Call for Papers – EAWOP Small Group Meeting

Unpacking the Role of Work and Organizational Psychology for Forced Migration and

Displacement

Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli, Rome, Italy

12-14 June 2024

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Conference Theme and Scope

Over the last decade, we have witnessed a sharp increase in the number of people forcibly having to leave their countries of origin, whether due to war, violence, persecution, and/or terror (UNHCR, 2023), economic reasons (Castles, 2007; Stanley, 1987), or the intensification of climate change and the occurrence of natural disasters (Berchin et al., 2017; UNHCR, 2022). In addition to experiencing adversity before and during the flight, many of these people also face severe challenges and constraints in the supposedly safe receiving country (Newman et al., 2018). People from a forced migration and displacement background often struggle to re-establish their careers and to find decent work that is commensurate with their skills and experience, as they lack knowledge of the local labour market, hold few social networks (Pajic et al., 2018; Wehrle et al., 2019), face a devaluation of their career-related capital (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018), and suffer from discrimination (Cheung et al., 2022). As such, they are viewed as a disadvantaged group in society (Duffy et al., 2016).

While forced migration and displacement research has provided valuable insights (e.g., Baranik et al., 2018; Hoppe et al., 2017; Knappert et al., 2020; Kößler et al., 2022; Newman et al., 2018; Ortlieb et al., 2020), research in the field of Work and Organizational Psychology (WOP) on the thereby affected people is still in its early stages. Generally, WOP research has largely focused on people navigating labour markets familiar to them (Duberley et al., 2006) and scholars targeting structural outsiders have largely studied those who entered another country as expatriates or highly skilled migrants, that is, voluntary, prepared, and with resources (see, e.g., Zikic & Klehe, 2021). Yet, Szkudlarek et al. (2021) have shown that the insights on these more privileged groups do not

necessarily translate to people from a forced migration and displacement background. Given the prevalence (UNHCR, 2023) and the severe consequences (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018; Newman et al., 2018) of forced migration and displacement, scholars and practitioners need to understand these people's work-related circumstances and experiences to provide evidence-based support. This involves gaining additional insights into the consequences of forced migration and displacement (e.g., psychological trauma) and their further influence on labour market integration, workplace inclusion[1], and the general work-related experiences of these people (see van Tonder & Soontiens, 2013). More broadly, we need to understand more about the implications that resettlement and integration patterns have on and for other stakeholders (e.g., employers, society), and how we can jointly create positive resettlement and integration processes. In sum, the psychological impact of these poorly understood issues on the workplace remains elusive due to the lack of WOP psychologists involved in researching this area. Hence, in this Small Group Meeting (SGM), we seek to open and facilitate difficult conversations on the role that WOP holds for the positive resettlement and integration of people from a forced migration and displacement background in receiving countries.

The aim of this SGM is twofold. First, we seek to address the limited understanding of the work-related issues that people from a forced migration and displacement background encounter, particularly with regards to the nature of their forced resettlement. This entails the identification and exploration of the most pressing challenges and future research themes for people forcibly leaving their countries of origin. Given the blurry lines between the definitions of refugees and migrants, and the ongoing discussions on the unclear terminology (Castles, 2003; Donato & Ferris, 2020; Dustmann et al., 2017), we seek to open the SGM to scholars focusing on different groups of people from a forced migration and displacement background and to untangle the diverse conceptualizations used in research and practice. This is a critical endeavour given that research has, for instance, suggested that people from a refugee background perceive certain labels such as 'refugee' as stigmatizing, instead pursuing identities of more desirable migrant groups (e.g., expatriates; Pozzo, 2022).

Second, we aim to bridge the current gap between scholarship and practice by bringing together participants representing the different stakeholders involved in the work-related issues concerning people from a forced migration and displacement background. These include but are not limited to academic scholars, people from a forced migration and displacement background, employers, HR managers, service workers, and policy makers. In line with the aims of the EAWOP Impact Incubator (EAWOPii), we seek to identify the topics that are of importance and of interest to these stakeholders and that therefore need to be studied. By opening and facilitating necessary discussions, we will use this SGM as a platform to build fruitful and sustainable collaborations between scholars and practitioners.

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[1] We are aware of the different use of terminology as based on various frameworks and fields. We seek to speak to all audiences and use this SGM to clarify the terminology used in research and practice. With reference to Ortlieb and Knappert (2023), we will use the term "integration" encompassing "workplace inclusion".

Overall, we hope that this SGM will lead to insights into various issues surrounding the resettlement and integration (Lee et al., 2020; Newman et al., 2018; Richardson et al., 2020) and that we will generate a research agenda for evidence-based WOP informed studies whose findings can be translated into policy materials and guides for the labour market integration process.

The Relevance of Forced Migration and Displacement Research and Practice for all Geographical Regions, with a Special Interest on the Implications for Europe

The overwhelming number of people in the world being forcibly displaced due to global conflicts, wars, and/or environmental developments constitutes one of today's most pressing socioeconomic and political challenges. According to the UNHCR (2023), at the end of 2022, 108.4 million people were forcibly displaced globally, which constitutes an increase of 19 million to the year before – one of the largest year-to-year increases ever. While 35.3 million of these people are from a refugee background seeking shelter and to re-establish their lives and careers abroad, 12.4 million of them have resettled to Europe. Thus, and as employment constitutes an integral part of a positive resettlement, we highlight the relevance for international scholars and practitioners to join forces and to take a WOP perspective on the topic of forced migration and displacement.

This SGM seeks to shed light on key topics grouped into four main themes that target pressing issues around forced migration and displacement from a WOP perspective. Given the array of topics that need to be unpacked, we seek to bring in an interdisciplinary group of people addressing four strands and their underlying questions. We specifically aim to develop conceptual, empirical, and methodological advances in our understanding of forced migration and displacement through the following questions (being exemplary but far from exhaustive):

Theme 1: Which Topics Should WOP Address With Regards to People From a Forced Migration or Displacement Background?

- What are the current and upcoming challenges that we face in regards to people forcibly leaving their countries of origin (e.g., due to climate change, natural disasters, technology) and how can we tackle these challenges?
- Which conversations are not yet taken but need to be – not only in regards to psychological processes but also when it comes to the broader context and society (e.g., vulnerability, power structures, inequality, illegal practice and dignity, dynamics, context)?
- What are the challenges and potentials of decolonization and how can we bring de-colonial, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist critiques and discourses into the conversation on refugee resettlement and integration?
- What are the future research and practice directions for WOP in addressing the above mentioned issues and challenges?

Theme 2: What is the Underlying Aim of Studying People from a Forced Migration and Displacement Background in WOP? Why, for What and for Whom are We Studying Them?

- What is successful integration of people from a forced migration and displacement background from the perspectives of different stakeholders?

- What constitutes a positive/sustainable career for people from a forced migration and displacement background and how can they find decent and meaningful work?

- How do people from a forced migration and displacement background experience their labour market integration? What are the processes and mechanisms that contribute to or ameliorate successful integration of people from a forced migration and displacement background?

- What policies strategies and/or practices can be employed at different levels (i.e., micro, meso and/or macro levels) to stimulate successful work integration and prevent entrapment in menial work?

Theme 3: What are the Different Stakeholder Groups/Perspectives/System(s) That We Need to Study?

- What are the different perspectives and interests of stakeholders in forced migration and displacement (e.g., refugees, other forced migrant groups, receiving country nationals, home country nationals, employers, HR policies, policy makers, service providers), how can we understand these different perspectives and interests of the stakeholders, and what are the factors we need to study for this (e.g., culture)?

- Who are the different types of migrants from a forced migration and displacement background (e.g., trafficked individuals, refugees, economic refugees)? How are the different groups perceived and treated and what role do academics play in this debate?

- Which consequences (e.g., spill-over effects) may arise for people working in the forced migration and displacement space (e.g., social workers) in diverse areas of life?

- What are the manifold/multi-level (individual, family/friends/social environment, organisational, societal) processes involved in the resettlement and integration of people from a forced migration and displacement background?

Theme 4: Which Theoretical Fields Could We Draw From Building Our Work on Forced Migration and Displacement in WOP?

- What challenges are common to people from a forced migration and displacement background and voluntary migrants? How can research on these different groups inform each other?

- Which theoretical intersections need to join forces to inform scholarship and practice regarding forced migration and displacement (e.g., work, health, social, and clinical psychology, or history)?
- Which (psychological) consequences for work and integration span forced migration and displacement (e.g., trauma) and how can we draw on different theoretical lenses to understand the consequences and build targeted interventions?

Further Development of Papers

This SGM is strongly embedded in the research on forced migration and displacement in the field of WOP. It benefits from a connection with the EAWOPii that focuses on engaging, informing, and influencing policy makers and policy-making based on evidence and insights generated by WOP research and practice. In line with the EAWOPii refugee and migrant strand, we seek to use this SGM to build sustainable collaborations between scholars and practitioners that best nurture and utilize the knowledge and expertise of WOP for the field of forced migration and displacement. For this, we believe that WOP scholars need to identify and make sense of the real-world challenges that diverse stakeholders face in regards to forced migration and displacement and we seek to tackle this in the SGM. This is how we connect the SGM with EAWOPii, benefitting from cross-fertilization, and how we make sure there is a continuity of activities and initiatives following the SGM.

Other directions for the advancement of research are to develop the work from the SGM into a position paper and the intention to host a special issue connected to the SGM. Similarly, at the SGM, we will seek to bundle initiatives and organize several sessions for the biannual conference of the EAWOP in Prague, 2025 to build upon the SGM. This event in June 2024 leaves enough time for researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to get together for developing engaging sessions around this topic, with EAWOP conference applications due January 2025.

Meeting Format, Location, and Date

This SGM seeks to address the above mentioned issues by opening conversations and discussions, tailoring research specifically to the lived experiences and practical problems that stakeholders in the field face, generating collaborations, and creating practical tools to build a sustainable WOP. By this, the SGM will hold societal relevance, promote equality, and embrace diversity, all of which are based on rigorous scientific methods. To achieve this goal, we propose to use non-traditional formats during the SGM that focus on active participation and co-creation. Viewing the SGM more from the lens of an incubator, we seek to create a space for the development of ideas, objectives, and the setting of a research agenda for upcoming topics and challenges in regards to which scholars and practitioners yet lack answers. Inspired by formats used in the annual meetings of the Society for the Improvement of Psychological Science (SIPS,

https://improvingpsych.org) and the recent SGM on "Building the Future of Work and Organizational Psychology: Developing a Practical Toolkit" in 2022, we will use the following four formats:

1. *Digital impact panels/summit:* Discussion on the topical agenda of future research and practice in the field of forced migration and displacement from around the world. The panels will include members from the forced migration and displacement community, those from community organisations, policy makers, and academics currently working in the field. To open these panels for as many practitioners and stakeholders as possible, we will hold them as hybrid sessions.

2. *Lived experiences:* Workshop or discussion session, in which people share their lived experiences and work-related issues as, e.g., persons from a forced migration and displacement background, and in which we reflect on theory development. This will feed into a workshop space for theoretical development with regards to underlying values, assumptions, and the inherent complexity and interrelations between levels and parties involved in work-related issues of forced migration and displacement.

3. *Unconference sessions:* Participants can freely pitch and discuss ideas during these sessions in a roundtable setting, which are moderated by the session organisers and focus on a particular topic or issue. While such sessions can start out as a brainstorming session to reflect on a specific issue, they may transform into hack-a-thons as ideas solidify (e.g., a session where participants brainstorm about actions that can be taken to improve "X").

4. *Lightning talks:* These sessions include short, five-minute presentations. Presenters can discuss their (ideas for) research, teaching, and practice, or thoughts on how we can draw on WOP to improve forced migration and displacement research and practice in general.

The SGM will take place over three days with sessions organised thematically. The program will include academic research talks, talks by policy makers and practitioners, group discussions, and creative sessions. In particular, we seek to use the SGM to encourage participants to co-generate questions and discuss the next necessary steps to bridge the gap between research, organisational practice, and policy via a participatory research approach. We seek to identify and have conversations on yet un(der)discussed issues and to build research collaborations between participants that seek to tackle these issues. Ample time will be provided for discussions and networking.

The format of this SGM (20-25 participants) is designed to foster extensive discussions, constructive feedback as well as research collaboration around forced migration and displacement research. The presentations will be selected through a competitive process in which submissions are reviewed by the organising committee.

Please note that only the digital impact panels/summit will be held virtually as hybrid sessions. The rest of the SGM will take place in person.

Date and Place of Meeting

The SGM will be hosted at LUISS (Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli) in Rome, Italy, from 12-14 June 2024. On 12 June 2024, we will begin with the registration and an informal welcome reception at 12pm, with the official SGM starting at 2pm. The SGM will end on 14 June 2024 with a farewell reception at 6pm.

Conference Fees

The expected conference fee is 100 EUR for all participants (reduced student fees is 50 EUR). This registration fee includes lunches, all coffee breaks, and a farewell reception.

Submission of Abstracts

Participants are invited to submit contribution abstracts with a clear indication of the targeted session format (i.e., digital impact panels/summit, lived experiences, unconference sessions, or lightning talks) by **January 31st, 2024** by sending an email to katja.wehrle@psychol.uni-giessen.de. Participants interested in contributing to the digital impact panels/summit, unconference sessions, or lightning talks are invited to submit abstracts of up to 500 words. Participants interested to contribute to the lived experiences session including ideas for potential theory development workshops are invited to submit abstracts of up to 1500 words. Submissions should include a title page including all the authors' details. In the abstract, authors should also indicate how their contribution fits the scope of the SGM and the session format. Submitted abstracts will be reviewed and selected by the organising committee. Participants will be notified about the acceptance of their paper by **March 1st, 2024**.

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