probablement la sévérité des adversités pré-migratoires, rendant la discrimination post-migratoire relativement moins saillante.

Malgré ces résultats nuls, la continuité de soi est apparue comme un prédicteur robuste du maintien et du développement de l'identité sociale. Cela soutient les travaux théoriques qui soulignent la continuité de soi comme une ressource psychologique clé après un déplacement forcé. De manière importante, une analyse en profils latents a identifié quatre profils distincts d'identité et d'intégration, révélant une hétérogénéité substantielle qui aide à expliquer pourquoi les modèles centrés sur les variables n'ont pas détecté d'effets significatifs. Ces profils reflétaient étroitement les récits qualitatifs, démontrant une convergence entre les méthodes.

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Convergence entre thèmes qualitatifs et profils quantitatifs

Pris ensemble, les résultats confirment que l'intégration n'est pas une trajectoire unique mais un processus multidimensionnel façonné par le traumatisme, les stratégies de coping, la reconstruction identitaire et les conditions structurelles. Les entretiens qualitatifs ont mis en évidence la fragilité émotionnelle, la résilience et la quête de sens, tandis que les profils quantitatifs ont montré que ces mêmes schémas étaient présents au niveau de la population. L'intégration est apparue à la fois comme un processus externe de participation et comme un processus interne de maintien de la continuité, de négociation des pertes et de reconstruction de l'identité.

Trajectoires d'intégration

Quatre trajectoires d'intégration ont été identifiées. La première reflétait une intégration fragile, dans laquelle les individus semblaient fonctionnellement intégrés mais rapportaient une faible continuité de soi et des liens identitaires faibles, correspondant à une situation de marginalisation. Malgré une adaptation apparente, la vulnérabilité psychologique restait élevée en raison d'une continuité perturbée et d'un sentiment d'appartenance limité.

La deuxième trajectoire correspondait à une intégration stable et équilibrée, caractérisée par une continuité de soi modérée, la préservation des racines culturelles et une adaptation progressive. Ce profil s'aligne sur des stratégies intégratives permettant la coexistence de la continuité et du changement et soutient l'idée que l'intégration se déploie graduellement.

La troisième trajectoire représentait une intégration biculturelle consolidée, marquée par une forte continuité de soi, un maintien et un développement identitaires élevés, ainsi qu'une forte intégration socioculturelle. Bien que psychologiquement ancrée, cette trajectoire impliquait également des coûts émotionnels tels que le regret et le deuil, soulignant que même une intégration réussie peut être émotionnellement exigeante.

La quatrième trajectoire reflétait une assimilation façonnée par les circonstances, dans laquelle les participants présentaient une forte intégration socioculturelle et un développement identitaire élevé, mais un faible maintien de l'identité d'origine et une continuité de soi seulement modérée. Bien que l'adaptation paraisse réussie, elle était souvent guidée par des contraintes structurelles plutôt que par un choix libre, laissant la reconstruction identitaire vulnérable.

À travers ces trajectoires, la séparation était notablement absente. La plupart des participants s'engageaient dans la société française à des degrés divers, soulignant l'importance des contraintes contextuelles et de la contrainte perçue dans la structuration des stratégies d'intégration.

Implications théoriques plus larges

Bien que le cadre d'acculturation de Berry n'ait pas été le modèle principal guidant cette étude, les profils latents correspondaient étroitement à ses stratégies d'intégration, d'assimilation et de marginalisation. Toutefois, le modèle de Berry à lui seul ne permettait pas d'expliquer pleinement la fragilité émotionnelle, la continuité perturbée et les processus liés au traumatisme observés. Ces complexités étaient mieux saisies par le modèle PARI, la continuité de soi et le SIMTIC.

Les résultats soulignent que la continuité de soi et la reconstruction identitaire sont centrales dans l'intégration des réfugiés, même lorsque les voies de médiation ne sont pas statistiquement confirmées. L'intégration est façonnée non seulement par la participation externe, mais aussi par le rétablissement psychologique, la construction de sens et la cohérence identitaire. Ensemble, ces cadres montrent que l'intégration est un processus dynamique, psychologiquement ancré, impliquant à la fois vulnérabilité et résilience.

Limites et défis

Résumé de la thèse en Français

L'étude a rencontré plusieurs limites. Le recrutement a été difficile en raison de questions de confiance, de barrières culturelles et d'un accès limité à certains sous-groupes, en particulier les femmes pachtounes. Le recrutement via des réseaux communautaires a pu surreprésenter des individus déjà connectés, sous-représentant potentiellement ceux en situation d'isolement sévère. Sur le plan méthodologique, le devis transversal a limité la capacité à saisir les changements dans le temps, et les instruments standardisés peuvent ne pas avoir pleinement reflété des significations culturellement ancrées. La traduction linguistique et les normes culturelles relatives au dévoilement ont également influencé la collecte des données.

Malgré ces défis, le devis en méthodes mixtes a renforcé l'étude en permettant la triangulation et une interprétation plus approfondie, comblant des lacunes fréquentes dans la recherche sur les réfugiés.

Perspectives futures et implications pratiques

Les recherches futures devraient adopter des devis longitudinaux afin de suivre l'identité, la continuité de soi et l'intégration dans le temps, inclure des échantillons plus diversifiés et développer des outils de mesure culturellement sensibles. Des méthodes participatives et narratives pourraient mieux saisir les processus de reconstruction identitaire, tandis que des recherches orientées vers l'intervention devraient examiner comment des programmes fondés sur l'identité et informés par le traumatisme soutiennent l'intégration.

Sur le plan pratique, les résultats soulignent que les politiques et programmes d'intégration doivent prendre en compte le bien-être psychologique et l'identité au même titre que le logement, l'éducation et l'emploi. Le soutien à la continuité culturelle, aux liens entre pairs et au rétablissement émotionnel est essentiel pour une intégration durable. Les décideurs, les praticiens et les éducateurs doivent reconnaître que l'intégration n'est pas uniquement structurelle, mais profondément psychologique.

Conclusion

Résumé de la thèse en Français

Ce chapitre montre que l'intégration des réfugiés est un processus non linéaire et multidimensionnel, façonné par la migration forcée, le traumatisme, la reconstruction identitaire et la résilience. Les quatre trajectoires d'intégration illustrent la manière dont les réfugiés afghans négocient l'appartenance, la continuité et le changement de façons diverses. Si le modèle de Berry constitue une référence utile, l'utilisation conjointe du PARI, de la continuité de soi et du SIMTIC offre une compréhension psychologique plus approfondie de l'intégration. En définitive, l'intégration apparaît comme un processus continu de reconstruction de la cohérence, du sens et de l'appartenance, soulignant la nécessité de politiques et d'interventions qui prennent en compte à la fois la participation sociale et le rétablissement psychologique.

List of Appendices

Appendix 3A

Appendix 3A

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Appendix 4A

Appendix 4A

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Project title: Perceived Violence, Forced Displacement and Sociocultural Integration of Afghan Refugees and Asylum Seekers in France

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A. Generalities

I would like to start by asking you some questions that will help me to get to know you better. Could you tell me a bit about yourself? [ask: age, gender, current living conditions, time since arrival in France/length of stay in France]

B. Perceived forcedness and related perils in relation to the migration

Thank you. Now I would like to ask you about your experiences before and during your migration to France. [ask: migration history, reasons for coming to France].

I know this can be difficult to talk about, so take your time.

1. Did you feel forced to leave Afghanistan? [Why? Can you comment on the extent to which you were forced? Can you tell me more about your experiences in your country of origin prior to your migration?]

2. How was your route of migration? How safe vs dangerous would you say it was? How legal vs illegal?

3. Could you tell me about the perils you encountered during your migration route to France? What perils did you encounter?

4. In case of your longer stay in a third country before arriving in France, please tell me about the perils undergone there. [If no transit country, then jump to next.]

C. Integration relevant psychological process

Very good, thank you. Now I am going to ask you about your current life in France.

Again, I know some of these things can be difficult to talk about, so take your time.

a. Well-being

1. Do you believe that you and those around you are happy?

Appendix 4A

2. Do you feel positively evaluated by others around you?

3. Do you feel that you make significant others happy?

4. Do you have major concerns or anxieties?

       b. Attitudes towards the receiving society

1. How do you see your host country, France?

2. What do you think about the people living in France?

3. Do you feel welcome and supported by the French society in general, or not?

4. Have you ever been provided social support by a French friend or neighbour? Do you feel this help (if any) affected your integration?

       c. Acculturation preferences

1. Do you see Afghan refugees in France as a distinct community (exclusive Afghans only) or as a community moving towards integration into the French society (inclusive)?

2. How do you perceive the values/traditions/customs of the French society? Do you feel inclined to imbibe them in your life? (If yes, how; if no, why)

3. Do you feel that you belong in French society? Do you feel accepted, included by other people in the society?

4. How comfortable do you feel celebrating Afghan festivals/days & practicing Afghan customs/traditions in France?

5. Do you feel that you can maintain your identity as an Afghan person, while living in France? Or do you feel that you are required to change, to become similar to French people?

       d. Uncertainty

1. Do you feel that you know what is happening to you, and where you are going?

2. Do you feel uncertain about your life today? And your future? Why?

3. Do you think about leaving France and settling somewhere else?

4. How do you perceive your educational and professional future in France?

D. Psychological mediators

Thank you very much, you're doing great. The last series of questions relate to how you feel about yourself and your life more generally.

a. Self-continuity

1. Please try to recall your past self: who you were when you were still living in Afghanistan. Select a circle-pair that best describes how similar and connected you feel to your past self. (Respondents choose a pair of circles from seven with different degrees of overlap. 1 = no overlap; 2 = little overlap; 3 = some overlap; 4 = equal overlap; 5 = strong overlap; 6 = very strong overlap; 7 = most overlap. The number chosen is the respondent's score.)

2. Could you tell me about the things, if any, that make you feel connected to your past self? [if none, move on]

3. Do you see yourself as stable and unchanging, or not?

4. Do you think of your life as a story? [containing different parts, linked together in a meaningful way]

5. Does your life today remind you of your past?

b. Suffering

1. Do you spend a lot of time remembering the perils of your migration?

2. How do you feel that the perils experienced before you reached France impact your life today? [ask to detail impacts on all levels: physical, economic, cultural, mental, social, other]

3. Do you feel that the perils you faced interfere in your present life? If not, what have you done to overcome this feeling?

E. Integration outcomes in domains of work, education and societal participation,

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Appendix 4A

1. Does the education system in France help you pursue your education?

2. What is your employment status? (Jobs according to educational qualification, formal jobs, etc.)

3. What is your housing situation? (rented/government facilities; type of locality such as low-cost housing; frequency of house shift, etc.)

4. What would you say what your achievements are since your arrival in France?

5. Do you perceive that there are benefits provided by French society for you?

F. Conclusion

We are almost finished. I have a few final questions.

1. Do you think there are other topics we should talk about? Do you have any other people you would like to refer to me to participate in this research?

2. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you very much for your time. Your participation is very important to us. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything else you would like to share with us.

Appendix 4D

Appendix 4D

PROTOCOL FOR THE INTERVIEWS

Project title: Perceived Violence, Forced Displacement and Sociocultural Integration of Afghan Refugees and Asylum Seekers in France

Date of interview:

Interview ID:

Introduction:

Dear Madam/Sir,

We welcome you to this interview as part of our research on the Impact of perceived forcedness of displacement and violence on sociocultural integration of Afghan Refugees. For the next 1 hour and 30 minutes, we will discuss how various factors have impacted your integration in France, including forced displacement and related violence. The discussion on the resilience shown after forced displacement and the psychological mediators that have helped you during your integration could help other refugees paving way to a better life. The sharing of the challenges faced in the process of integration could also help in developing solutions by the practitioners. The sharing of the helpful resources encountered by you in France for refugees and asylum seekers and the difficulties to access them will result in finding solutions to resolve the difficulties.

