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MOBILITY, MULTICULTURALISM AND SOCIAL INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS IN SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNITIES

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Abstract. This empirical study examines integration and international human mobility in South African communities. Like any other international actor, South Africa draws many people from around the globe. The study's two main goals are to ascertain how migration affects integration in the host communities and the essential role that multiculturalism plays in these communities. The culture and languages of the migrants are brought with them when they relocate to South Africa. South Africa welcomes its diversity and is a multicultural nation by nature. Additionally, migrants that relocate to South Africa integrate with the host communities, upholding their cultural traditions and proudly speaking their native tongues. The bulk of the immigrants in South Africa, numbering in the hundreds or even millions, are from the Southern African Development Communities (SADC). This qualitative investigation was carried out immediately in the provinces of Mpumalanga and Limpopo. The researcher held Focus group talks in this study with immigrants from various African nations. Additionally, a blindfolded focus group discussion was led by local community members. The study's conclusions showed that immigrants easily integrate into host communities with a common language and culture with South Africans. The study concludes that migration is a worldwide phenomenon and that there will always be transnational human mobility among nations due to globalisation. According to the report, host communities should keep welcoming immigrants and giving them the freedom to live according to their traditions and speak their tongue.

Keywords: integration; multiculturalism; migration; Salad Bowl; social inclusion

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1. Introduction

The extent and variety of international human mobility and the cultural diversity of the populations participating are growing tremendously. The phenomenon of multiculturalism is a demographic outcome of heightened intercultural interaction and human movement. Furthermore, more countries and groups are anticipated to have to deal with higher degrees of social and cultural diversity (Fokin, Baryshnikov, Bogoliubova, Nikolaeva, Ivannikov, Portnyagina, Ryazantseva, Eltc & Chernov, 2016). Most communities have lost their historic ethnic and cultural homogeneity because of this process and have developed a multicultural character or become culturally varied (Mishra, 2005).

Multiculturalism refers, among other things, to the coexistence of several sizable cultural groups that seek and, theoretically, can preserve their unique identities within the same political system. The multicultural movement is here to stay. As far as historical trends are concerned, they will become more significant. There are various types

of multiculturalism in Canada, including the coexistence of indigenous people comes first: Several American Indian tribes and Innuits coexist with the "old immigrants" of European descent (May 2008).

The second is the coexistence of "old immigrants" from francophone and anglophone populations. Thirdly, the recent immigrants from Asia and southern Europe coexist with the "old" immigrants of West European descent. The situation is quite different in Britain. Two main types of multiculturalism exist today: the coexistence of the four ethnic groups that made up the United Kingdom—the Scots, Welsh, Irish, and English—and their coexistence with newly arrived immigrant communities, primarily Afro-Caribbean, Hindu-Indian, and a variety of Muslim communities, including Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian, and others.

In general, multiculturalism is considered a policy used to manage the relationships between various ethnic groups, accept cultural differences, and spread the notion of a peaceful and harmonious coexistence in which all groups are treated equally and with respect. People from different cultural backgrounds want their language and culture acknowledged, which is at the core of multiculturalism (Mishra, 2005). The national identities bestowed to citizens at birth should be preserved, and they should remember their cultural origins.

To bring diverse groups of people together while maintaining respect for the various cultural and religious perspectives of receiving societies, multiculturalism was adopted in the 1970s in the UK and other European countries, including Canada and Australia. Multiculturalism was hailed as a vast improvement over the racist "White Australia" policy in Australia, which required immigrants to give up their heritage, culture, and any social or political ties to their home countries to integrate into mainstream society (Mansouri & Lobo, 2016).

For many people in South Africa, the term "ubuntu" has come to represent social cohesiveness, nation-building, and initiatives to overcome historical racial and cultural barriers. It is, therefore, worthwhile to consider how closely our suggested definition aligns with the concept of Ubuntu (Burns, Hull, Lefko-Everett, and Njozela, 2018). A growing number of people are becoming insecure about the effects of immigration on the world at large and the emergence of multicultural communities. They are also uneasy about the disappearance of values and standards, the loss of social trust, and the decline in civic engagement. It is determined that some children, ethnic minorities, immigrants, and certain neighbourhoods lack the necessary skills, values, and attitudes to integrate into society. Moreover, according to Jansen, Chioncel, and Dekkers (2006), these "deficiencies" generally threaten social cohesiveness and integration.

2. Conceptualisation of social inclusion

There isn't a single, globally recognised definition of social inclusion. Nonetheless, unity and solidarity are frequently associated with social inclusion. It's common knowledge that social disorder, or disarray, is the antithesis of social cohesiveness. Most of the time, social cohesiveness is just defined as solidarity, and the terms "community cohesion" and "social cohesion" are used synonymously (Demireva & McNeil, 2015).

Political philosophy and its sibling concepts, social inclusion and paradigms, are never the same. Liberals view social inclusion as the result of individual freedoms provided by the state to gather, establish groups, and weave intricate, diverse, cross-cutting networks of voluntary civil society formations. Republicans, on the other hand, emphasise the social contract and the unity of equal citizens to further the common good (Silver, 2025). Going a step further, social inclusion demands that variety be validated and acknowledged, as well as the similarities in people's life experiences and aspirations, which are especially clear in families with children (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003).

