WORKING PAPERS

Migration Narratives from Origin and Destination Country Perspectives

Zeynep Sahin-Mencutek

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Zeynep Sahin-Mencutek
Ryerson University

Series Editors: Anna Triandafyllidou and Usha George

Abstract

This working paper describes the multiple policy narratives advocated by origin and destination countries. It questions how migration is narrated and which perspectives are dominant to understand policy and political narratives. It argues that as narratives are developed and negotiated with the plethora of actors operating at the local, national, and global levels, they emerge as highly complex phenomena. A mapping of migration studies illustrates the presence of various immigration and emigration narratives that range from those supporting migration to those seeking to constrain it as well as in-between narratives. These narratives have impact on policies. Also, individual migration narratives offer more nuanced understanding of immigration and emigration experiences.

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Introduction

Public opinion survey results show that "while attitudes towards immigration have held stable, the perceived importance of the issue of migration has risen sharply across Europe" (Dennison & Drazanova, 2018). The issue's prominence can be partly attributed to the fact that millions of migrants from Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia have arrived in Europe in the last decade. It can also be explained by the escalation of alarming stories about migrants and migration disseminated by the media and politicians. This situation is not unique to Europe; migration in various forms and narratives about migrants are vividly constructed and widespread across the globe. Multiple policy narratives on immigration and emigration are advocated by origin, destination, and even transit countries.

Rather than being objective 'facts' of the situation, narratives are about discourse and storytelling. As Fischer rightly points out, "when we examine communication in the everyday realm of politics and policymaking, we find people largely explaining things by telling stories" (2009, p.192). These stories provide "a clear sequential order that connect[s] events in a meaningful way … thus offer[ing] insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it" (Hinchman & Hinchman, 2001, p. xvi). Narratives are embedded in the changing social and political context, making them complex.

Narratives are part and parcel of policy debates and policymaking. In policy fields, narrative refers to "setting out beliefs about policy problems and appropriate interventions" (Boswell et al., 2011). They suggest which policies are "reasonable and realistic to adopt and support" (Shanahan et al., 2011, p. 535). They aim to enable and legitimize certain sets of policy preferences. A narrative is strategically selected as a "background for argumentation, knowledge production, political decision-making and wider identity-building and national self-determination processes" (Kissová, 2018, p. 743). However, as Collyer underlines, narratives are

> *the deliberate construction of fictions for political ends, although those profiting from such 'fictions' may actually be equally constrained by them, in the sense that new political projects must be expressed in the form of well-established narratives if they are to receive the necessary popular support" (2013, p.15). Nevertheless, they may emerge as internally contradictory and ambiguous due to their multiple creators and competing purposes*. (Smith, 2003)

Migration narratives are how migration is discussed, debated, and framed in platforms such as society, media, politics, the international arena, civil society, and business. Migration narratives offer a specific view on migration or migrants or both, incorporating values, interests, knowledge, and claims that explain the causes and impacts of migration. Hence, there is no single narrative on migration policies, rather a series of narratives as they are constructed at different scales and by multiple actors. Scales range from global (Pécoud, 2015; Akanle, 2018) to supranational/regional (D'Amato & Lucarelli, 2019; Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; Baldwin-Edwards et al., 2019), national (country level), sub-national (regions, cities), and individual. At these scales, various actors, also called stakeholders, engage in constructing and disseminating migration policy narratives. These stakeholders can be grouped under at least seven categories: 1) migrants, refugees, diasporas; 2) governments, politicians, policymakers, international organizations (IOs), law enforcement and security agencies; 3) media, including broadcast, traditional or print (newspapers), social media, and citizen journalism; 4) artists and activists; 5) migration scholars; 6) humanitarian organizations, civil society, and non-governmental organization (NGOs) (Leurs et al., 2020); 7) corporations and the private sector (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013).

As narratives are developed and negotiated with a plethora of actors, they often end up being complex, complementing or competing (Ceccorulli & Lucarelli, 2017; Wee et al.,

2018). Counter-narratives emerge that strive to expand our understanding by seizing control from the dominant ideologies and include degrees of nuance not found in the mainstream narratives; they serve as forums for individual voices, counteracting depersonalization and contesting the official account. These counter-narratives are quite important as they become part of what defines a certain period or situation or crisis in the collective memory. To illustrate: while the media often consolidates mainstream stereotyping or racialization of migrants, particularly in the news (print or online), artists and activists, on the other hand, may offer counter-narratives through graphics, novels, theatre, movies, and other art forms or outlets (Titley, 2019). Both may use the same tools – pictures, for instance, as visual vocabularies of suffering and displacement – to disseminate their respective narratives across the globe daily, not only as news and social media posts but also in reports and appeals by humanitarian organizations (Giannakopoulos, 2016). Migrants themselves become involved in creating and disseminating migration counter-narratives. Historically, individual migration narratives have taken shape in a variety of art forms: autobiography, fiction, music, poetry, photography, and painting. For some migrant or diaspora communities, migration narratives become the dominant forms of cultural production, as created by African Americans for centuries (Griffin & Griffin, 1995, p.4). Forced migrants currently use narratives to challenge the display of refugees as political, economic, religious, or cultural threats or of refugees as victims. Their narratives offer "more nuanced counter-discourses regarding the humanity of refugees, their countries of origin and arrival, and the suffering" (Smets et al., 2019, p.186).

A review of the published research in Migration Studies illustrates the presence of multiple migration narratives. This working paper aims to categorize them along two axes: immigration and emigration. Each axis has a wide spectrum ranging from narratives supporting migration to those objecting to migration, as will be detailed below.

Narratives on Immigration

This section aims to understand policy narratives of destination countries by addressing how immigration is narrated and which perspectives are dominant (Caviedes, 2015; Eberl et al., 2018; D'Amato & Lucarelli, 2019).

Historically (Marfleet, 2013) and currently immigration is associated with the nation-state's ideas around sovereignty and controlling its borders. As Vaughan-Williams (2015) notes, the border "seeks to rhetorically identify and control the (very) mobility of certain people, services and goods that operate around its jurisdiction" (p. 6). Immigration, particularly irregular immigration, is thus considered a challenge to the very core of the sovereign state and the dominant narrative has negative attitudes toward migrants and migration, known as anti-immigration narratives.

Anti-immigration narratives

Anti-immigration narratives present simplified views of immigration and immigrants, often casting both in negative and disapproving ways. These antagonistic/hostile migration narratives (Perrino, 2019) centre on immigration phobia. They reflect the othering of immigrants in relation to the social and political imaginary about 'us' and 'others.' Othering practices can be institutionalized and sedimented in domestic and international politics as well as in the media, economy, and public policy. Anti-immigration narratives are constructed through mechanisms of bordering, stereotyping, racialization, securitization, economization,

visualization, and quantification (e.g. by overemphasizing and exaggerating the number of immigrants), and take multiple interrelated forms, as will be briefly discussed.

Immigration as a threat narrative

Narratives identify immigration, mainly unauthorized migrants, as a risk and existential threat to host country or region with regards to security, values (e.g. democracy, secularism, egalitarianism, rule of law), economy (e.g. labour market, development, infrastructure) and demography (e.g. population distribution, majority-minority balance), cultural identity, and customs (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017). Narratives depict migrants as endangering the established order of a territorial entity (Učakar, 2020). Nevertheless, the degree to which the actors (media, politicians, public) mobilize a certain emphasis such as the economy, culture, or security can vary substantially between countries and across time (Alexseev, 2006). Threat narratives can be tentatively grouped according to what is considered as being threatened by immigration or immigrants.

a. The ***security threat (securitization) narrative*** reflects the view of migration as a threat to sovereignty and internal security as a vehicle for importing terrorism and crime. This historically-persistent narrative considers migrants or migrant flows as a challenge to border, order, and citizens. Narratives linking terrorism and migration gained prominence after the September 11, 2011 attacks in the United States (Tolan et al., 2013), while the Paris and Brussels attacks in Europe consolidated the migration-terrorism nexus, with an implicit reference to Muslim immigrants (Mazzucelli et al., 2016). The official rhetoric enabled the American government to imprison and deport a large number of Muslim immigrants and indirectly legitimize the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq by garnering support in subsequent years (Scanlan, 2010). In Europe and elsewhere, the nexus has been warmly embraced by political parties to win votes, thereby contributing to the consolidation of the alleged link between migration and terrorism (Mazzucelli et al., 2016). The same nexus has frequently evoked a hostile perspective about migrants at the levels of society and state government, making policies out of practices such as border closures and walls, constant surveillance, and confiscation of migrants' personal belongings. It is important to bear in mind that migration itself does not create or directly prompt terrorism. However minor, it is nonetheless fact that migratory movements carry some risk for security under specific circumstances such as drug trafficking or exporting inter-state or regional civil wars beyond their initial place (ibid.).

Against this background, the refugee crisis of 2015, along with the terror attacks in Paris and other European cities in 2015 and 2016, reignited the debates and "facilitated the crystallization of a migration-terrorism nexus in media and political discourses" (Galantino, 2020, p.16). In a recent study of German and Italian newspapers in 2015 and 2016, Galantino (2020) finds that migration and terrorism are conflated in the media discourse and presented as the "one and the same problem, to be addressed (and solved) with the very same set of solutions: patrol, control and eventually closure of borders" (ibid.). The dominance of counter-narratives that might possibly decouple "the discursive association between the terror threat and newly arrived migrants and refugees" was not evident not only because the nexus "became increasingly more frequent over time, eclipsing other possible chains of causation" but also because there are very weak cognitive and political constraints that might be "able to contain the instrumentalization of terrorism in the discourse over migration control" (ibid).

In addition to the terrorism-migration nexus, the widespread securitization narrative criminalizes migrants, presenting them as potential criminals, cheaters, and abusers (Kubal, 2014). This narrative depicts the migrant as a dangerous stranger and evil-doer with the capacity to threaten and harm the native population via violent acts such as rape, robbery, or murder. Such framing has consequences for migrants' daily lives, leading to practices that severely influence their encounters such as frequent ad hoc identity checks in public places, raids on their home or place of work, detention by police or immigration officers and deportation (ibid.). Being considered a 'foreigner' on the basis of appearance, accent, or race can easily become a reason for being viewed with suspicion. Criminalization is also reflected in migrants' treatment by state institutions, most notably during visa applications, border crossings, and asylum proceedings; for migration officers an underlying presumption may be that migrants lie to enter or settle in the destination country. An extreme in this narrative is casting a visa applicant as a 'trickster' deploying various modes of deception like 'document fraud' or 'visa shopping.' Drawing on visa applications to the Schengen area, Stephan Scheel's study shows that practices that appear to be instances of 'trickery' – for instance, applying at a consulate known for more liberal decision-making – may, in fact, be coping strategies by migrants seeking to "mitigate the uncertainty that a culture of suspicion, the discretionary power of consular staff and the heterogeneity of opaque decision-making criteria create for them" (2020, p.1).

There is an extensive literature on securitization over borders, particularly addressing the external borders of the EU. A more recent, liberal, and softer, but still ambiguous version of the dominant narrative is humanitarian securitization, or the "search for the balance of humanitarian needs with concerns over sovereignty" (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 614). This narrative intertwines with narratives of security that offer ideas about "why and how 'our' borders are kept safe" (ibid.) Humanitarian securitization targets both immigrants and actors involved in migration governance such as smugglers, rescue NGOs, human rights advocates, among others. This narrative takes a number of forms according to target actor or is labelled differently from one study to another.

One example of the humanitarian securitization narrative is Karen McVein's (2008) conceptualization of it as a toxic narrative that focuses on rhetoric targeting rescue NGOs in the Mediterranean. This framing parallels increasing opposition to search-and-rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea as "aid groups that rescue migrants, have been accused of colluding with smugglers and thus endangering lives" (McVeins, 2008, p.1). The underlying logic is that the prospect for basic assistance or search-and-rescue somehow acts as a pull factor for irregular migration. The toxic narrative has implications, creating fear among individuals and NGOs who might provide life-saving services and who, in turn, become indifferent to those suffering in the sea and 'left-to-die.' The fear is well-founded because many recently passed laws require public service providers to share information with immigration enforcement. In the case of noncompliance, rescuers may face sanctions such as arrest, detention, or deportation. Tugba Basaran explains the consequences of this toxic narrative, particularly the rescue sanctions, by using the concept of "governing indifference in the name of security" (2015, p. 205). She notes:

> …contrary to the portrayal of deaths at sea as exceptional events, the frequency and magnitude of these occurrences demonstrate an uncomforting regularity, displaying a deeper rationale at work. These deaths at sea cannot only be casualties of individual behavior but result from a system of sanctions that punish rescuers and the process of rescue of particular people, commonly labelled refugees, irregular migrants or boat people. (ibid., p. 206)

Examples of securitization and criminalization of individuals and organizations delivering humanitarian assistance to migrants at sea and camps are not rare, limiting aid organizations' activities to the sea or food distribution in refugee settlements.

b. The ***economic threat (economization) narrative*** focuses on the financial burden created by immigrants. It problematizes the impact of migration on the labour market, local welfare systems, and social services as well as the overall cost of granting asylum. It mainly claims that immigration removes jobs from locals and overstrains the welfare state (Zaslove, 2004, p. 99). These claims are widely disseminated through the media and political debates in several European countries like the UK, France, Italy, Austria, and the Netherlands. They gradually turn into hegemonic narratives by right-wing or far-right (radical right) populist parties[1] that intensely intervened in the immigration debate in Europe. Despite their predominance, some studies argue that "it would be premature to speak of a pre-eminent securitised meta-narrative within the European press" as of 2015 (Caviedes, 2015, p. 897), but there is much evidence for it becoming a meta-narrative since then.

c. The ***identity/culture/customs narrative*** problematizes that immigration has a negative impact over the local culture, customs, and identity of a country. It is assumed that immigration precipitates the loss of identity, even if the numbers of migrants are very low, for instance 1 to 1.5 per cent of native population as in the case of Chinese immigrants in the Russian Far East (Alexseev, 2006, p.1).

The emphasis on the cultural threat has historical roots in relation to the rise of the nation-state that claims homogeneity of its population and a unified culture with regards to values, behaviours, and norms. Despite its existence in several immigration countries, the cultural threat narrative has been studied more in the context of Europe, particularly by problematizing the presence of Muslim immigrants. The claim that Muslim immigrants threaten the future and common achievements of the democratic Western world has moved the discussion into the centre of European political discourse since the mid-1980s (Yılmaz, 2012). The post-September 11 era led to the framing of migration policies, particularly anti-Muslim discourses, more strongly within securitization by amplifying the fear and anger felt in Europe and North America (Vollmer, 2014; Bail, 2012). Islam's perception as a cultural/identity threat to Western society became dominant in both media and politics, permeating both parties and parliaments (Roggeband & Vliegenthart, 2007). Narratives underlying the emancipation of Muslim immigrant women can be examined in this context too. In policy fields, this type of threat narrative emphasising how migrants and natives are distinct social and cultural entities leads to the call for regulation or even restriction of migration in order to preserve and protect the so-called national identity and uniformity. Often this leads to negative messages of exclusion, racism, misogyny, and hate, and deeply roots such stereotypes.

Immigration as a disaster and emergency narrative

One extreme and recent form of threat narrative is the 'disaster and 'emergency narrative.' The 2015-2016 migration movement towards Europe has been overwhelmingly identified with the vocabulary of crisis, flooding, and waves (Hogan & Haltinner, 2015).

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[1] Examples include the British National Party (UK), the One Nation Party (Australia), the Tea Party Patriots (US), Golden Dawn (Greece), Freedom Party (Austria), Legal Nord (Italy), Party for Freedom (Netherlands), National Front (France), and *Alternative für Deutschland* (Germany). For an extensive list of such parties and ideological stances see Vieten, U. M., & Poynting, S. (2016). Contemporary Far-Right Racist Populism in Europe, *Journal of Intercultural Studies, 37*(6), 533-540, DOI: 10.1080/07256868.2016.1235099)

Migrants are portrayed with metaphors conjuring chaos, such as 'migrants as invaders and marauders' and 'parasites' (Shariatmadari, 2015). The usage of these terms along with images of war and anarchy aim to trigger feelings of emergency, panic, fear, and anxiety in the public and, by extension, policymakers.

Populist and far-right politicians, particularly, depict mass migration movements with metaphors normally associated with natural disasters such as a 'swarm of people coming across the Mediterranean' (then-British Prime Minister David Cameron) or the continent as being 'overwhelmed with tidal waves of migrants' (Philip Hammond, foreign secretary under Cameron) or 'flooded with tsunami' (Dutch politician and Party of Freedom leader Geert Wilders in Kraak, n.d., p. 56), while prominent British politician Gordon Brown has also used the phrase 'flocking from' (Curtis, 2010) and the Spanish far-right VOX party decried 'avalanches of illegal migrants' (Spain Journal, 2020).

Spaces related to migration such as routes and camps are also described using negative vocabulary, while restrictive policy interventions are presented as 'victory.' For example, the Mediterranean Sea has long been presented as the setting of a 'perpetual emergency' (Bigo, 2002; Vaughan-Williams, 2016). The Italian Navy during the operation Mare Nostrum produced strategic narratives mobilizing war and emergency imaginaries in its photographs and videos, presenting the "Mediterranean as a 'humanitarian battlefield' and the rescue operations as 'new mediated warfare'" (Musarò, 2017). The images of the Calais camp, located in France close to UK border and over time dubbed 'the jungle,' not only depict refugees' living conditions or daily existence but also depict "the refugee camp as a violent and dissonant space in civilised Europe" that poses a threat to the immediate environment (Ibrahim, 2016, p.1). Accordingly, the camp's demolition in October 2016 was "portrayed as a victory over 'invaders,' 'illegals,' 'transgressors' and security 'threats,' who wanted to bring misery and instability" to Britain (Bhatia, 2018, p.181). No doubt that the visualization of border crossings with the pictures of massive numbers of people on the move make migration visible and actionable (Van Reekum, 2019).

To sum up, threat narratives increase the public's perception of anarchy (lack of order), group distinctiveness, and relative deprivation and amplify behavioural outcomes of discrimination, hostility and conflict (Alexseev, 2006, p.70). The emphasis on migrants as being a threat has implications on policy designs and administrative regulation as well as on the practices of migration bureaucracies regarding visa/asylum applications and service provision such as social welfare. The threat perception empowers the climate of suspicion against migrants, particularly the cause of migration and integration efforts.

Ambivalent humanitarian narratives about refugees

As argued by Chouliaraki and Zaborowski (2017), "in the context of contemporary transformations in the regimes of global governance from militarized to humanitarian security" (p. 617), victimhood and threat have become coexisting rather than opposing categories in the representation of migrants, particularly irregular migrants and refugees. Similarly, the "militarisation of migration and border controls have been explicitly bound with notions of humanitarianism" (ibid.). As such, the current focus on both the securitized and humanitarian sides of the phenomenon supports a more complex logic of threat and benevolence that allows for a security-humanitarian response.

Humanitarian narratives support refugees' reception in the context of humanitarianism and a welcoming culture (Hyndman, 2000)**.** Migration, particularly of irregular migrants and refugees, is framed as a humanitarian question, and the discourse mainly emphasizes the destination country's values such as solidarity, human rights, the rights of refugees, and the moral obligation to open borders or shelter those fleeing

persecution. References can be made to the universal right of asylum and international humanitarian law. Politicians may draw from historical events or the religion/culture of the receiving country; they may disseminate the message that the country dealt with large influxes of refugees in the recent past, that its people are civilized and generous and can cope with the influx once again. They stir themes of humanitarianism and solidarity. They speak to emotions like empathy, understanding, and compassion by emphasizing tragedies and losses during migration journeys. The faith/religious groups such as the Church tend to focus on humanitarian narratives drawing from religious teachings to mobilize resources to help migrants/refugees (Dahlin et al., 2020), while ethnic groups can follow similar narratives drawing from their common language, history, and ethnicity. These narratives aim to mobilize collective identities. At the macro scale, they are used to legitimize or criticize political actions.

The narratives may "shift between the positions of victim and threat," as observed in the European media in the 2015 refugee crisis (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 614). The **refugee as a victim narrative** capitalizes on the refugee experience regarding suffering, injustice, or mistreatment. As Chouliaraki and Zaborowski argue, the victim narrative uses two key linguistic strategies of refugee representation: passivization and collectivization. Passivization portrays the refugee as a vulnerable body-in-pain lacking basic resources for survival such as food or shelter. Collectivization is manifested in depictions of the refugee as a statistical percentage, as part of a mass of unfortunates, where one is indistinguishable from another (ibid., p. 616).

Both passivization and collectivization have implications, triggering audience emotions, advocating narratives of care**,** and mobilizing an individual or collective sense of responsibility. In fact, both threat and victim narratives are problematic as a discursive structure as they reduce asylum seekers to simply threat or victim by dehumanizing them (Smets et al., 2019). This tension also raises questions about voice, particularly who has the right to narrate the crisis and from whose perspective (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 614).

From the perspective of destination countries, 'we' – that is, Western communities – have had relative safety (Silverstone, 2006). Encountering non-Western 'others' is considered a challenge because countries of origin are depicted as the scene of nothing but misery, war, and terror, hence refugees are passive aid recipients (Smets et al., 2019, p.188). From the refugees' perspective, the story is not that simple. A comparative study on Afghan, Iraqi, and Syrian asylum seekers shows that migrants utilize personal narratives to shift emphasis of hegemonic discourse from pity and victimization to empathy and recognition. They do it through adopting three frames: "the impossibility of simply continuing their lives in their countries of origin, the difficulties encountered during their journey, and the inhumane uncertainties experienced in the host country; either institutional or interpersonal" (Smets et al., 2019, p.185).

Examples of **humanitarian and victim narratives** are observable in non-Western worlds. The most recent examples are from the response of Syria's neighbouring countries to mass conflict-induced migration. Drawing from historical, cultural, and religious references, Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan used narratives around brotherhood, guest-hood, solidarity, moral/religious responsibility, and historical mission using framings like Turkish hospitality, Muslim fraternity, Arab hospitality, and a history of being a land of refuge in depicting response to Syrian refugees' migration. These framings help mobilize collective identities, facilitate reception, and legitimize government policies (Mencutek-Sahin, 2018; Kaya, 2016; Korkut, 2016). They help policymakers label Syrians not as refugees but as guests in Lebanon and Jordan, allowing for their partial institutionalization in Turkey with temporary protection status. Such strategic selections in narratives and labelling bring "a freedom to manoeuvre in response to international and domestic political incentives"

(Abdelaaty, 2020). As employed by the Government of Justice and Development Party in Turkey, the pro-refugee narratives are a discursive tool to reconstruct the nation along more ideological lines such as Islam and as a

> source of pride and to claim moral superiority both vis-à-vis the West and its political opponents at home" (Karakaya-Polat, 2018, p.500). However, the government's "Islamically infused migration discourse in response to the Syrian refugee crisis" failed to create a progressive settlement and integration regime because it has "own system of 'Othering' and has led to the development of selective admission and exclusionary practices. (Balkılıç & Teke Llyod, 2020, p. 1)

During the 2015-2016 refugee movement, similar humanitarian narratives are partially observed in Europe. For example, Germany initially responded to refugee arrivals with positive public support, mobilizing the narrative of '*willkommenskultur'* (**a welcome culture**). (Hamann & Karakayali, 2016). In a slightly different mode, politicians in the UK consistently referenced the country's historical role in providing refuge to Jews fleeing Nazi Germany to reinforce its "heroic" position but accepted fewer refugees than Germany. The use of history served six functions, including resonance, continuity, reciprocity, posterity, responsibility, and redemption in the UK case (Kirkwood, 2019). These functions might also be expected to be traced in other refugee-hosting debates too. *Resonance* highlights the context by drawing from the events of the past that used the national identity in such a way as to interpret and respond to present events. The second function, *continuity*, is commonly how politicians use history to underline continuity between the past and present in both their personal narrative of history as well as in a national one, such as using the well-known vocabulary of "having a long and distinguished history of helping those who are in need" or being "proud of welcoming…" (ibid., p. 304). *Reciprocity* suggests that as a result of past events in the regional (European) or national context, the country "is indebted and [has] reciprocal duty to assist refugees in the present" (ibid., p. 305). Moving beyond the past with *posterity*, politicians refer to "what people in the future might think when reflecting on and judging the present (as history in the making) in terms of the UK's legacy as a moral nation on the world stage" (ibid.). *Responsibility* once again springs from history, but this time emphasizes that "responsibility on people and nations in the present due to their actions in the past, such as creating of problematic situation leading the displacement. (ibid., p. 306). *Redemption* focuses on actions in the past but highlights negative aspects of national responses and a past different to that presented by many other politicians by invoking resonance and reciprocity.

Many of these functions are also pertinent to another form of humanitarian narratives, that is the **hospitality narrative**. Recent discussions of hospitality have focused on the nation-state as a 'home,' with immigrants seen as either guests or trespassers. For some scholars, hospitality can become an 'alibi' used by the state to justify increased border control, while for others, it has a potential to prevent hostility and social exclusion. Vicki Squire (2011) has shown how the City of Sanctuary network in the UK has supported social spaces where asylum seekers and refugees offer their own hospitality to local people.

The **non-deserving or deserving refugee narrative** (real or false refugees/acceptable/non-acceptable) becomes the dominant narrative influencing the design of migration policies and infrastructures across the globe as well as the direction of humanitarian assistance. This narrative is a reflection of stratifying migrants, for instance as acceptable/non-acceptable. This has been always a case in relation to the broader political, economic, and social contexts but has varied over time (Houston & Lawrence-Weilmann, 2016, p.107). Asylum policy mainly seeks to "differentiate between the economic migrant and the person fleeing persecution, but also attempts to determine whether an applicant represents a future threat to the receiving country" (Bohmer & Shuman, 2018, p.4). Some material and discursive techniques are used to differentiate deserving and non-deserving

refugees. While refugee detention camps (Gerrad, 2017), as a bordering infrastructure, serve for spatial differentiation, vulnerability criteria make categorical differentiation for this binary. Victim discourse intertwines with the deserving refugee narrative; it supposes that "the good, 'real,' refugee is the one who can prove their suffering and capitalize on victimhood" (Smets et al., 2019 p.184). A common discursive tool for differentiating between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' migrants is to draw a distinction between criminal and civil immigration law violations. The US policymakers differentiate between law-abiding versus criminal migrants, creating the category of 'model migrant' in designing policies such as sanctuary legislation (Houston & Lawrence-Weilmann, 2016, pp.107-8).

Pro-labour (supportive) migration narratives

Although anti-immigration narratives have been dominant in policy fields, the narratives supporting migration have also been pertinent. The migration of the highly skilled individuals, investors, and workers – preferably temporary workers who may work in low skilled jobs – carries economic value for developed countries. These groups are defined as "legal migrants." The demographics narrative presents "ageing as the reason of liberal immigration policies and migrants as economic resources" (Scuzzarello, 2015, p.59). This narrative is embedded in broader neoliberal narratives and displays immigration as a solution to the increasing public expenditure on pensions and healthcare for the elderly. Immigrants' integration to the local job market is narrated as an effective way of satisfying the demand for low-skill workers, opening new jobs, making investments, and maintaining the market (via production and consumption). Migrants are depicted as a workforce and taxpayers for the future. However, this narrative is not necessarily supported by liberal immigration policies in all aging countries. Social welfare states opt for the facilitated expansion of female employment, while in the case of liberal and conservative welfare states there is evidence for a demography-induced liberalisation of immigration" (Lutz, 2020, p.331). In a similar vein, neoliberal narratives define migration as a market-driven phenomenon and rely on the functioning of the market for the regulation of migration as much as possible without government intervention.

One strand of the pro-migration narrative focuses on integration. It is assumed that migration narratives may influence integration processes. Triandafyllidou (2013) argues that as an important actor behind migration narratives, the media has a capacity to foster/contribute migrants' integration by promoting positive and fair views about migration. Host countries, and often migration-related institutions, create certain constructions of the social relationship between migrants and the majority society, which they express through a **narrative of 'integration.'** As Sarah Scuzzarello argues, "policy actors narratively construct migrants' integration, duties and rights, and what consequences these constructions have for the evaluation of migrants as more or less integrated in society" (2015, p. 59). For example, they use the '**employed migrant' narrative** to ascribe a positive value to migrants by underlining how migrants contribute to the local economy. The '**cosmopolitan entrepreneurial migrant' narrative** is used to point out migrants who have an orientation, willingness, and the resources to engage with the host community and contribute via investment.

The integration narratives often create a normative order between receiving community and migrants. This provides the justifications for adopting a direction in policymaking over other alternatives, such as emphasizing socio-cultural and economic integration over political integration. However, integration is not a one-way process; instead "the two-way process of mutual adaptation between migrants and the societies in which they live, whereby migrants are incorporated into the social, economic, cultural and the political

life of the receiving community" (IOM, 2020). Hence, receiving communities also have a significant role to play in integration. The cosmopolitan (disposition) narrative focuses on the fact that host communities have a 'an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other' (Hannerz, 1990, p. 239) and that 'cosmopolitan' communities are open, hospitable, and inclusive of refugees (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p.615).

Narratives on Emigration

There is an enduring connection between immigration and emigration, although much more emphasis is put on the former. Unlike immigration narratives, the dominant narratives about emigration provide a more positive picture.

Pro-emigration narratives

Demography-, economy-, and development-related narratives: historical and contemporary

Before any other discipline, History has been interested in examining emigration and settlement as early as 1913 by focusing on the religious, social, and economic drivers of emigration in a certain time period from a certain spatiality such as empire, country, or city (Johnson, 2019). It sought to explore the journey and overseas settlement experiences of mainly historical-settler communities such as those from Europe to the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The colonial emigration from 1840 to 1914 (from Europe to Africa, India, the Americas) has been studied by historians in detail (Swaisland, 1993). **The historical narratives of emigration** use themes like **emigration for 'new people and new World**' (Kelly, 2005), **emigration as an escape** from population pressure, agricultural, and industrial crisis (when the reference is economy), **voluntary exodus** (when the reference is religion) (Shepperson, 1952), and ***adventurous* male** (mainly in literary studies) (Green, 1993). For male emigrants – who are soldiers, prospectors, pastoralists, adventurers, or agricultural workers – and female emigrants, who are servants, emigration to "colonial life held out the prospects of improvement of a better future" (Macdonald, 2015, p. iii-iv). This perspective found reflections in institutions as economic historians underlined in cross-country studies (Tomaske, 1971). For example, in the 19th century, British trade unions considered emigration to Britain's colonies as necessary movement to improve the standard of life of the English workers who had suffered from periodic fluctuations in industrial activity, strikes, and lockouts. From 1850 to the 1880s, most English trade unions encouraged and aided emigration (Erickson, 1949). In this picture, **emigration is narrated as a relief** and **safety valve** for pressure and crisis.

This safety valve narrative has found popularity among demographers and economists studying push factors of emigration – both international and rural-urban – in historical and current contexts (Tomaske, 1971). The assumption in the **safety valve narrative** is that "emigration became a way to export the surplus labour of a developing economy and a safety valve to relieve the pressure of overcrowding" (Duany, 1994, p. 95). Besides providing relief to local labour market pressures, emigration is considered a way to earn "much needed foreign exchange earnings in the context of poverty and slow growth" (Wickramasekara, 2016, p. 99).

Mass emigration after World War II, such as the emigration of millions from Italy to elsewhere in Europe and the Americas – known as Great Emigration – can be ascribed to similar economic concerns of states. Likewise, in the global economic crisis of 2007-2008,

emigration reappeared as "a viable remedy to economic strain and as a safety valve to release the social pressure of high level of unemployment" in Italy as previously observed (Tintori & Romei, 2017, pp. 49-50). Tintori and Romei note: "the Italian State has traditionally looked at the emigrants and their descendants as commercial and economic outlets and a key instrument for promoting its political role in the international arena" (ibid., 50).

Besides exploration of emigration in the disciplines of History, Demographics, and Economics, growing scholarly attention to the importance of emigration policies and politics has been observed in other disciplines such as Sociology and Political Science in the last decades (Brand, 2006; Délano, 2011; Collyer, 2013). Migrant transnationalism and diaspora theories in a broader sense inform the studies addressing the involvement of emigrants (as also including descendants) in the development (e.g. remittances, hometown associations) and politics of their country of origin via transnational activities (e.g. absentee voting, party activities, value transfers) by shifting emphasis from state to transnational spaces in the 1990s and the 2000s (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003a, 2003b; Mencutek-Sahin, 2015). As noted by Collyer, "the broader notion of 'diaspora' as a potential community beyond those who retain citizenship is often important in symbolic or narrative terms, most practical policy measures are more restricted" (2013, p.7).

Emigrants as a resource narrative is originally drawn from the development perspective and has historical roots as discussed above. This approach considers emigrants as a resource that can be mobilized in support of the political or economic interests of the sending state (Collyer, 2013, p. 5). It is known that out-migration for employment relief and remittance inflows provided significant resources for less-developed emigration countries. Many South Asian, North African, and Caribbean countries promote migration as a development strategy, given remittances' substantial contribution to the national economy of sending countries.

Increasingly, positive meaning attached to the emigration-development nexus is also observable in the discourses of international organizations such as UN agencies (including the World Bank) as well as international and local NGOs. These discourses contributed to popularizing the notion of the 'diaspora' as an agent of progressive changes in the realm of development policy (Collyer, 2013, p.4). So has states' belief in the power of emigrants to seek, incite, or support productive investments. However, the advanced case studies on the **development-migration nexus** illustrate that emigration is not an effective development strategy but only a temporary solution to the problem of surplus population and is not a long-term sustainable policy (Duany, 1994, p.95).

Citizenship-related narratives

Drawing from comparative politics scholarship, researchers seek to explain the growing trends in sending countries' policies towards institutional efforts targeting migrants such as establishing emigration directorates/ministries and encouraging dual citizenship (Ragazzi, 2009; Sahin-Mencutek & Baser, 2017). Citizenship studies also provide theoretical insights for discussing emigration with an emphasis on the boundaries of membership to the political community, leading the discussions around extra-territorial citizenship and the rights of non-resident citizens (Smith, 2003; Bauböck, 1994). These two scholarship strands share the argument that state institutions show an increasing enthusiasm to engage with emigrants – "citizens defined by their absence from state territory" – underlying the "limitations of territorial definitions of the state in a way that is not true of the more common focus on immigration" (Collyer, 2013, p.5). It also underlines the issues of nation-state and power because emigration is often mainstreamed into the

narrative of the nation. As Collyer notes, "continued engagement with emigrants, re-emphasizes not only the necessary link between state and nation, highlighting the ways in which sovereign power is exercised beyond the territorial but also the fragility of that link" (2013, pp. 3-4). In one way or another,

> *emigration has been incorporated into the ideology of the nation" prompting an emigration narrative which I call the togetherness or nationalist* [interventionist] *emigration narrative and which centres on the idea of binding "our 'imagined communities' together (those living in different places) to incorporate emigrants in more positive ways*. (ibid., p. 4)

From the citizenship perspective of sending countries, two narratives that can be categorized as normative are identifiable. The first is the **'caring' 'guardianship' narrative** developed by countries such as Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, which are the main sending countries of domestic workers, overwhelmingly to Gulf states. The governments of these states seem to take measures to provide care and protection to their emigrant workers in case of hardship, poor living conditions, discrimination, or exploitation experienced by female domestic workers. The second, and similar, narrative **'responsibility towards' or protection narrative** embraces more religious or nationalist components. It presents the country of origin as the protector of emigrants when they are subject to racism, xenophobia (including Islamophobia), and discrimination or attacks in the immigration country. Both caring and responsibility narratives often appear in the discourses of political elites or parliamentary discussions and intensify in times of incidents targeting migrants in their countries of residence. Both narratives push protection offered by the sending country to citizens abroad beyond traditional consular activities and symbolic gestures (Collyer, 2013, p. 6).

Emigrant states do not only self-assign roles to themselves, but also give some roles to emigrants. As in the cases of Turkey and India, both large sending countries, governments developed narratives in which emigrants are depicted and expected to play the role of 'public diplomats' of the home country since the early 2000s. The idea is to use emigrants or diasporas as tools of soft power. Emigrants are expected to engage in political campaigns against their host countries to support the cause of sending country, creating a positive image or isolating criticisms that target it. In another version, particularly for peace-building processes, emigrants may have been seen as **prospective promoters of democratic values**. All these may lead to an idolization of emigrants and the diaspora.

Anti-emigration or anti-emigrant narratives

One narrative particularly challenging the positive portrayal of emigration and its contribution to development is the **brain drain argument**. It is based on the idea that the most talented, highly skilled, educated (potentially the best citizens and prospective contributors) leave the country because of emigration and their loss impedes development in the long run. The brain drain argument turned into the hegemonic narrative in Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal through its dissemination in parliamentary debates, speeches by political elites, public discourses, and social media (Mavrodi & Moutselos, 2017; Tintori & Romei, 2017; Bermudez & Brey, 2017). It depicts recent emigrants as a generation of highly skilled and intensely mobile people who are enabled to benefit globalization, differing from the emigrants of past who were "unskilled, poorly educated individuals and families forced to leave the country out of sheer misery" (Tintori & Romei, 2017, p. 58). Both depictions overlook the diverse profiles among emigrants. The main point in this narrative is the negative impact of the emigration flow – the brain drain – on the future of the sending country's economy and competitive power. In fact, as Lafleur et al., rightly point out,

> *the migration of such a large number of professionals might not be necessarily regarded as examples of 'brain drain' but rather as individual responses to a lack of employment opportunities in the South* [Europe]*, where the skills of the young are often disregarded by its segmented labour market.* (2017, p. 211)

A more moderate version of this emigration narrative sees emigration as both loss and gain as discussed in the cases of India, Hong Kong, and China (Raghuram, 2008).

Several factors may affect how a regime chooses to portray emigrants. Official historical narratives materialized in school textbooks, museums, and monuments may provide evidence to trace how emigrants are discursively included or excluded from historical national narratives. Drawing from the cases of Jordan and Lebanon, Laurie Brand (2010) identifies four factors: the relationship of emigrants to the colonial versus the post-independence state; the relationship between migration and sending state economic development; and the relationship between migrants and the home state elite – either benign neglect or instrumentalization (2010, p. 78).

Beside history and relationships, the situation causing emigration may also influence the emigration narratives. Emigrants, particularly those who left during conflicts and civil wars, are often portrayed negatively in the countries of origin. In some country contexts, overwhelmingly in authoritarian regimes, emigrants may be excluded from the narratives about nation or depicted as traitors, cowards or disloyal citizens – particularly emigrants from opposition groups or refugees. This was common practice in the former communist countries; North Korea and Eritrea both criminalize emigration in virtually all cases. As observed in the Arab Uprisings experiences and continuing tensions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Yemen since 2011, emigrants, mainly those politically active, have been accused of instigating the disturbances inside the sending country. During ongoing civil conflict, as in Syria, home-state institutions such as the government, political leaderships, or armed factions tended to depict those who left the country as wealthy, privileged, or corrupt in comparison with the honest, hard-working folk who chose to remain during the country's hardest time. The negative narratives on emigration in the form of flight from country may turn into practices ranging from marginalization to criminalization, targeting family members who remained in the home country, seizure of assets, or deprivation of citizenship (Öztürk & Taş, 2020).

Negative narratives about emigrants can be also selective in a way to reflect a gendered, caste- and class-based nationalism (Kodoth, 2016). Since the 1990s, public discourses portray many female migrants from South Asia with the negative image of "being ignorant, sexually promiscuous women who abandon their children to feckless husbands" (Frantz, 2011; Shah, 2018). This public discourse, coupled with the "caring and protection narrative," transforms into actual policies. For instance, Indian emigration policy introduced restrictions on the mobility of female domestic workers to the Middle East with the rationale that these women are subject to exploitation and abuse both in the emigration process and their employment in Gulf countries. But the policy created controversial outcomes because it "has made way for unscrupulous recruiters, raised the costs of migration and reduced returns" (Kodoth, 2016, p. 83).

To conclude, there is a complex relationship between policies, institutions, and narratives about emigrants/emigration, as eloquently summarized by Collyer (2013) in his edited book on emigration:

> *Yet where emigrants have been criticized or marginalized, particularly where emigration itself was viewed as evidence of disloyalty, a transformative retelling of the national narrative is necessary. Where the emigration of particular groups has been criticized or even banned, as has often been the case with the emigration of women, stories have to develop to explain why this is no longer the case, or why it never was. It is often the case that this simply requires a realignment of official narratives with*

popular narratives in order to justify resulting policy changes, but it may require a greater shift in public opinion. (p. 20)

This brings us back to the possible complexities and controversies among official and popular narratives. At this point, it is useful to pay attention to migrants' own narratives about emigration.

Migration from the Migrants' Perspectives

At the individual level, migration is depicted in multiple ways based on type of migration, such as forced or voluntary. Approaches on networks, class, and gender as well as intersectionality may inform individual narratives on migration (Bélanger & Wang, 2013; Dossa, 2004). The representation of the migration experience depends on the genre (autobiography, interview, cultural artifact) as well as the historical and political moment of the narrative's production (Griffin & Griffin, 1995, p. 3).

Multiple theoretical frameworks like social networks, transnationalism, diaspora, and exile studies show different facets of the depiction of the migration experience. These include **migration as a struggle, narrative of 'personal effort,' fight or flight** (Kesisoglou et al., 2016), drawing from the examples of highly skilled migration cases; **emigration as a loss,** mostly depicted in diaspora and exile literature; **migration as a double sword, being neither here nor there**, labelled in transnationalism and mobility studies; **emigration as a way of regaining dignity, emancipation, and access to human rights for minorities or persecuted population** (Virkama, 2015; Herzberg, 2015), mostly referred to in critical citizenship studies; and, **migration as an adventure** (Olwig, 2018).

Economic migrants may assign positive (hopeful/aspirative) meaning to migration as it is considered the main path for acquiring a good life. This recurring narrative turns to the one feature of local culture of migration in the traditional sending countries. Carling's (2002) research on Cape Verdean youth illustrates how they over-emphasize emigration and think that there is no life of an acceptable level possible without migration. Here, emigration has become the only narrative for acquiring a good life. Kandel and Massey (2002) provide similar examples of youngsters from southern Mexico, where migration turned into one of the community's values. For the case of East European migration to the UK, Galasiński and Galasińska (2007) found that Polish people have a strong belief that migration can bring them material gains as well as achieve the financial and social independence that will turn the emigrant male into a 'real' person. This **narrative of success abroad** is embedded in the hegemonic narrative of the superiority of the West and the man as the breadwinner. Moreover, a man's success as a person is measured by his ability to find work abroad and be emancipated from passivity (Galasińska, 2010). This phenomenon has also been observed in sending countries in Africa and South Asia (Baldwin-Edwards, 2006; De Haas, 2003) in which return to the country of origin – even if a deportation or failed crossing attempt – is considered as a failure of migrating men (van Heelsum, 2017; Carling, 2002).

A narrative analysis as methodology also helps explain sensational dimensions of emigration and immigration, linking them with emotions and memories that are overlooked by other methods. For example, a narrative analysis on refugees shows that:

…the adolescents' experience of being a refugee is greatly influenced by the stories of the past narrated about the family, and the internal relations and conflicts within the families. Adolescent refugees who have grown up with violence in their family relations experience greater difficulties in creating new homes in exile than adolescents whose memories of violence are connected with a narrative of the historical persecution and suffering of their family and people. (Bek-Pedersen & Montgomery, 2006, p.94)

Studying migration, reinforced by transnationalism and diaspora theories, enables moving beyond individuals as unit of analysis, focusing rather on families (sometimes across generations). Family story is found "central to the migration narratives and well as to the networks and support systems that migrants need to utilize" (Chamberlain, 2017, p. iv). Psychology and mental health studies found the value of narrative methods in research with refugee communities and for deciding on proper intervention mechanisms (Miller et al., 2002). As literary studies and social psychology displays, narratives contribute to unpacking emotions and meanings ascribed to emigration by emigrants. For conflict-induced migrants (asylum seekers, exiles, diasporas), emigration stories can be narrated around the themes of nostalgia, home, memory, generations, separation, and loss as well as and 'survival in the diaspora' (Stefanko, 1996).

Conclusion

The analysis of discourses and narratives about migration is useful for understanding how perspectives and opinions are constructed. Examining the impact of narratives creates a new perspective for understanding migration policy and politics as well as broader debates around citizenship, political polarization, and identity regarding who constitutes 'we' in a certain local, national, or regional context. These, in turn, influence policy debates on migrants' admission, integration, and social cohesion.

A mapping of migration studies illustrates that migration narratives intersect with and/or respond to historical, geopolitical, socio-economic, cultural, and security narratives thus becoming more relevant to public life, politics, and policies. Hence, multiple migration narratives are disseminated by politicians, institutions, the media, and migrants themselves, resulting in the circulation of complex, competing and conflicting migration narratives in the global policy environment. Moreover, several narratives may coexist, even dominant and counter-narratives, either at the same time or may shift in the short term. No doubt that geographical context plays a substantial role in the emergence of migration narratives, the dominance of a certain one, or the coexistence of many. This working paper sought to categorize the migration narratives from at least two different axes, immigration and emigration as well as pro-migration and anti-migration narratives.

Review of existing studies shows that anti-immigration narratives are dominant. They tend to simplify dynamics of immigration and code immigrants as 'others' in the political and social imaginary of 'us.' The majority of these narratives are perilous as they overwhelmingly dehumanize or stratify migrants by making strategic selections through metaphors, categorizations, and causal relations. The paper identifies a number of anti-immigration narratives, mainly those targeting irregular or 'unwanted' immigration. The proliferation of these narratives proves that there is a bias against forced migration or asylum-seeking in the global media, governance institutions, and scholarly studies. These anti-immigration narratives centre on the ideas of territoriality, sovereignty, security, and control of borders and population. Irregular migration is seen as a threat to security and sovereignty. Some of these narratives have broad coverage, such as securitization and threat narratives, while others are used to identify certain types of immigration or actors, such as the immigration as a disaster and an emergency narrative in times of mass migration or a toxic narrative targeting rescue operations.

Many anti-immigration narratives translate into policies and practices that assemble monitoring, governing, and controlling of borders and actual and prospective migrants. These are ingrained in legislation and policies aimed at enhancing regulatory frameworks at the global, regional, national levels and also have implications for strengthening institutional capacities and actors' spheres of influence. To illustrate, at the

policy level, depicting migration as a disaster or a security threat leads to the design of policies prioritizing deterrence and return of any migrants before or just after arrival to the territory even if this puts the migrant's life into risk. At the level of practices, when prospective migrants are portrayed as potential criminals, cheaters, or liars, they are treated severely during visa applications, border crossings, asylum proceedings, and encounters with state institutions. This potentially creates feelings of humiliation, fear, precarity, exclusion, and marginalization among migrants. Unfortunately, anti-immigration narratives appear as hegemonic narratives dominating the immigration debate not only in Europe but also across the globe in North America, the Middle East, and Africa alongside the rise of populism, economic stagnation, and national protectionism. Nonetheless, the extent to which the media, politicians, and public mobilize a certain narrative or are attentive to it varies substantially between countries and across time.

Although anti-immigration narratives have been dominant in the policy fields in relation to contemporary migration flows, pro-migration narratives are also identifiable. These narratives support the migration of highly skilled individuals, investors, and temporary workers by identifying them as 'legal migrants.' Pro-immigration narratives intersect with narratives around neoliberal economics, development, and demographic needs, ascribing a positive value to migrants by underlining how they contribute to the current and future economy of the country.

The paper also illustrates how migration narratives could not be reduced to those only focusing on immigration. The literature review shows that emigration has also been teased out from the narrative perspective, led by historians, demographers, and economists. Pro-emigration narratives intersect with narratives about demographics, the economy, and development that highlight emigrants' economic value to the home state. Due to growing interest in migration for comparative politics and political sociology, the issues of citizenship, extraterritorial voting, and state-diaspora relations were also studied from the perspective of narratives on emigration.

Despite the large body of literature on immigration and emigration narratives, there is little research on the interaction (or lack of) between them. So far, drawing from the externalization literature, we have gained some insights about how destination countries/regions' anti-immigration narratives influence the narratives and policies of transit and origin countries (adoption of crisis language, using refugee sheltering in negotiations). Additionally, transnationalism literature tells us how migrants build ties in both home and host countries. However, considering how narratives operate in a complex interconnected global policy environment, it might be interesting to know more about how immigration narratives (e.g. European anti-immigration narratives) are influenced by discourses that emerge from actors in origin and transit countries.

Despite increasing attention on narratives as a methodology and concept in understanding migration, there are many unresolved questions about the potentiality and power of narratives for the policy field, the construction process of narratives, and the methodology for studying them. Some of these questions include: What is the exact policy relevance of narratives? How do certain narratives turn into dominant narratives? How are causal relations drawn in migration narratives? What is the impact of past and anticipated future in constructing narratives? What make counter-narratives weak or powerful? How far researchers can go with regard to the deconstruction of narratives? How does the positionality of researcher shape the understanding of narratives?

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