We would like to be able to record this exchange, which can help us keep track of all the information you share. By signing the letter of consent, you have given us permission to do so. We thank you for your permission.

As a reminder, the transcripts will be kept in an anonymized form for a period of ten years. The audio recording files will be deleted after the transcription.

Do you have any questions regarding the organization of the interview or the management of your data?

Conclusion:
Thank you for your collaboration in this project, and we wish you a pleasant day.

Appendix 4E

Interview Protocol – Persian Version

پروتکول برای مصاحبه ها

عنوان پروژه: بیجا شدن اجباری و ادغام اجتماعی و فرهنگی مهاجرین و پناهجویان افغان در فرانسه

تاریخ مصاحبه:

شناسه مصاحبه:

معرفی:

خانم / آقای عزیز،

ما به شما به عنوان بخشی از تحقیقات خود در مورد "تأثیر اجبار درک شده از بیجاشدن و خشونت بر ادغام اجتماعی فرهنگی پناهندگان أفغان" خوشامد میگوییم. در 1 ساعت و 30 دقیقه آینده در مورد چگونگی تاثیر عوامل مختلف بر ادغام شما در فرانسه منجمله بیجاشدن اجباری و خشونت های مربوط به آن بحث خواهیم کرد. بحث در مورد مقاومت نشان داده شده پس از مهاجرت اجباری و واسطه های روانی که در طی ادغام شما را یاری کرده اند می تواند به دیگر پناهندگان کمک کند که راه را برای زندگی بهترخود هموار کنند. به اشتراک گذاشتن چالش های پیش روی در فرآیند ادغام نیز می تواند به توسعه راه حل ها توسط دست اندرکاران کمک کند. به اشتراک گذاری منابع مفیدی که شما در فرانسه برای پناهندگان و پناهجویان و دشواری های دسترسی به آنها با آن روبرو شده اید، به یافتن راه حل هایی برای رفع مشکلات منجر خواهد شد.

ما مایلیم که بتوانیم این تبادل را که می تواند به ما کمک کند تا تمام اطلاعاتی که به اشتراک گذاشته اید را پیگیری کنیم، ثبت کنیم. با شما با امضای نامه موافقت نامه اجازه این کار را به ما داده اید. ما از شما به خاطر اجازه ی شما تشکر می کنیم.

به عنوان یادآوری، رونوشت ها به صورت ناشناس (بدون اسم) برای مدت ده سال نگهداری می شوند، اما فایل های ضبط شده پس از رونویسی حذف خواهند شد.

آیا در مورد سازماندهی مصاحبه یا مدیریت داده های خود سؤالی دارید؟

نتیجه:

از همکاری شما در این پروژه سپاسگزاریم و روز خوبی را برای شما آرزومندیم.

Appendix 4F

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Appendix 4F

INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT

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Project title: Sociocultural Integration of Afghan Refugees and Asylum Seekers in France

What we expect of you (methodology):
If you agree to participate in this study, you will take part in personal interview (lasting approximately 1 and half hours) that will be confidential and focusing on your integration in France and your perceptions of forcedness and violence. These interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed.

Purpose of the treatment:

The information collected about you will be processed for the purposes of the Laboratoire CLLE, Université de Toulouse, CNRS, UT2J, France. Scientific coordinator of the project: Prof Maja BECKER, Laboratoire CLLE - UMR5263, Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès, Maison de la Recherche, 5 Allée Antonio Machado, 31058 Toulouse cedex 9; The Data Protection Officer at CNRS can be contacted for any questions about the protection of personal data. The contact details are as follows: CNRS Service protection des données, 2 rue Jean Zay, 54519 Vandoeuvre-lès-Nancy;

Personal data are collected and processed for the following purposes: The study aims at understanding the situation and experiences of Afghan refugees in France. We are interested in the impact of perceived violence and forced displacement during migration, on present experiences.

The legal basis for the processing is the performance of a mission in the public interest.

Recipients of the data: Depending on their respective needs, all or part of the data is destined for: Bashria Jan SARWARI, Maja BECKER, and Zabihullah FAIZI. No information will be given to the association that takes care of you or to French legal and administrative bodies. No data is transferred outside the European Union.

How long we keep your data: Your personal data will be kept for a period of at least 10 years. After this period, they will be deleted. All data will be kept in a secure location and only the scientific supervisor and the researcher conducting the interviews will have access to it. The audio files of your interview will be deleted

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after 4 weeks when the transcription is made of your interview.

Individual rights: You have the following rights with regard to the use made of your data:

- The right to withdraw: you may at any time object to the processing of your data and have the right to withdraw your consent

- The right to access and rectify your data

- The right of deletion

- The right to restricted use when your data is not necessary or is no longer useful

All of these rights apply until the end of the individual interview. During transcription, we will assign anonymous codes to participants, which will not allow the data to be destroyed once the data is transcribed. Therefore, once you have finished the individual interview, withdrawal will no longer be possible.

You can exercise these rights by contacting: Maja Becker

You can also contact your DPO at the following address: CNRS Service protection des données, 2 rue Jean Zay, 54519 Vandoeuvre-lès-Nancy; If, after contacting us, you feel that your rights with regard to Data Processing, Data Files and Individual Liberties have not been respected, you can lodge a complaint online with the CNIL or by post.

Benefits:

The research will benefit various stakeholders through the information collected on the wellbeing and sociocultural integration of Afghan asylum seekers and refugees and their resilience. The insights from the research will help the organizations working with the refugees reach out effectively to the actual needs of the refugees, positively affecting their lives. Information obtained from the results of this study will be transmitted in an anonymous way to the scientific community, policy makers and practitioners who help asylum seekers and refugees.

Possible risks:

To the best of our knowledge, this research does not involve any risks or discomforts other than those of daily life. In the event that you are uncomfortable with any of the questions, you may contact the principal investigator of this study for further guidance and support.

Publication:

The findings from this research may be disseminated in scientific events and published in conference proceedings and academic journal articles.

Your right to ask questions at any time:

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You can ask questions about the research at any time by contacting the scientific supervisor (see above) and/or the researcher associated with the project, Bashria Jan SARWARI, by e-mail or telephone.

Consent prior to participation:

By signing the consent form, you certify that you have read and understood the information above, that we have provided satisfactory answers to your questions and duly informed you that you are free to withdraw your consent or withdraw from the research at any time until the end of the interview, without prejudice.

☐ I agree that my words maybe recorded and used by members of the research team.

To be filled in by the participant:

I have read and understood the information above and I freely agree to participate in this research study.

Last name, first name - Date – Signature

You will be given a copy of this document; another copy will be kept by the research team.

Appendix 4G

APPENDIX 4G

Informed Consent Form – Persian Version

برگه اطلاعات و رضایت آگاهانه

عنوان پروژه: ادغام اجتماعی و فرهنگی مهاجرین و پناهجویان افغان در فرانسه

آنچه ما از شما انتظار داریم (روش شناسی):
در صورت موافقت با شرکت در این مطالعه، در مصاحبه شخصی (تقریباً 1 ساعت و نیم) شرکت خواهید کرد که کاملا محرمانه خواهد بود. این تحقیق روی ادغام شما در فرانسه و درک شما از اجبار برای مهاجرت و خشونت تمرکز دارد. این مصاحبه ها به صورت صوتی ضبط و رونویسی می شود.

چگونگی نگهداشت مصاحبه ها:
اطلاعات جمع آوری شده در مورد شما برای اهداف آزمایشگاه CLLE، دانشگاه تولوز ، UT2J، CNRS، فرانسه طی مراحل می شود.
هماهنگ کننده علمی پروژه:

Prof Maja BECKER, Laboratoire CLLE - UMR5263, Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès, Maison de la Recherche

Address: 5Allée Antonio Machado, 31058 Toulouse cedex 9

برای هرگونه سوال در مورد حفاظت از داده های شخصی می توان با مسول حفاظت از داده ها در CNRS تماس گرفت. اطلاعات تماس به شرح زیر است:

Address: CNRS Service protection des données, 2 rue Jean Zay, 54519 Vandoeuvre-lès-Nancy

داده های شخصی برای اهداف زیر جمع آوری و طی مراحل می شوند: هدف این مطالعه درک وضعیت و تجربیات پناهندگان افغان در فرانسه است. ما به تأثیر خشونت درک شده و جابجایی اجباری در طول مهاجرت، بر تجربیات کنونی علاقه مندیم.

مبنای قانونی برای طی مراحل، انجام یک ماموریت در جهت منافع عمومی است.

دریافت کننده گان داده ها: با توجه به نیاز های مربوطه، تمام یا قسمتی از داده ها در نظر گرفته شده است برای: بشریه جان سروری، مایا بکر، و ذبیح الله فیضی ارسال می شود. هیچ اطلاعاتی به انجمنی که از شما مراقبت می کند یا نهادهای قانونی و اداری فرانسه داده نخواهد شد. هیچ داده ای به خارج از اتحادیه اروپا منتقل نمی شود.

چه مدت داده های شما را نگه می داریم: اطلاعات شخصی شما حداقل برای مدت 10 سال نگهداری می شود. پس از این مدت، آنها حذف خواهند شد. تمامی داده ها در مکانی امن نگهداری می شوند و تنها ناظر علمی و محققی که مصاحبه را انجام می دهد به آن دسترسی خواهند داشت. فایل های صوتی مصاحبه شما پس از 4 هفته پس از رونویسی مصاحبه شما حذف می شود.

حقوق فردی: در رابطه با استفاده از داده های خود از حقوق زیر برخوردار هستید:

- حق انصراف: شما می توانید در هر زمان نسبت به طی مراحل داده های خود اعتراض کنید و این حق را دارید که رضایت خود را پس بگیرید.

Appendix 4G

- حق دسترسی و اصلاح داده های شما

- حق حذف

- حق استفاده محدود زمانی که داده های شما ضروری نیست یا دیگر مفید نیستند

تمام این حقوق تا پایان مصاحبه فردی اعمال می شود. در حین رونویسی کدهای ناشناس را به شرکت کنندگان اختصاص خواهیم داد که به محض رونویسی داده ها اجازه تخریب داده ها را نخواهند داد.

می توانید با تماس با مایا بکر از این حقوق استفاده کنید:

همچنین می توانید با DPO خود در آدرس زیر تماس بگیرید:

CNRS Service protection des données, 2 rue Jean Zay, 54519 Vandoeuvre-lès-Nancy

اگر پس از تماس با ما، احساس کردید که حقوق شما در مورد پروسس داده، فایل های داده و آزادی های فردی رعایت نشده است، می توانید به صورت آنلاین با CNIL یا از طریق پست شکایت کنید.

فواید:

این تحقیق از طریق اطلاعات جمع آوری شده در مورد رفاه و ادغام اجتماعی-فرهنگی پناهجویان و پناهندگان افغان و انعطاف پذیری آنها به نفع ذینفعان مختلف خواهد بود. بینش های حاصل از این تحقیق به سازمان هایی که با پناهندگان کار می کنند کمک می کند تا به طور موثر به نیازهای واقعی پناهندگان دست یابند و بر زندگی آنها تأثیر مثبت بگذارد. اطلاعات به دست آمده از نتایج این مطالعه به صورت ناشناس به جامعه علمی، سیاست گذاران و دست اندرکارانی که به پناهجویان و پناهندگان کمک می کنند منتقل می شود.

خطرات احتمالی:

تا آنجا که ما می دانیم، این تحقیق هیچ خطر یا ناراحتی دیگری به جز خطرات زندگی روزمره را در بر ندارد. در صورتی که با هر یک از سؤالات ناراحت هستید، می توانید برای راهنمایی و پشتیبانی بیشتر با محقق اصلی این مطالعه تماس بگیرید.

انتشار:

یافته های این تحقیق ممکن است در رویدادهای علمی منتشر شود و در مجموعه مقالات کنفرانس ها و مقالات مجلات دانشگاهی منتشر شود.