Conversely, the Social Democrats strongly emphasise citizens' social rights to a liveable wage in exchange for their active participation in society and ability to mediate class disputes. According to more conventional

conservative theory, social order develops organically from a natural hierarchy of authority and the three bounded domains of family, community, and nation. Confucian philosophy prioritises social harmony over personal liberty. Certain theological paradigms are typically based on a group of followers who follow the laws and directives of one or more gods. Depending on one's ideology, social inclusion can be conceived in a variety of ways. However, ideological divergences might exist within any nation, making it challenging to draw broad conclusions about its people's ideas (Silver, 2025).

Social inclusion is believed to be the causal mechanism that shapes people's membership attitudes and behaviours. A cohesive society is a group of free people who support one another and work towards shared objectives via democratic means. A society devoid of ethnic and cultural variation is scarce; the critical concern is managing diversity to turn it into a mutually enriching asset rather than a source of conflict and division. A cohesive society has figured out acceptable means of openly and democratically handling these and other stresses. To keep these disparities under control and prevent them from getting out of hand and endangering the stability of society, it is necessary to take steps to lessen inequality and restore equity (Friedkin, 2004). According to Burns, Hull, Lefko-Everett, and Njozela (2018), social cohesion is influenced by various factors, including "tolerance of and respect for diversity." Concerning sexual orientation, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, economic status, political views, and other factors) - both individually and institutionally," and societies that lack cohesion run the risk of experiencing "increased social tension, violent crime, targeting of minorities, human rights violations, and, ultimately, violent conflict.

Friedkin (2004) bemoans the fact that no society can honestly assert to be completely united. Instead of being a goal that can be fully attained, social cohesion is an ideal many ethnic communities have tried to reach. Furthermore, fostering, enhancing, and adjusting cohesiveness continuously is critical. Fighting poverty and social exclusion is not the sole way to promote social cohesiveness. It also involves fostering social cohesion to lessen marginalisation. Simultaneously, particular actions must be taken to assist society's most vulnerable people as long as poverty and marginalisation persist. Therefore, a social cohesion strategy must address exclusion through prevention and treatment, even though it is predicated on people's willingness to work together in various collective endeavours that members of a society must engage in to survive and thrive. When willing to work together, other groups can create partnerships and a reasonable probability of success because others are also willing to work together (Burns, Hull, Lefko-Everett & Njozela, 2018).

Kearns and Forrest (2000) assert that a city may comprise socially cohesive neighbourhoods or communities that are becoming increasingly fragmented. Nonetheless, social, ethnic, or religious strife inside local groups may increase with the strength of their bonds. The most important thing to remember is that neighbourhood social cohesiveness is only sometimes positive. It may involve prejudice and exclusion, and the majority may force its values or will upon a minority.

3. Theoretical framework

Multinational societies must recognise and value cultural diversity as the world becomes a smaller, more interconnected place due to globalisation. This is why the author applied the multiculturalism salad bowl hypothesis. This idea, which discusses how multicultural societies can effectively merge many cultures while preserving their identities, is highly pertinent to the research being done here. Assimilation into the new world culture is easy for immigrants who support salad bowls but maintain some of their previous cultural customs (Mahfouz, 2013). Rajkumar (2022) claims that this makes it possible for people of different backgrounds and cultures to coexist happily as a homogeneous community and to appreciate and understand one another.

However, in situations where native culture predominates and there is a cultural gap between immigrants and natives, there is a chance that immigrants will embrace the native culture. A dish is a salad when a few vegetables

are chopped into small bits and combined in a bowl. Nevertheless, the salient feature of the salad is that each component maintained its unique character despite being readily identifiable and distinguishable from one another as different vegetables. The Salad Bowl Theory holds that immigrants carry on with the same traditions and customs from their home country. They don't have to give up their identity to live in a foreign nation. Because culture is essential to daily life, having a shared culture for interaction and integration becomes increasingly important. As a result, it becomes more challenging to maintain multiculturalism in communities because people eventually end up speaking the same language and participating in the same cultural activities (Advani & Reich, 2015). Nappa (2020) highlights that multiculturalism is more than just acknowledging cultural differences; it also involves learning about other people's cultures. Integration will be much more manageable for immigrants if they approach society with a multicultural mindset, utilising their experiences from many cultural contexts as they go from one social setting to the next.

4. Review of selected literature

4.1 International Migration and Social inclusion in host communities

The process of achieving equality and closing gaps in productivity, skills, education, employment, labour fragmentation, and informality—factors found to be the primary causes of inequality—is known as social inclusion. Social inclusion is a crucial marker of integration (Wanga & Naveed, 2029). A relatively new and expansive notion, social inclusion refers to providing chances and resources to ensure full participation in social, cultural, and economic life. The Roma immigrants in Spain have more access to public services, better housing, less clear plans for returning to their home countries, regular legal status in the host nation, and stable employment opportunities. However, most Roma people in Italy work in primary vocations, and a sizable fraction are unemployed. This suggests that social inclusion does not exist in some regions of Europe (Tarnovschi, Preoteasa, Pamporov, