

Programme

Overall programme Sessions PhD activities (Semi) plenaries SCs/ECs

Side events

21st IMISCOE Annual Conference

2–5 July 2024 — Lisbon & online



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Participants

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Job (in)security, emotions and migrants' wellbeing

Wed July 3, 10:50–12:20, Session #101 panel  | SC Migration, Migrants and the Labour Markets

Room: Webex Room 6

Link : <https://imiscoe.webex.com/imiscoe/j.php?MTID=m86f0004704303b71a13a00b2b083f6af>

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chair

Alessio Buonomo

 online

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The papers of this panel offer insights into the diverse experiences of migrants in the labour market by shedding light on emotional dynamics, job insecurity, coping strategies, (ir)regular work, and inter-generational differences. In doing so, the panel examines different migrant groups and labour market contexts.

PAPER #1

Paradoxes of emotional exchange: Migrant agency and the disruption of affective structures in labour market incorporation

AUTHOR(S)

Miguel Morillas (University of Copenhagen)

Claire (Maxwell)

ABSTRACT

The labour incorporation of migrants is a process marked by emotions. Most research on emotions focuses on transnational family connections, domestic work, and mobility aspirations. Research on the creation and negotiation of affective structures in migrant labour incorporation remains limited. This paper focuses on the changing constitution over time of an organizational initiative/programme and illuminates how the affective structures underpinning it can help understand how the employer and the migrants interact and assess its value. We show how an emotional exchange underpins the initiative's dominant discourse around the target group of skilled migrant workers that it strives to engage. Over time, the discourse transitions from being driven by feelings of pity (via a social responsibility logic) towards aspiring for migrant professional empowerment (drawing on a business logic). Migrants' emotional response to this affective structuring is gratefulness and self-assertiveness, respectively. Drawing on the experiences of 40 skilled migrant workers and managers in this organization, we show how the migrant recipients of the programme come to re-appropriate the dominant discursive frame shaping the initiative, and in doing so disrupt the emotional exchange mechanism expected by the organisation. Such acts and attitudes of resistance are met with confusion by managers. We illustrate how this paradox occurs, when the emotional exchange embedded within the programme facilitates the mobilization of reflexive agency, which in turn destabilizes the intended affective structures of the initiative. Such an analysis allows us to extend literature on migrant labour incorporation, as well as that of migration and emotions.

PAPER #2

Job insecurity and subjective well-being of natives and immigrants in Germany:

Disentangling the role of objective and subjective components

AUTHOR(S)

Maye Ehab (Institute for Employment Research (IAB))

ABSTRACT

Non-standard employment forms are becoming more common (Brady & Biegert, 2017). While these jobs may act as a stepping stone into the labor market (Booth et al., 2002; Gash, 2008), they might lead to insecurity and lower wages (Giesecke & Groß, 2003; McGovern et al., 2004), and can render certain groups more vulnerable in the labor market. Two such groups are migrants and refugees, who are more likely to be in non-standard employment than natives (Kogan, 2011) and are at higher risk of experiencing subjective job insecurity (Bürmann et al., 2022). However, little is known about the effect of various measures of job insecurity on subjective wellbeing (SWB) according to ethnicity.

Complementing previous research, this paper focuses on the outcomes for migrants and refugees, specifically asking how the effect of objective job insecurity on SWB differs depending on migration experience in Germany and which role the subjective component of job insecurity plays in explaining differential outcomes. Using panel data models and data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP), the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee sample and the IAB-SOEP Migration sample from the years 2013 to 2020, results show differences in the level of life satisfaction between natives, migrants and refugees, where migrants and refugees are happier than natives when employed in permanent employment. Being in a non-standard employment compared to being in permanent employment decreases SWB only for migrants and refugees. We find that native's SWB is least affected by the type of employment. Working in informal employment compared to permanent employment decreases SWB drastically for migrants while refugees largest decline in SWB is witnessed in working in fixed-term employment compared to permanent employment. We will disentangle the mechanisms behind the observed differences and analyse the role of subjective job and labor market insecurity to explain the relationship between employment type and SWB.