حق شما برای پرسیدن سوال در هر زمان:

شما می توانید در هر زمان با ناظر علمی (مایا بکر، از طریق مشخصات ذکر شده در صفحه اول) و/یا محقق مرتبط با پروژه، بشریه جان سروری، از طریق آدرس ایمیل و شماره تماس ذیل سؤالات خود را در مورد تحقیق بپرسید.

رضایت قبل از مشارکت:

با امضای فرم رضایت، گواهی می‌دهید که اطلاعات فوق را مطالعه کرده و درک کرده‌اید، ما به سؤالات شما پاسخ‌های رضایت‌بخشی ارائه کرده‌ایم و به‌طور مقتضی به شما اطلاع داده‌ایم که در هر زمان تا پایان، مختار هستید رضایت خود را پس بگیرید یا از تحقیق انصراف دهید. از مصاحبه، بدون پیش داوری.

☐ **موافقم که کلمات من ممکن است توسط اعضای تیم تحقیقاتی ضبط و استفاده شود.**

برای تکمیل توسط شرکت کننده:
من اطلاعات بالا را خوانده و درک کرده ام و آزادانه با شرکت در این مطالعه تحقیقاتی موافقم.

نام خانوادگی، نام ـ تاریخ ـ امضا

یک کپی از این سند به شما داده می شود. یک نسخه دیگر توسط تیم تحقیقاتی نگهداری خواهد شد.

Appendix 4H

APPENDIX 4H

Preliminary Codebook

Themes	Codes																
Generalities	**D1**	**D2**	**D3**	**D4**													
	Age	Gender	Lenght of stay	Left Afghanistan													
Perceived forcedness and related perils in relation to the migration	**P1**	**P2**	**P3**	**P4**	**P5**	**P7**											
	Forcedness	Home country experience	Migration route (places crossed)	Illegal and Dengerous migration pathway	Legal/Safe migration pathway	Post arrival stressors											
Integration relevant psychological process	Wellbeing		Attitudes towards the receiving society				Acculturation preferences						Uncertainty				
	P1W	P2W	P1A	P2A	P3A	P4A	P1AC	P2AC	P3AC	P4AC	P5AC	GID18	P1C	P2C	P3C	P4C	P5C
	Perception of Happiness	Perception of Unhappiness	Positive Perception of Locals	Negative Perception of Locals	Positive Perception of Host Country	Negative Perception of Host Country	Seeing Afghan Community socially separated	Seeing Afghans integrating in french society	Sense of Belonging	Ability to maintains Afghan Identity	Inability to maintains Afghan Identity	Selective Cultural Group Belonging	Situational Awareness	Uncertainty	Certainty	Desire to Leave France	Desire to Stay in France
Psychological mediators	Self continuity						Suffering										
	M1SC	M2SC	M3SC	M4SC	M5SC	M6SC	M1S	M2S	M3S								
	Strong connection to past	Weak or lost connection to past	Stable Sense of Self	Non-stable sense of self	Viewing Life as a Coherent Story	Fragmented Life perception	Ongoing Emotional and mental disruption due to past trauma	Ongoing Impact of Past Perils (Physical, Social, or Economic Consequences)	Personal Coping Stretegies with Past Trauma								
Integration outcomes in domains of work, education and societal participation,	IN1	IN2	IN3	IN4	IN5	IN6	IN7	M6M									
	Status in France	Access & Opportunity in Education System	Barriers in Education System (what)	Employment condition	Accommodation & Residency Condition	Access to Public Services or social support	Restricted Access to Public Services or social support	Limited access to mental health support									
New emerged Codes	**P7**	GID18	M6M														
	Post arrival stressors	Selective Cultural Group Belonging	Limited access to mental health support														

Appendix 4H

Number	List of codes	Definitions
		GENERALITIES
D1	Age	The respondent's age at the time of data collection, which may influence integration experiences and adaptation strategies.
D2	Gender	The gender identity of the respondent, which can shape experiences of migration, integration, and access to resources.
D3	Lenghth of stay	The duration of time the respondent has lived in France, which can impact their level of integration and adaptation to the new environment.
D4	Left Afghanistan	Refers to the participant's departure from Afghanistan
		PERCEIVED FORCEDNESS AND RELATED PERILS
P1	Forcedness	Focuses to which extent and how individuals perceive their migration as forced or voluntary, shaped by external threats or personal circumstances.
P2	Home Country Experience	Encompasses pre-migration conditions such as conflict, persecution, economic hardship, and social instability influencing displacement.
P3	Migration Route (Places Crossed)	Documents the specific geographic locations or transit countries passed through during migration. In addition it highlights the length of stay in transit or other country before entering France
P4	Illegal and Dangerous Migration Pathway	Covers migration methods involving unauthorized border crossings, smugglers, forged documents, related risks and dangers including risks in transit country, and the perils witnessed (seeing others facing risk).
P5	Legal/safe Migration Pathway	Involves migration through recognized channels such as asylum applications, refugee resettlement, work, or study visas which carries no perils., Experienced migration as a child
P7	Early stage of integration experiences	Refers to the difficulties migrants face during their initial settlement phase in France, including the Dublin procedure, the length of the process, and other challenges before obtaining refugee status. It also includes any first positive impression or experiences of the early stage.
		INTEGRATION RELEVANT PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESS
P1W	Perception of Happiness	An individual's overall sense of contentment and life satisfaction. It includes happiness of others or making apositive impact in making others happy
P2W	Perception of Unhappiness	An individual's overall sense of unhappiness. It includes seeing others being unhappy or feeling that one has made no impact on others' happiness.
P1A	Positive Perception of Locals	Feeling valued and welcomed by locals in the host society, receiving support, perceiving acceptance, and having a positive view of the culture, values, and behaviors. This includes embracing French values and experiencing cultural freedom.
P2A	Negative Perception of Locals	Feeling marginalized or rejected by the host society, experiencing a lack of support, and feeling unvalued or negatively judged by locals. This includes feeling unwelcome and struggling to accept or adapt to the local culture and values.
P3A	Positive Perception of Host Country	Viewing the host country as welcoming, supportive, and full of opportunities.
P4A	Negative Perception of Host Country	Viewing the host country as hostile, unwelcoming, or difficult to integrate into.
P1Ac	Seeing Afghan Community Socially Separated	Viewing Afghans as isolated and separate from mainstream society.
P2Ac	Seeing Afghans Integrating in French Society	Recognizing Afghan efforts to participate and integrate into French culture.
P3Ac	Sense of Belonging	Feeling included and accepted in the host society.
P4Ac	Ability to Maintain Afghan Identity	Successfully preserving cultural identity while living in the host country.
P5Ac	Inability to Maintain Afghan Identity	Feeling compelled to abandon Afghan identity to fit into French society, leading to avoiding cultural celebrations, struggling with identity maintenance, or not maintaining Afghan identity. Pressure to assimilition is a part of it.
P1C	Situational Awareness	Awareness of one's circumstances, environment, and opportunities.
P2C	Uncertainty	Feeling unsure about current or future living conditions, stability, education, profession or integration progress.
P3C	Certainty	Feeling sure about current or future living conditions, stability, education, profession or integration progress.
P4C	Desire to Leave France	Considering relocating due to dissatisfaction or lack of opportunity.
P5C	Desire to Stay in France	Intending to remain in France and integrate fully.
		PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDIATORS
M1Sc	Strong Connection to Past	The extent to which individuals feel strongly connected to their past selves and the reason behind
M2Sc	Weak or Lost Connection to Past	The extent to which individuals feel weakly or lost of connection to their past selves and the reason behind
M3Sc	Stable Sense of Self	A strong and consistent personal identity.
M4Sc	Non-Stable Sense of Self	A fragmented or shifting sense of identity.
M5Sc	Viewing Life as a Coherent Story	Seeing life as a meaningful and connected journey.
M6Sc	Fragmented Life Perception	Feeling that life lacks a structured or meaningful narrative.
GID18	Selective Cultural Group Belonging	Captures the participant's decision to associate with specific cultural or ethnic groups rather than fully integrating into the broader host society.
M1S	Ongoing Emotional /Mental Disruption Due to Past Trauma	Experiencing emotional distress linked to past experiences.
M3S	Ongoing Impact of Past Perils (Physical, Social, or Economic Consequences)	Experiencing lasting effects of past trauma in different life aspects. Excluding mental impact as it falls under M3S
M4S	Personal Coping strategies with Past Trauma	Using strategies to manage and overcome past hardships.
M6M	Limited access to mental health support	Difficulty in obtaining adequate psychological care due to barriers such as language, legal status, lack of information, stigma, or insufficient mental health services.
		INTEGRATION OUTCOMES
IN1	Status in france	The legal or residency status of the respondent (e.g., refugee, asylum seeker, temporary resident, citizen), which affects access to rights, employment, and social services.
IN2	Access & Opportunity in Education System	Availability of educational resources, programs, and opportunities for refugees to pursue learning.
IN3	Barriers in Education System (What)	Challenges preventing access to education, such as language barriers, financial constraints, or systemic obstacles.
IN4	Employment condition	Employment , unemployment, under employment
IN5	Accommodation & Residency condition	Having a stable and long-term housing arrangement with legal security, No access, or temporary housing
IN6	Access to Public Services or Social Support	Availability and use of healthcare, financial aid, counseling, or other essential public services. Social support insures the emotional, informational, and practical assistance from one's social network.
IN7	Restricted Access to Public Services or Social Support	Limited availability or barriers in accessing necessary support systems.

Appendix 4I

Appendix 4I

Sample of Coded Interview Text

Statement	Code
My name is Amina and I am 22 years old woman.	Age - Gender
We entered France in 2021.	Lenght of stay
Our current condition is good, Alhamdulillah (thanks God).	Perception of Happiness
My husband works, I study the language, our children are studying, and our life is peaceful.	Employment condition
Most importantly, my parents also live in Toulouse in the same city, and whenever I want, I go to their house and see them.	Sense of Belonging
My husband was a driver, and his life was in danger, so we came to France later.	Forcedness
In general, the Taliban and the insecurity in the country had made life difficult for everyone.	Home Country Experience
I would give myself a four.	
I had to leave my homeland.	Left Afghanistan
We came from Afghanistan to Iran by car, from Iran to Turkey on foot, from Turkey to Greece by boat, and from Greece to Italy by boat.	Migration Route (Places Crossed)
The dangers we faced on the way included hunger, fatigue, lack of sleep, carrying my child, and my little daughter was born on the migration route in the refugee camp in Greece.	Illegal Migration Pathway
I was very scared during the passage through the forests with my children.	Ongoing Emotional /Mental Disruption Due to Past Trauma
The children would get sick, and there were thousands of other problems.	Ongoing Impact of Past Perils (Physical, Social, or Economic Consequences)
It's a good country.	Positive Perception of Host Country
But the fact that they don't allow hijab for women has created a problem for all Muslims.	Negative Perception of Host Country
I am attending language classes.	Access & Opportunity in Education System
Our neighbour in the city we were in before used to bring toys for my daughters and treated us well.	Positive Perception of Locals
I think Afghans both celebrate their own customs among themselves and are integrated with the French people in the community.	Seeing Afghans Integrating in French Society
I don't know much about French culture because it has been very limited time I am in France.	Uncertainty
I feel comfortable celebrating Afghan festivals.	Ability to Maintain Afghan Identity
Sometimes I think that when my children grow up, I want to go to a country that allows the hijab.	Desire to Leave France
Other than that, I don't think about leaving France.	Desire to Leave France
Sometimes I feel very stressed about my future in France.	Limited access to mental health support
But there is no one to talk to.	Limited access to mental health support
For example, I'd like to become a tailor and start my own business.	Certainty

Appendix 4I

Number 6, strong overlap.	Strong Connection to Past
I think we haven't changed much.	Stable Sense of Self
I think of my life like a story with different meaningful parts.	Viewing Life as a Coherent Story
I remember everything, and now I'm thankful that we passed through it all and arrived safely.	Personal Coping Strategies with Past Trauma
I'm not working; I'm learning the language.	Employment condition - Access & Opportunity in Education System
Our house is temporary; it is a temporary (low-cost housing) for now.	Accommodation & Residency Condition
Later, maybe we will get a permanent house or an HLM.	Accommodation & Residency Condition
There are government aids for immigrants.	Access to Public Services or Social Support
They provide us with monthly financial assistance.	Access to Public Services or Social Support

Appendix 5A

Appendix 5A

List of Items Used in the Online Survey

Survey questionnaire
Screening questions

- Please indicate your age:
    1) Drop-down menu 18-99

- What is your legal status in France?
    - French Citizen
    - Resident in France
    - Foreign Worker
    - Asylum Seeker
    - Recognized refugee with a residence cart
    - Recognized refugee without a residence card
    - Subsidiary Protection
    - Undocumented/Illegal Immigrant
    - None of the above

Experiences of violence

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing the lowest level of agreement and 5 representing the highest level of agreement, please select the option that indicates the extent to which you agree with the sentences below.

- I experienced a lot of violence (for example based on political beliefs, religious affiliation, language…) in Afghanistan before leaving.
    a. Strongly disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neutral
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly agree

- I have directly witnessed war in Afghanistan.

- I was not directly impacted by war but I have experienced displacement or migration as a result of the violence in Afghanistan, either within the country or as a refugee.

Perceived Migration Forcedness

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing the lowest level of agreement and 5 representing the highest level of agreement, please select the option that indicates the extent to which you agree with the sentences below.

- I was forced to leave my country.

- I had the choice to stay in my home country

Related perils

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing the lowest level of agreement and 5 representing the highest level of agreement, please select the option that indicates the extent to which you agree with the sentences below.

Appendix 5A

- I felt threatened before I left my home country

- Before I fled, I had experiences that caused psychological distress.

- The journey went as planned.

- I felt threatened during my journey.

- During my journey, I had emotionally stressful experiences.

- During my journey I feared for my life.

- During my journey I feared for the lives of my family members.

- I felt safe during my journey.

- During my journey I was able to decide where to go next.

- During the journey, my freedom of movement was restricted.

Sense of self-continuity

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing the lowest level of agreement and 5 representing the highest level of agreement, please select the option that indicates the extent to which you agree with the sentences below.

- My past and present flow seamlessly together.

- My present is a simply continuation of the past.

- There is continuity between my past and present.

- My past merges nicely into my present.

Social identity

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing the lowest level of agreement and 5 representing the highest level of agreement, please select the option that indicates the extent to which you agree with the sentences below.

Please note that in the following items, the term "new groups" encompasses various categories, including other refugee groups, groups with French people, youth groups, and similar entities.

Maintenance of group memberships.

- After my migration, I still belong to the same groups as I did before.

- After my migration, I still join in the same group activities as I used to do before my migration.

- After my migration, I am friends with people in the same groups as I was before my migration.

- After my migration, I continue to have strong ties with the same groups as before my migration.

Appendix 5A

New group memberships.

    1- After my migration, I have joined one or more new groups.

    2- After my migration, I have joined the activities of new groups.

    3- After my migration, I am friends with people from one or more of these new groups.

    4- After my migration, I have strong ties with one or more new groups.

Integration/Acculturation

Living in a different culture often involves learning new skills and behaviours. When considering life in France, please rate your competence in each of the following behaviours on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 representing "Not at all competent" and 5 representing "Extremely competent".

- Building and maintaining relationships.
    1) Not at all competent
    2) Slightly competent
    3) Moderately competent
    4) Very competent
    5) Extremely competent

- Obtaining community services, I require.

- Understanding and speaking French language.

- Interacting at social events.

- Attending or participating in community activities.

- Finding my way around.

- Accurately interpreting and responding to other people's emotions.

- Dealing with the bureaucracy.

- Adapting to the pace of life.

- Interacting with members of the opposite sex.

- Reading and writing French language.

Integration-relevant psychological processes and responses :
(Discrimination)

On a scale from 1 (almost every day) to 6 (never), please rate the following statements regarding your day-to-day life, considering how often any of the following things happen to you.

- You are treated with less courtesy than other people are.
    a. Almost every day
    b. Frequently
    c. Occasionally

Appendix 5A

d. Rarely
e. Almost never
f. Never

- You are treated with less respect than other people are.

- You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.

- People act as if they think you are stupid.

- People act as if they are afraid of you.

- People act as if they think you are dishonest.

- People act as if they are better than you are.

- You are called names or insulted.

- You are threatened or harassed.

(Regret)
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing the lowest level of agreement and 5 representing the highest level of agreement, please select the option that indicates the extent to which you agree with the sentences below.

- Generally, I think it was the right decision to flee from my country.

- I regret leaving my country.

Socio Demographics

At this stage, we would like to ask you a few questions about your personal background. We assure you that all information provided will be handled carefully, and no personal conclusions will be drawn from your responses.

- Please indicate your gender:
  - Male
  - Female
  - Non-binary or prefer not to say

- Please indicate your marital status.
  - Single
  - Married
  - Divorced
  - Widowed
  - Prefer not to say
  - Other, please specify…….

- Please indicate how many years you were in schooling in your home country.
  - (Dropdown menu 0-18+)

- What is your level of education from your home country?
  - I finished school.
  - I finished vocational training.

Appendix 5A

- o Please indicate type of vocational training:
  - I finished university with a degree.
    - o Please name the degree obtained:
  - I did not graduate
  - Other, please specify:

- Did you obtain another qualification in France or any other country?
  - No, I did not obtain another degree.
  - Yes, I obtained another degree.

    - o If yes, please select the type of degree obtained.
  - Primary education: Ecoles élémentaires
  - Secondary education: Baccalauréat (Bac)
  - Undergraduate/ Bachelor's degree: Licence
  - Master degree
  - Ph.D.
  - Vocational diplomas (BTS or DUT)
  - Vocational qualification (CAP)
  - Other, please specify:

- What is your current living situation?
  - A-   Please indicate type of residence you inhabit
  - In an accommodation centre for asylum seekers (CADA);
  - In Emergency accommodation for asylum seekers (HUDA, AT-SA, PRAHDA, Reception and orientation centres (CAO)
  - In Reception and administrative situation examination centres (CAES)
  - Social Housing (HLM)
  - Host families (in accommodation provided by humanitarian organizations)
  - Student accommodation
  - Sharing someone else's rented apartment
  - In a privately rented apartment
  - I own my house
  - Other, please specify:

  - B-   Please select the option that best corresponds to your situation in the accommodation where you live.

I live…
  - Alone (without family members)
  - With family members
  - With friends
  - With strangers
  - Other, please specify:

- What is your employment status?
  - Employed
  - Self-Employed
  - Unemployed
  - Underemployed
  - Training for Employment (formation)
  - Internship or Apprenticeship

Appendix 5A

- • Registered Job Seeker with Pôle Emploi
- • Other, please specify:

- How long have you lived in France?
    - • Dropdown menu (1-15 years)

- What is the total monthly income you receive?
  Less than 700 €
  700 € to 1300 €
  1300 € to 2000 €
  2000 € to 3000 €
  More 3000 €

- How many family members do you share your financial income with?

Appendix 5B

Appendix 5B

Persian Translation of the Online Survey

فهرست پرسش‌های به‌کاررفته در نظرسنجی آنلاین

فرم نظرسنجی

سوالات انتخابی

- وضعیت حقوقی شما در فرانسه چگونه است؟
  - شهروند فرانسوی
  - ساکن در فرانسه
  - کارگر خارجی
  - پناهجو (demande asil)
  - مهاجر قانونی دارای کارت اقامت (reconnu réfugié avec de titre de séjour)
  - مهاجر قانونی بدون کارت اقامت (reconnu réfugié sans de titre de séjour)
  - حمایت/حفاظت فرعی
  - بدون مدرک/مهاجر غیرقانونی
  - هیچکدام

تجربیات خشونت

در یک مقیاس از 1 تا 5، به طوری که 1 نمایانگر پایین ترین سطح توافق و 5 نمایانگر بالاترین سطح توافق باشد، لطفاً گزینه ای را انتخاب نمایید که نشان دهد شما به چه اندازه با هر یک از جملات زیر موافق هستید.

- من خشونت های زیادی (به عنوان مثال بر اساس باورهای سیاسی، عقاید مذهبی، زبان...) را در افغانستان قبل از ترک کشور تجربه نموده ام.
  a. کاملاً مخالف
  b. مخالف
  c. بی طرف
  d. موافقم
  e. کاملاً موافقم

- من به طور مستقیم جنگ در افغانستان را شاهد بوده ام.

- تحت تأثیر مستقیم جنگ قرار نگرفته ام، اما به عنوان نتیجه‌ای از خشونت در افغانستان، جابجایی اجباری یا مهاجرت را تجربه کرده‌ام.

میزان احساس اجباری بودن مهاجرت

در یک مقیاس از 1 تا 5، به طوری که 1 نمایانگر پایین ترین سطح توافق و 5 نمایانگر بالاترین سطح توافق باشد، لطفاً گزینه ای را انتخاب نمایید که نشان دهد شما به چه اندازه با هر یک از جملات زیر موافق هستید.

- من مجبور شدم از کشورم خارج شوم.

- من میتوانستم انتخاب نمایم که در کشورم بمانم.

خطرات مرتبط

در یک مقیاس از 1 تا 5، به طوری که 1 نمایانگر پایین ترین سطح توافق و 5 نمایانگر بالاترین سطح توافق باشد، لطفاً گزینه ای را انتخاب نمایید که نشان دهد شما به چه اندازه با هر یک از جملات زیر موافق هستید.

- من قبل از ترک کشور اصلی خود تهدید می شدم.

Appendix 5B

- من قبل از فرار، تجربیاتی را داشتم که منجر به استرس روانی من شدند.

- سفر مهاجرت من به طور مورد نظر پیش رفت (یعنی آنچنانی که خودم برنامه نموده بودم).

- من در طول سفر مهاجرتم احساس تهدید می نمودم.

- در طول سفر، تجربیاتی را داشتم که در من باعث استرس عاطفی شدند.

- در طول سفر، برای زندگی خود اضطراب داشتم.

- در طول سفر، برای زندگی اعضای خانوادهام اضطراب داشتم.

- در طول سفر، احساس امنیت می نمودم.

- در طول سفر، قادر بودم تصمیم بگیرم که به کجا بروم.

- در طول سفر، آزادی حرکت من محدود شد.

حس تداوم خود (ادامهٔ خود)

در یک مقیاس از 1 تا 5، به طوری که 1 نمایانگر پایین ترین سطح توافق و 5 نمایانگر بالاترین سطح توافق باشد، لطفاً گزینه ای را انتخاب نمایید که نشان دهد شما به چه اندازه با هر یک از جملات زیر موافق هستید.

- گذشته و حال من به طور پیوسته و بی وقفه با یکدیگر ارتباط دارند.

- حال حاضر من صرفاً ادامه ی گذشته من است.

- بین گذشته و حال من پیوستگی وجود دارد.

- گذشته من به خوبی در حال حاضرم ادغام می شود.

هویت اجتماعی

در یک مقیاس از 1 تا 5، به طوری که 1 نمایانگر پایین ترین سطح توافق و 5 نمایانگر بالاترین سطح توافق باشد، لطفاً گزینه ای را انتخاب نمایید که نشان دهد شما به چه اندازه با هریک از جملات زیر موافق هستید.