PAPER #3

Situational adaptation: Examining migrant investment and coping strategies in a small island labour market

AUTHOR(S)

David Im (Immigration Office of Faroe Islands)

ABSTRACT

This paper concerns in-migration and labour market integration in the small island

community of the Faroe Islands. The Faroe Islands, with its tiny population of 54,000, has remained ethnically and culturally homogenous, with scarcely any immigration – until the very recent past. Being a new immigrant destination (NID) (McAreevey & Argent, 2018) with a small-scale labour market and a micro public administration, there lacks a systematic approach to language education and labour market inclusion. Faroese, the majority language in this bilingual sub-state archipelago with two globally small languages (Faroese and Danish), conjures strong feelings of ownership and belongingness amongst Faroe Islanders – as an ideology of authenticity (Hoffmann & Holm, 2022). Furthermore, the interconnectedness and intimacy in Faroese culture encompasses locally produced familiarity (Hayfield, 2022) and what, Gaini (2013) coins family capital. Thus, networks can be difficult to access and are a form of capital that highly skilled migrants seldom bring with them. Lacking family capital and without language “authenticity”, both as non-Faroese speaking “strangers”, and as speakers of Faroese, in-migrants frequently experience exclusion on the labour market, (Gaini, 2013; Hayfield & Schug, 2019). Despite struggles to receive recognition for their skills and qualifications, and oftentimes de-skilling and a loss of identity (Holm et al., 2020; Ísfeld, 2019), in-migrants do not lack agency and find ways of navigating the labour market using various coping strategies. Using ethnographic and interview material, we will apply and build on the concept of investment in language learning, community participation and the labour market (Darvin & Norton, 2017), to understand migrants’ situational adaptation and coping strategies.

PAPER #4

The Factors Behind Shifting the Jobs within Irregular and Regular work in Low-skilled Jobs: The case of International students in the UK

AUTHOR(S)

Emine Canan Acar (Middlesex University)

ABSTRACT

In western countries, international students create a ‘new vulnerable workforce’. They work under poor conditions for less than minimum wage; they also become illegal according to immigration law when they work more than their permitted hours (Nyland et al, 2008). Discussions of “illegality” in the employment of migrant workers are typically based on a “legal/illegal” dichotomy that conflates breaches of rights of residence and rights of employment (Ruhs and Anderson 2006). Previous research on international student workers has not answered several important questions. One of the significant questions is why these international students accept low pay and poor working conditions while they could get better jobs, and why they are shifting between irregular and regular work? Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 participants.

This study shows international students' experiences of mobility in regular and irregular work. The participants in this study showed that there are various factors that impact their decision to shift their jobs from irregular to irregular, irregular to regular, regular to irregular and regular to regular. International students' decisions on shifting their jobs are based on maximizing income, flexibility, better working conditions, religion and better type of job. The majority of the participants had shifted at least once from regular to irregular and/or irregular to regular. These factors were consistent with the low-skilled migrant worker research (Anderson et al. 2006, Knight, 2014, Parutis, 2014).

PAPER #5

"Children are integrated". Perception of integration among different generations of Kosovo Albanian migrants in Germany and Switzerland

AUTHOR(S)

Mimoza Dushi (University of Pristina)

ABSTRACT

Through a biographical approach, this article explores the perception of integration of different generations of Kosovo Albanian migrants in Western European countries. Germany and Switzerland have been the main destinations of Kosovo Albanian migrants. They represent one of the first migration flows to Western Europe, starting in the early 1960s. They initially enter destination countries as guest workers through bilateral agreements between the counties of origin and destination. Subsequently, they served as the basis for building Kosovar diaspora networks and promoting chain migration for the following migration flows composed by asylum seekers, refugees, family reunifications and irregular economic migrants.

The migrant's biographies tell us that their integration process has been difficult. They recognise as reasons, the low paid jobs, and difficulties to upward mobility, difficulties to learn the host country's language, lowliness and many more. Despite these many of them did decide to bring their families along and have been active part of the host countries societies. While for their children, most of them 1.5 or 2nd generations, the integration process was simpler. They had different integration strategies in compliance with improved economic conditions within family. They grow up with two languages simultaneously, have achieved to be involved in the educational processes and to provide a job. These things made them feel integrated in the host society and labour market. Therefore, this generation of migrants was supposed to have achieved individual independence, but their parents sometimes perceive as an obstacle to return to their country of origin.

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