حفظ عضویت در گروه

توجه: در موارد زیر، اصطلاح "گروه" شامل دسته های مختلفی از جمله گروه های مذهبی، گروه دینی، گروه جوانان، گروه اجتماعی و نهادهای مشابه می شود که شما قبل از مهاجرت در فرانسه خود را عضو آن میدانستید و بخشی از هویت اجتماعی شما را تشکیل میدادند. به طور مثال "من یک افغان هستم". در این جمله "أفغان بودن" یک هویت اجتماعی محسوب میشود.

- پس از مهاجرت، هنوز به همان گروههایی که قبل از مهاجرت به آنها تعلق داشتم، تعلق دارم.

- پس از مهاجرت، هنوز در فعالیتهای گروهی که قبل از مهاجرتم در آنها شرکت می نمودم، شرکت می نمایم.

- پس از مهاجرت، با افرادی دوست استم که قبل از مهاجرت در همان گروه ها دوست بودم.

- پس از مهاجرت، همچنان ارتباطات قوی را با همان گروههایی که قبل از مهاجرتم داشتم، حفظ می نمایم.

عضویت های گروهی جدید

توجه: در موارد زیر، اصطلاح "گروه های جدید" شامل دسته های مختلفی از جمله سایر گروه های پناهنده، گروه های فرانسوی، گروه های جوانان و نهادهای مشابه می شود.

- پس از مهاجرت، به یک یا چند گروه جدید پیوسته ام.

Appendix 5B

- پس از مهاجرت، در فعالیت گروه های جدیدی شرکت نموده ام.

- پس از مهاجرت، با افرادی از یک یا چند گروه جدید دوست استم.

- پس از مهاجرت، ارتباطات قوی با یک یا چند گروه جدید دارم.

ادغام / فرهنگ گرایی

زندگی در فرهنگ متفاوت اغلب مستلزم یادگیری مهارت ها ورفتار های جدید است. هنگامی که زندگی در فرانسه را در نظر می گیرید، لطفاً توانایی خود را در هر یک از رفتارهای زیر به أساس یک مقیاس از 1 تا 5 ارزیابی نمایید، به طوری که 1 به معنی " کاملاً ناتوان" و5 به معنی "فوق العاده توانمند" باشد.

- ایجاد وحفظ روابط.
  a. کاملاً ناتوان
  b. کمی توانا
  c. توانا در حد متوسط
  d. بسیار توانا
  e. کاملاً توانمند

- به دست آوردن خدمات اجتماعی که نیاز دارم.

- درک وصحبت نمودن (زبان فرانسوی).

- تعامل در مراسم اجتماعی

- حضور یا مشارکت در فعالیت های اجتماعی.

- پیدا نمودن راه خود (آشنایی با جاده ها و آدرس ها)

- درک دقیق و پاسخ دادن به احساسات دیگران.

- برخورد با بوروکراسی (دیوان سالاری یا کاغذ پرانی)

- سازگاری با سرعت زندگی.

- تعامل با جنس مخالف در اجتماع.

- خواندن و نوشتن (زبان فرانسوی).

فرآیندها و پاسخ‌های روانی مرتبط با ادغام در اجتماع

(تبعیض)

لطفاً نظر به مقیاس1 (تقریباً هر روز) تا 6 (هرگز) به عبارات زیر در مورد زندگی روزمره خود پاسخ دهید، با در نظر گرفتن اینکه چقدر این موارد برای شما در زندگی روزمره اتفاق می افتد.

- با شما نسبت به دیگران با ادب کمتری برخورد می شود.

- با شما با احترام کمتری نسبت به دیگران رفتار می شود.

- شما خدمات کمتری نسبت به سایر افراد در رستورانت ها یا فروشگاه ها دریافت می نمایید.

مردم با شما طوری رفتار می نمایند که گویا شما ساده لوح استید.

- مردم با شما طوری رفتار می نمایند که گویا از شما می ترسند.

Appendix 5B

- مردم با شما طوری رفتار می نمایند که گویا فکر می کنند شما نادرست هستید (صادق نیستید).

- مردم با شما طوری رفتار می نمایند که گویا بهتر از شما هستند.

- به شما نامهای توهین آمیزبرده میشود یا اهانت میشوید.

- شما مورد تهدید یا آزار و اذیت قرار می گیرید.

(پشیمان شدن/پشیمانی)
در یک مقیاس از 1 تا 5، به طوری که 1 نمایانگر پایین ترین سطح توافق و 5 نمایانگر بالاترین سطح توافق باشد، لطفاً گزینه ای را انتخاب نمایید که نشان دهد شما به چه اندازه با هریک از جملات زیر موافق هستید.

- به طور کلی، فکر می کنم این تصمیم درستی بود که کشورم را ترک نمایم.

- از ترک کشورم پشیمانم

جمعیت شناسی اجتماعی/سوالات فردی

در این مرحله می خواهیم چند سوال در مورد پس زمینه شخصی شما از شما بپرسیم. ما به شما اطمینان می دهیم که تمام اطلاعات ارائه شده به دقت کام مدیریت می شود و هیچ نتیجه گیری شخصی از پاسخ های شما گرفته نخواهد شد.

- لطفا سن خود را مشخص نمایید:
  - A- منوی کشویی 18-99

- لطفا جنسیت خود را مشخص نمایید:
  - A- مرد
  - B- زن
  - C- ترجیح می دهم نگویم

- لطفا حالت مدنی خود را ذکر نمایید.
  - مجرد
  - متأهل
  - طلاق شده/طلاق گرفته
  - بیوه
  - ترجیح میدهم که نگویم

- لطفاً تعداد سالهای را که در کشور خود تحصیل نموده اید، مشخص نمایید.
  - (منوی کشویی 0-18+)
  -
- سطح تحصیلات شما از کشور خودتان چقدر است؟
  - مکتب را به پایان رسانده ام.
  - آموزش حرفه ای را به پایان رسانده ام.
  - لطفا نوع آموزش حرفه ای را ذکر نمایید: ....
  - دانشگاه را با مدرک به پایان رسانده ام.
  - لطفا رشته تحصیلی مدرک بدست آورده را نام ببرید: ....
  - من فارغ التحصیل نشدم
  - دیگر
(لطفا مشخص نمایید): ....
  - آیا شما در فرانسه یا کشور دیگری مدرک تحصیلی کسب نموده اید؟
  - نه مدرک دیگری کسب ننموده ام.
  - بلی مدرک دیگری کسب نموده ام.

- اگر بلی، لطفا نوع مدرک تحصیلی که کسب نموده اید را انتخاب نمایید.
  - آموزش ابتدایی/مکتب ابتداییه: Ecoles élémentaires
  - تحصیلات ثانی: (Baccalauréat)

Appendix 5B

- لیسانس
- ماستر
- دکترئ: Ph.D
- مدرک حرفه ای (BTS یا DUT)
- مدرک حرفه ای/شغلی (CAP)
- دیگر (لطفا مشخص نمایید): ....
-
- وضعیت زندگی شما در حال حاضر چگونه است؟
- A- لطفاً نوع محل سکونت خود را مشخص نمایید.
- در یک مرکز اقامت برای پناهجویان (CADA)؛
- در اقامت اضطراری برای پناهجویان (PRAHDA ،AT-SA، HUDA، مراکز پذیرش و راهنمایی (CAO)
- در مراکز پذیرش و بررسی وضعیت اداری (CAES)
- اقامت اجتماعی (HLM)
- خانواده های میزبان (در محل اقامت ارائه شده توسط سازمان های بشردوستانه)
- خوابگاه دانشجویی
- مشترکاً در آپارتمان کرایی دیگران
- در یک آپارتمان که خودم خصوصی به کرایه گرفته ام
- من صاحب خانه شخصی خودم استم
- دیگر (لطفا مشخص نمایید): ....

- A- لطفاً گزینه ای را انتخاب نمایید که با وضعیت شما در محل اقامت شما مطابقت دارد.
من .... زندگی می نمایم.
- تنها (بدون اعضای خانواده)
- با اعضای خانواده ام
- با دوستان ام
- با افراد بیگانه
- دیگر (لطفا مشخص نمایید): ....

- وضعیت شغلی شما چگونه است؟
- شاغل
- دارای شغل آزاد
- بیکار
- کار با دست مزد ناکافی و ناهماهنگ با مهارتهای ام
- آموزش برای شغل یابی (formation)
- کارآموزی با شاگردی
- ثبت شده با Pôle Emploi به عنوان جستجو کننده کار (demandeur d'emploi).
- دیگر (لطفا مشخص نمایید): ....

- چه مدت است که در فرانسه زندگی می نمایید؟
- منوی کشویی (1-15 سال)

- مجموع درآمد ماهانه شما چقدر است؟
کمتر از € 700
€ 700 الی € 1300
€ 1300 الی € 2000
€ 2000 الی € 3000
بلندتر از € 3000

- با چه تعداد از اعضای خانواده درآمد مالی خود را شریک می نمایید؟

Appendix 5C

Pashto Translation of the Online Survey

د انلاین سروۍ پوښتنتو لرليک

د سروۍ پوښتنليک

انتخابي پوښتنی

پہ فرانسه کې ستاسو قانوني حیثیت څه دی؟

- د فرانسي تبعه
- د فرانسي اوسیدونکی
- بهرني کارگر
- پناه غوښتونکی
- مهاجر د استوگنۍ کارت سره (reconnu réfugié avec de titre de séjour)
- مهاجر د استوگنۍ کارت پرته (reconnu réfugié sans de titre de séjour)
- د فرعی ملاتړ یا فرعی محافظت څخه گته اخیستونکي
- بی سنده/ غیر قانوني مهاجر
- هیڅ یو

د تاوتریخوالي تجربی

د 1 څخه تر 5 پورې په پیمانه، 1 د موافقي د ټیټي کچي استازیتوب کوي او 5 د موافقي د لوړي کچي استازیتوب کوي، مهرباني وکړئ هغه اختیار غوره کړئ چي دا په گوته کوي چي تاسو د لاندې بیاناتو سره څومره موافق یاست.

ما له هیواد څخه د وتلو د مخه په هیواد کي د ډیر تاوتریخوالی (د بیلگي په توگه د سیاسي عقیدی، مذهبي عقایدو، ژبي...) تجربه کرې ده.

1) په بشپړه توگه مخالف یم
2) مخالف یم
3) بی طرفه
4) موافق یم
5) په بشپړه توگه موافق یم

زه په مستقیم ډول د افغانستان دجگړی شاهد یم.

زه په مستقیمه توگه د جگړی له امله اغیزمن شوی نه یم ، مگر په افغانستان کې د تاوتریخوالي په پایله کي د اجباري بی ځایه کیدو یا مهاجرت تجربه لرم.

د اجباری مهاجرت احساس

د 1 څخه تر 5 پورې په پیمانه، 1 د موافقي د ټیټي کچي استازیتوب کوي او 5 د موافقي د لوړي کچي استازیتوب کوي، مهرباني وکړئ هغه اختیار غوره کړئ چي دا په گوته کوي چي تاسو د لاندې بیاناتو سره څومره موافق یاست.

زه مجبور شوم چي خپل هیواد پریږدم.

زه کولی شم په خپل هیواد کي پاتي کیدل غوره کړم.

اړوند خطرونه

د 1 څخه تر 5 پورې په پیمانه، 1 د موافقي د ټیټي کچي استازیتوب کوي او 5 د موافقي د لوړي کچي استازیتوب کوي، مهرباني وکړئ هغه اختیار غوره کړئ چي دا په گوته کوي چي تاسو د لاندې بیاناتو سره څومره موافق یاست.

ما مخکي له دی چي خپل هیواد پریږدم گواښل شوی ومر

مخکي له دی چي زه وتښتم، ما داسي تجربي درلودي چي زما د ذهني فشار لامل شوی.

زما د مهاجرت سفر د پلان سره سم روان وه. (یعني لکه څنگه چي ما پلان کړی وه).

ما مهاجرت په سفر کی د گواښ احساس وکړ.

د سفر په جریان کي، ما داسي تجربي درلودي چي ما د احساساتي فشار لامل شو.

د سفر په جریان کي، زه د خپل ژوند لپاره اندیښمن وم.

Appendix 5C

- د سفر په جریان کي، زه د خپلي کورنۍ د غړو ژوند په اړه اندېښمن وم.
- ما د خپل سفر په جریان کي د خوندیتوب احساس وکړ.
- د سفر په جریان کي، ما پریکړه کیدای چی چیرته لاړ شم.
- د سفر په جریان کي، زما د تګ راتګ آزادي محدوده شوه.

د خُان د دوام احساس

د 1 څخه تر 5 پوري په پیمانه، 1 د موافقي د ټیټي کچي استازیتوب کوي او 5 د موافقي د لوړي کچي استازیتوب کوي، مهرباني وکړئ هغه اختیار غوره کړئ چی دا په ګوته کوي چی تاسو د لاندي بیاناتو سره څومره موافق یاست.

- زما تېر او حال په دوامداره توګه یو له بل سره تړاو لري.

- زما اوس په ساده ډول زما تېر د دوام دی.
- زما د تېر او اوس تر مینځ تسلسل شتون لري.
- زما تېر زما په حال کي په ښه توګه سره یوځای کیږي.

تولنیز هویت

د 1 څخه تر 5 پوري په پیمانه، 1 د موافقي د ټیټي کچي استازیتوب کوي او 5 د موافقي د لوړي کچي استازیتوب کوي، مهرباني وکړئ هغه اختیار غوره کړئ چی دا په ګوته کوي چی تاسو د لاندي بیاناتو سره څومره موافق یاست.

د ګروپ غړیتوب ساتل.

یادونه: په لاندي بیاناتو کي د "ګروپ" په اصطلاح کي مختلفي کټګوري شاملي دی لکه دیني او مذهبي ډلي، د ځوانانو ډلي، تولنیزي ډلي او شبیه نهادونه چی تاسو فرانسي ته د مهاجرت دمخه خُان غړی ګنلی وه او دا ستاسو د تولنیز هویت برخه وه. د مثال په توګه "زه یو افغان یم". په دي جمله کي "افغان" یو تولنیز هویت ګنل کیږي.

- د مهاجرت وروسته، زه لا هم په هماغه ګروپونو پوري اړه لرم چی مخکي له مهاجرت سره تړاو درلودم.
- زما د مهاجرت وروسته، زه اوس هم په ورته ډله ایزو فعالیتونو کي برخه اخلم چی له مهاجرت څخه مخکي مي پکي برخه اخیستي وه.
- زما له مهاجرت وروسته، زه په هماغه ګروپونو کي د خلکو سره ملګري یم لکه څنګه چی زه له خپل مهاجرت څخه مخکي وم.
- زما د مهاجرت څخه وروسته، زه لاهم د ورته ډلو سره پیاوړي اړیکي ساتم چی ما د خپل مهاجرت څخه مخکي درلود.

د نوي ګروپ غړیتوب بیاناتو

یادونه: په لاندي جملو کي د "نوي ګروپ " اصطلاح د نورو کډوالو ګروپ ، فرانسوي ګروپ ، ځوانانو ګروپ او مشابه نهادونه په ګډون په مختلف کټګوري شاملي دي.

- د مهاجرت وروسته، زه یو یا ډیرو نویو ګروپونو سره یوځای شوی یم.

- د مهاجرت وروسته، زه د نویو ګروپي په فعالیتونو کي شامل شوي یم.
- د مهاجرت وروسته، زه د دي نوي ګروپونو څخه د یو یا ډیرو خلکو سره ملګري یم.
- د مهاجرت وروسته، زه د یو یا ډیرو نویو ګروپونو سره پیاوړي اړیکي لرم.

ادغام / کلتوریزم

په یو متقاوت کلتور کي ژوند کول ډیری وختونه د نوي مهارتونو او چلندونو زده کولو ته اړتیا لري. کله چي په فرانسه کي د ژوند کولو په اړه فکر کوئ، مهرباني وکړئ په لاندي هر یو چلندو کي خپل ورتیا د 1 څخه تر 5 پوري اندازه کړئ، چی 1 یي "په بشپړ توګه نا توان" او 5 یي "خورا پیاوړی" وی.

- **د اړیکو جوړول او ساتل.**

6) په بشپړه توګه ناتوان
7) یو څه وړ
8) په منځنۍ توګه ورتیا
9) ډیر وړ
10) په بشپړه توګه وړ

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- هغه ټولنیز خدمات ترلاسه کول، چې زه ورته اړتیا لرم.
- پوهیدل او خبری کول (فرانسوي ژبه).
- په ټولنیزو پیښو کي تعامل.
- په ټولنی فعالیتونو کي برخه اخیستل یا ګډون کول.
- زما په شاوخوا کي لاره موندل (د سړکونو او آدرسونو سره اشنا کیدل).
- د نورو خلکو احساساتو په سمه توګه درک کول او ځواب ورکول.
- د بیوروکراسي (کاغذ کار) سره معامله کول ورته.
- د ژوند د سرعت سره تطابق.
- په ټولنه کي له مخالف جنس سره تعامل.
- لوستل او لیکل (فرانسوي ژبه).

د ادغام اړوند رواني پروسي او ځوابونه

(تبعیض)

مهرباني وکړئ د خپل ورځني ژوند په اړه لاندي بیاناتو ته د 1 (تقریبا هره ورځ) څخه تر 6 (هیڅکله) په پیمانه ځواب ورکړئ
، په پام کي ونیسئ چي دا شیان ستاسو په ورځني ژوند کي څو ځله پیښیږي.

- تاسو سره د نورو خلکو په پرتله لږ مؤدبانه چلند کیږي.

1) تقریبا هره ورځ
2) په مکرر ډول
3) کله ناکله
4) په ندرت سره
5) تقریبا هیڅکله نه
6) هیڅکله نه

- تاسو سره د نورو خلکو په پرتله لږ درناوی کیږي.
- تاسو په رستورانونو یا پلورنځیو کي د نورو خلکو په پرتله لږ خدمات ترلاسه کوئ.
- خلک داسي چلند کوي لکه دوی فکر کوي چي تاسو ساده یاست.
- خلک داسي چلند کوي لکه څنګه چي دوی له تا څخه ډاریږي.
- خلک داسي چلند کوي لکه دوی فکر کوي چي تاسو صادق نه یاست.
- خلک داسي چلند کوي لکه څنګه چي دوی ستاسو څخه غوره دي.
- تاسو ته نومونه ورکول کیږي یا سپکاوی کیږي.
- تاسو تهدید یا ځورول کیږي.

(پښیماني)

د 1 څخه تر 5 پوري په پیمانه، 1 د موافقي د ټیټي کچي استازیتوب کوي او 5 د موافقي د لوړي کچي استازیتوب کوي،
مهرباني وکړئ هغه اختیار غوره کړئ چي دا په ګوته کوي چي تاسو د لاندي بیاناتو سره څومره موافق یاست.

- په عمومي توګه، زه فکر کوم چي زما د هیواد پریښنودو سمه پریکړه وه.
- زه د خپل هیواد په پریښنودو پښیمانه یم.

ټولنیز ډیموګرافیک

پدي مرحله کي، موږ غواړو له تاسو څخه ستاسو د شخصي بیګروند په اړه یو څو پوښتنتي وکړو. موږ تاسو ته داډ درکوو چي
ټول چمتو شوي معلومات به په دقت سره اداره شي، او ستاسو د ځوابونو څخه به هیڅ شخصي پایله ونه اخستل شي.

- **مهرباني وکړئ خپل عمر په ګوته کړئ:**

A- د دراپ داون مینو 18-99

- مهرباني وکړئ خپل جنسیت په ګوته کړئ:
A- نارینه

Appendix 5C

B-   ښځينه
C-   زه غوره نه بولم چی ووايم

-    مهرباني وکړئ خپل مدني حالت په گوته کړئ.
-    مجرد
-    واده شوی
-    طلاق شوی
-    کونډه
-    زه غوره نه بولم چی ووايم

-    مهرباني وکړئ په گوته کړئ چي تاسو په خپل هيواد کي څو کاله ښوونځي کي یاست.
-    (د دراپ ډاون مينو 0-18+)

-    ستاسو په هيواد کي د زده کړي کچه څومره ده؟
-    ما ښوونځی پای ته ورساوه.
-    ما حرفوي زده کړي پای ته ورسولي.
-    مهرباني وکړئ د حرفوي زده کړو ډول په گوته کړئ:.............
-    ما په پوهنتون کي د ليسانس سند بشپړ کړ.
-    مهرباني وکړئ د ترلاسه شوي مطالعي ساحي نوم ورکړئ:.............
-    زه فارغ شوی نه وم
-    نور
-    مهرباني وکړئ مشخص کړئ:............

-    ايا تاسو په فرانسه يا بل هيواد کي تحصيلي سند ترلاسه کړی؟
-    نه، ما بله تحصيلي سند نه ده ترلاسه کړي.
-    هو، ما بله تحصيلي سند ترلاسه کره.

-    که هو، مهرباني وکړئ د ترلاسه شوي تحصيلي سند ډول وټاکئ.
-    لومړنی زده کړي: Ecoles élémentaires
-    ثانوي زده کړي: Baccalauréat (Bac)
-    د ليسانس ډيپلوم
-    د ماسټری ډيپلوم
-    Ph.D.
-    حرفوي ډيپلومونه (BTS يا DUT)
-    حرفوي ورتيا (CAP)
-    نور
-    مهرباني وکړئ مشخص کړئ:........

-    ستاسو د اوسنی ژوند حالت څه دی؟
-    A   مهرباني وکړئ د استوگنی ډول په گوته کړئ چي تاسو اوسيږئ
-    د پناه غوښتونکو لپاره د استوگنی په يوه مرکز کي (CADA)؛
-    د پناه غوښتونکو لپاره په بيرني استوگنځي کي (HUDA, AT-SA, PRAHDA، د استقبال او اوريدو مرکزونه (CAO)
-    په استقباليه او اداري وضعيت کي د ازموينی مرکزونه (CAES)
-    ټولنيز کور (HLM)
-    کوربه کورنی (د بشردوستانه سازمانونو لخوا چمتو شوي استوگنځي کي)
-    د زده کوونکو د استوگنی ځای
-    د بل چا د کرايه شوي اپارتمان شريکول
-    په شخصي کرايه شوي اپارتمان کي
-    زه خپل کور لرم
-    نور
-    مهرباني وکړئ مشخص کړئ:...........

Appendix 5C

- A-   مهرباني وکړئ هغه انتخاب غوره کړئ چي ستاسو له وضعيت سره په ستاسو استوګني ځای کي مناسب وي.

زه............. ژوند کوم

- يوازي (د کورنۍ له غړو پرته)
- د کورنۍ د غړو سره
- د ملګرو سره
- د اجنبيانو سره
- نور،
- مهرباني وکړئ مشخص کړئ:...............

- ستاسو د کار وضعيت څه دی؟
- ګمارل شوي (کارمند يم)
- آزاد ه دنده
- بي کاره
- د ناکافي معاش او خپل د مهارتونو سره په تضاد کي کار کول
- د کارموندني لپاره روزنه (formation)
- انترنشپ يا زده کړه
- راجستر شوی کار غوښتونکی د Pôle Emploi سره
- نور
- مهرباني وکړئ مشخص کړئ:

- تاسو څومره وخت په فرانسه کي ژوند کوئ؟
- ډراپ ډاون مينو (1-15 کاله)

- ستاسو ټول مياشتني عايد څومره دی چي تاسو يي ترلاسه کوئ؟
د 700 € څخه لږ
د 700 € څخه تر 1300
د 1300 € څخه تر 2000
د 2000 € څخه تر 3000
له 3000 € څخه لوړ

- تاسو د کورنۍ له څو غړو سره خپل مالي عايد شريکوئ؟

Appendix 5D

Appendix 5D

Survey Flyer – English – Persian - Pashto

Appendix 5F

Appendix 5F

Statistical Tables and Figures for Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1a

Table 1

Parameter Estimates Predicting Sociocultural Integration from Violence, Forcedness, and Migration-Related Perils

Names	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Intervals		β	df	t	p
			Lower	Upper				
(Intercept)	3.148	0.074	3.002	3.295	-0.000	89	42.797	<.001
Experience of_violence	-0.042	0.082	-0.204	0.121	-0.059	89	-0.511	0.611
Forcedness	0.131	0.105	-0.078	0.340	0.148	89	1.245	0.216
Perils	-0.134	0.117	-0.367	0.098	-0.125	89	-1.147	0.254

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Hypothesis 1b

Table 2

Parameter Estimates Predicting Social Identity Maintenance from Violence, Forcedness, and Migration-Related Perils

Names	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Intervals		β	df	t	p
			Lower	Upper				
(Intercept)	2.581	0.102	2.378	2.784	-0.000	89	25.276	<.001
Experience of_violence	-0.061	0.113	-0.287	0.164	-0.062	89	-0.542	0.589
Forcedness	0.042	0.146	-0.248	0.333	0.034	89	0.287	0.774
Perils	-0.239	0.163	-0.562	0.084	-0.160	89	-1.473	0.144

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Table 3

Parameter Estimates Predicting Social Identity Development from Violence, Forcedness, and Migration-Related Perils

Names	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Intervals		β	df	t	p
			Lower	Upper				
(Intercept)	3.387	0.091	3.207	3.567	-0.000	89	37.401	<.001
Experience of violence	0.096	0.101	-0.104	0.296	0.110	89	0.957	0.341
Forcedness	0.114	0.130	-0.143	0.372	0.104	89	0.881	0.381
Perils	-0.116	0.144	-0.402	0.171	-0.087	89	-0.803	0.424

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Hypothesis 1c

Table 4

Parameter Estimates Predicting Migration-Related Regret from Perceived Discrimination

Names	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Intervals		β	df	t	p
			Lower	Upper				
(Intercept)	2.072	0.090	1.894	2.250	-0.000	95	23.087	<.001
Discrimination	-0.236	0.080	-0.396	-0.077	-0.289	95	-2.942	0.004

Appendix 5F

Hypothesis 2

Table 5

Indirect and Total Effects of Migration-Related Perils on Sociocultural Integration via Self-Continuity

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a)		β	z	p
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	**Perils ⇒ Self_continuity ⇒ Integration**	-0.00194	0.00695	-0.0156	0.0117	-0.00179	-0.279	0.780
Component	**Perils Self_continuity**	-0.07114	0.13605	-0.3378	0.1955	-0.05329	-0.523	0.601
	Self_continuity ⇒ Integration	0.02731	0.08261	-0.1346	0.1892	0.03362	0.331	0.741
Direct	**Perils_ ⇒ Integration**	-0.10171	0.11027	-0.3178	0.1144	-0.09378	-0.922	0.356
Total	**Perils ⇒ Integration**	-0.10647	0.11034	-0.3227	0.1098	-0.09801	-0.965	0.335

Note. Confidence intervals computed with method: Standard (Delta method)

Betas are completely standardized effect sizes

Appendix 5F

Table 6

Indirect and Total Effects of Perceived Forcedness on Sociocultural Integration via Self-Continuity

| Type | Effect | Estimate | SE | 95% C.I. (a) | | β | z | p |
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	**Forcedness ⇒ Self_continuity ⇒ Integration**	-1.99e−4	0.00358	-0.00721	0.00682	-2.24e−4	-0.0555	0.956
Component	**Forcedness ⇒ Self_continuity**	-0.00624	0.11127	-0.22432	0.21184	-0.00572	-0.0561	0.955
	Self_continuity ⇒ Integration	0.03183	0.08246	-0.12978	0.19344	0.03918	0.3860	0.699
Direct	**Forcedness ⇒ Integration**	0.08684	0.08989	-0.08935	0.26303	0.09805	0.9660	0.334
Total	**Forcedness ⇒ Integration**	0.08956	0.09004	-0.08692	0.26603	0.10099	0.9946	0.320

Note. Confidence intervals computed with method: Standard (Delta method)

Betas are completely standardized effect sizes

Appendix 5F

Table 7

Indirect, Direct, and Total Effects of Migration-Related Perils on Sociocultural Integration via Self-Continuity

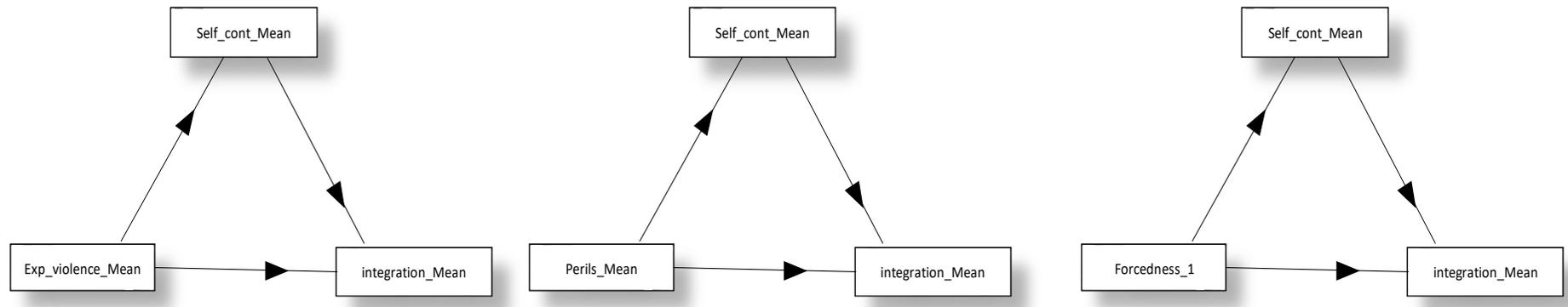| Type	Effect		Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a)		β	z	p
					Lower	Upper			
Indirect	**Perils ⇒ Self_continuity ⇒ Integration**		-0.00194	0.00695	-0.0156	0.0117	-0.00179	-0.279	0.780
Component	**Perils**	⇒ **Self_continuity**	-0.07114	0.13605	-0.3378	0.1955	-0.05329	-0.523	0.601
	Self_continuity	⇒ **Integration**	0.02731	0.08261	-0.1346	0.1892	0.03362	0.331	0.741
Direct	**Perils ⇒ Integration**		-0.10171	0.11027	-0.3178	0.1144	-0.09378	-0.922	0.356
Total	**Perils ⇒ Integration**		-0.10647	0.11034	-0.3227	0.1098	-0.09801	-0.965	0.335

Note. Confidence intervals computed with method: Standard (Delta method)

Betas are completely standardized effect sizes

Appendix 5F

Figure 1

Mediation Models of Self-Continuity Linking Violence, Forced Migration Perils, and Sociocultural Integration

Appendix 5F

Hypothesis 3

Table 8

Indirect, Direct, and Total Effects of Experience of Violence on Social Identity Maintenance via Self-Continuity

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a)		β	z	p
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	Experience of violence ⇒ Self-continuity ⇒ Social identity maintenance	-0.0118	0.0342	-0.0787	0.0552	-0.0119	-0.345	0.730
Component	Experience of violence ⇒ Self-continuity	-0.0316	0.0913	-0.2106	0.1473	-0.0359	-0.346	0.729
	Self-continuity ⇒ Social identity maintenance	0.3721	0.1096	0.1573	0.5870	0.3315	3.394	<.001
Direct	Experience of violence ⇒ Social identity maintenance	-0.0527	0.0966	-0.2420	0.1367	-0.0532	-0.545	0.586
Total	Experience of violence ⇒ Social identity maintenance	-0.0644	0.1029	-0.2661	0.1373	-0.0651	-0.626	0.531

Note. Confidence intervals computed with method: Standard (Delta method)

Betas are completely standardized effect sizes

Appendix 5F

Table 9

Indirect, Direct, and Total Effects of Perceived Forcedness on Social Identity Maintenance via Self-Continuity

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a) Lower	95% C.I. (a) Upper	β	z	p
Indirect	**Forcedness ⇒ Self-continuity ⇒ Social identity maintenance**	-0.00233	0.0416	-0.0838	0.0792	-0.00193	-0.0560	0.955
Component	**Forcedness ⇒ Self-continuity**	-0.00624	0.1113	-0.2243	0.2118	-0.00572	-0.0561	0.955
	Self-continuity ⇒ Social identity maintenance	0.37363	0.1065	0.1649	0.5824	0.33668	3.5078	<.001
Direct	**Forcedness ⇒ Social identity maintenance**	-0.05534	0.1161	-0.2829	0.1723	-0.04574	-0.4766	0.634
Total	**Forcedness ⇒ Social identity maintenance**	-0.05377	0.1234	-0.2957	0.1882	-0.04442	-0.4356	0.663

Note. Confidence intervals computed with method: Standard (Delta method)

Betas are completely standardized effect sizes

Appendix 5F

Table 10

Indirect, Direct, and Total Effects of Migration-Related Perils on Social Identity Maintenance via Self-Continuity

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a)		β	z	p
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	Perils ⇒ Self-continuity ⇒ Social identity maintenance	-0.0260	0.0503	-0.125	0.0725	-0.0175	-0.517	0.605
Component	Perils ⇒ Self-continuity	-0.0711	0.1361	-0.338	0.1955	-0.0533	-0.523	0.601
	Self-continuity ⇒ Social identity maintenance	0.3654	0.1055	0.159	0.5722	0.3293	3.462	<.001
Direct	Perils ⇒ Social identity maintenance	-0.2136	0.1409	-0.490	0.0626	-0.1442	-1.516	0.130
Total	Perils ⇒ Social identity maintenance	-0.2428	0.1493	-0.535	0.0499	-0.1637	-1.626	0.104

Note. Confidence intervals computed with method: Standard (Delta method)

Betas are completely standardized effect sizes

Appendix 5F

Table 11

Indirect, Direct, and Total Effects of Experience of Violence on Social Identity Development via Self-Continuity

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a)		β	z	p
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	**Experience of violence ⇒ Self-continuity ⇒ Social identity development**	-0.00805	0.0234	-0.0540	0.0379	-0.00915	-0.343	0.731
Component	**Experience of violence ⇒ Self-continuity**	-0.03163	0.0913	-0.2106	0.1473	-0.03589	-0.346	0.729
	Self-continuity ⇒ Social identity development	0.25440	0.0991	0.0603	0.4485	0.25486	2.568	0.010
Direct	**Experience of violence ⇒ Social identity development**	0.13408	0.0873	-0.0370	0.3051	0.15245	1.536	0.124
Total	**Experience of violence ⇒ Social identity development**	0.12604	0.0908	-0.0518	0.3039	0.14330	1.389	0.165

Note. Confidence intervals computed with method: Standard (Delta method)

Betas are completely standardized effect sizes

Table 12

Appendix 5F

Indirect, Direct, and Total Effects of Perceived Forcedness on Social Identity Development via Self-Continuity

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a)		β	z	p
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	**Forcedness ⇒ Self-continuity ⇒ Social-id-new**	-2.10e−18	0.0285	-0.0558	0.0558	-1.95e−18	-7.38e−17	1.000
Component	**Forcedness ⇒ Self-continuity**	-8.22e−18	0.1113	-0.2181	0.2181	-7.58e−18	-7.38e−17	1.000
	Self-continuity ⇒ Social identity development	0.256	0.0978	0.0639	0.4474	0.257	2.61	0.009
Direct	**Forcedness ⇒ Social identity development**	0.128	0.1061	-0.0797	0.3363	0.119	1.21	0.227
Total	**Forcedness ⇒ Social identity development**	0.130	0.1098	-0.0848	0.3456	0.121	1.19	0.235

Note. Confidence intervals computed with method: Standard (Delta method)

Betas are completely standardized effect sizes

Table 13

Appendix 5F

Indirect, Direct, and Total Effects of Migration-Related Perils on Social Identity Development via Self-Continuity

| Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a)		β	z	p
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	**Perils ⇒ Self-continuity ⇒ Social identity development**	-0.0196	0.0353	-0.0888	0.0496	-0.0148	-0.554	0.579
Component	**Perils ⇒ Self-continuity**	-0.0772	0.1360	-0.3437	0.1893	-0.0581	-0.568	0.570
	Self-continuity ⇒ Social identity development	0.2535	0.0987	0.0601	0.4469	0.2550	2.569	0.010
Direct	**Perils ⇒ Social identity development**	-0.0491	0.1310	-0.3058	0.2076	-0.0372	-0.375	0.708
Total	**Perils ⇒ Social identity development**	-0.0709	0.1353	-0.3360	0.1942	-0.0537	-0.524	0.600

Note. Confidence intervals computed with method: Standard (Delta method)

Betas are completely standardized effect sizes
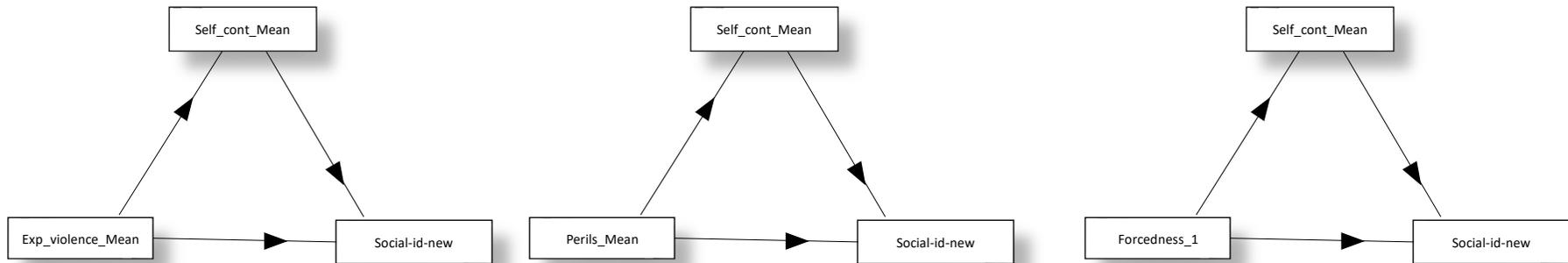
Figure 2

Appendix 5F

Mediation Models of Self-Continuity Linking Violence, Forcedness, Migration-Related Perils, and Social Identity Maintenance
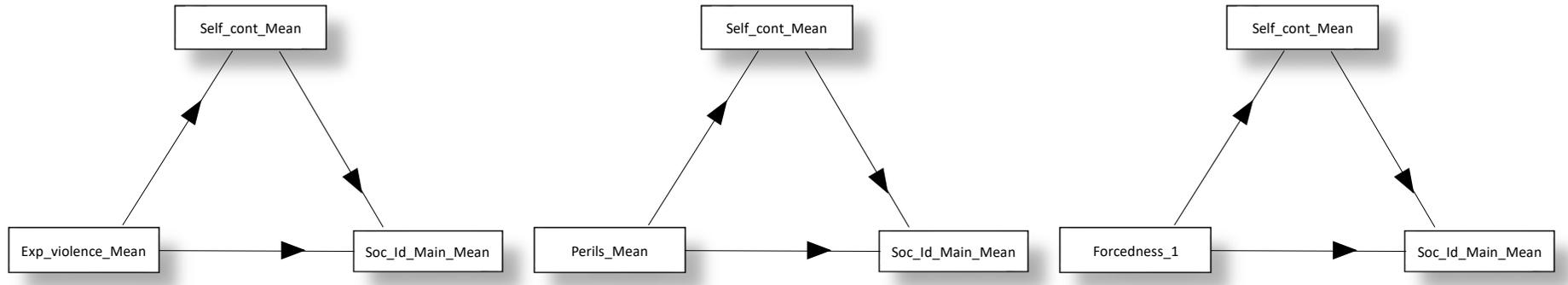
Figure 3

Mediation Models of Self-Continuity Linking Violence, Forcedness, Migration-Related Perils, and Social Identity Development

Appendix 5F

Hypothesis 4

Table 14

Indirect, Direct, and Total Effects of Perceived Discrimination on Migration-Related Regret via Self-Continuity

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a)		β	z	p
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	**Discrimination ⇒ Self-continuity ⇒ Regret**	0.00966	0.0149	-0.0195	0.0388	0.0118	0.649	0.517
Component	**Discrimination ⇒ Self-continuity**	-0.13109	0.0786	-0.2851	0.0229	-0.1687	-1.668	0.095
	Self-continuity ⇒ Regret	-0.07369	0.1047	-0.2788	0.1314	-0.0698	-0.704	0.481
Direct	**Discrimination ⇒ Regret**	-0.25476	0.0813	-0.4142	-0.0953	-0.3103	-3.132	0.002
Total	**Discrimination ⇒ Regret**	-0.23647	0.0800	-0.3932	-0.0797	-0.2890	-2.957	0.003

Note. Confidence intervals computed with method: Standard (Delta method)
Betas are completely standardized effect sizes

Figure 5.5

Mediation Models of Self-Continuity Linking Discrimination and Re
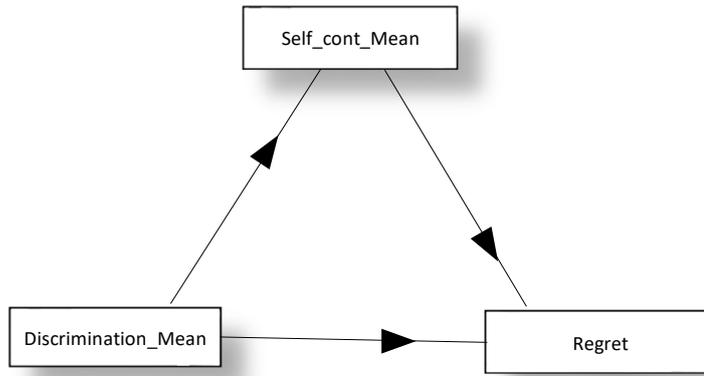
Titre : Déplacement forcé, intégration socioculturelle et continuité de soi chez les réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans en France

Mots clés : Déplacements subis, mineurs, Bien-être psycho-social, Conséquences de violence, Détresse psychologique, d'auto-continuité

Résumé : Cette thèse examine l'intégration psychologique et socioculturelle des réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans en France à travers un design mixte séquentiel exploratoire. Alors que la recherche existante a largement mis l'accent sur les indicateurs structurels de l'intégration tels que l'emploi, le logement ou le statut légal, relativement peu d'attention a été portée aux dimensions psychologiques et identitaires de l'adaptation (Donini et al., 2016 ; Ryan et al., 2008 ; Theisen-Womersley, 2021). Pour combler cette lacune, cette thèse analyse comment la perception de la contrainte migratoire, les périls liés à la migration, la discrimination et les traumatismes influencent le bien-être psychologique des réfugiés, la continuité du soi et leur intégration socioculturelle.

La phase qualitative a impliqué des entretiens semi-directifs avec 14 réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans résidant à Paris et à Toulouse. Guidée par le modèle PARI (Echterhoff et al., 2020), le concept de continuité du soi (Sedikides et al., 2023) et le modèle d'identité sociale du changement identitaire traumatique (Muldoon et al., 2020), l'analyse a mis en évidence des trajectoires d'adaptation hétérogènes. Les récits ont révélé des formes fragiles d'ajustement marquées par la marginalisation et une continuité du soi perturbée, aux côtés de formes plus équilibrées d'intégration biculturelle (Berry, 1997, 2005). Les participants ont souligné les effets perturbateurs des traumatismes, l'insécurité des procédures d'asile et l'exclusion, mais aussi le rôle protecteur du lien entre passé et présent. Ils ont également mis en avant les stresseurs post-arrivée tels que la précarité du logement et les barrières linguistiques, tout en démontrant de l'agence et de la résilience grâce à leurs aspirations et réseaux sociaux.

À la suite des résultats qualitatifs, la phase quantitative a été conçue pour tester et généraliser ces résultats sur un échantillon plus large. Une enquête auprès de 101 réfugiés afghans a mesuré la contrainte perçue, les périls migratoires, la discrimination, l'intégration socioculturelle, les processus d'identité sociale et la continuité du soi. Bien que les hypothèses de médiation n'aient pas été confirmées, une analyse exploratoire par profils latents a identifié quatre trajectoires d'adaptation distinctes, allant d'une assimilation fragile et de la marginalisation à des formes plus résilientes et biculturelles d'intégration. Ces profils reflétaient étroitement les résultats qualitatifs, soulignant à la fois la vulnérabilité et la résilience dans l'intégration des réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile afghans.

En combinant approches qualitative et quantitative, cette thèse démontre que l'intégration n'est ni linéaire ni uniforme mais constitue une négociation multidimensionnelle entre perte, continuité et appartenance. Les résultats contribuent à une meilleure compréhension des fondements psychologiques de l'intégration des réfugiés et mettent en lumière le rôle central de la continuité du soi dans la navigation du déplacement forcé et la reconstruction identitaire en exil.

Mots-clés : psychologie de la migration, réfugiés afghans, intégration socioculturelle, identité sociale, continuité du soi.

Title: Forced Displacement, Sociocultural Integration, and Self-Continuity among Afghan Refugees and Asylum Seekers in France

Key words: Displacement, adults, Psychosocial wellbeing, Impact of violence, Psychosocial distress, Self continuity

Abstract: This dissertation examines the psychological and sociocultural integration of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in France through an exploratory sequential mixed methods design. While existing research has largely emphasized structural indicators of integration such as employment, housing, or legal status, comparatively little attention has been paid to the psychological and identity-related dimensions of adaptation (Donini et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2008; Theisen-Womersley, 2021). Addressing this gap, this dissertation investigates how perceived forcedness of displacement, migration-related perils, discrimination, and trauma influence refugees' psychological wellbeing, self-continuity, and sociocultural integration.

The qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews with 14 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers residing in Paris and Toulouse. Guided by the PARI model (Echterhoff et al., 2020), the concept of self-continuity (Sedikides et al., 2023), and the Social Identity Model of Traumatic Identity Change (Muldoon et al., 2020), the analysis identified heterogeneous adaptation pathways. Narratives revealed fragile forms of adjustment marked by marginalization and disrupted self-continuity, alongside more balanced bicultural forms of integration (Berry, 1997, 2005). Participants highlighted the disruptive effects of trauma, insecure asylum procedures, and exclusion, but also noted the protective role of linking past and present identities. They further pointed to post-arrival stressors such as housing precarity and language barriers, while demonstrating agency and resilience through aspirations and social networks.

Following the qualitative findings, the quantitative phase was designed to test and generalize these insights on a broader sample. A survey of 101 Afghan refugees measured forcedness, migration-related perils, discrimination, sociocultural integration, social identity processes, and self-continuity. While mediation hypotheses were not supported, exploratory latent profile analysis identified four distinct adaptation patterns, ranging from fragile assimilation and marginalization to more resilient and bicultural forms of integration. These profiles closely mirrored the qualitative findings, underscoring both vulnerability and resilience in Afghan refugee and asylum seekers' integration.

By combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, this dissertation demonstrates that integration is neither linear nor uniform but a multidimensional negotiation between loss, continuity, and belonging. The findings advance understanding of the psychological foundations of refugee integration and highlight the central role of self-continuity in navigating forced displacement and rebuilding identity in exile.

Keywords: psychology of migration, Afghan refugees, sociocultural integration, social identity, self-continuity.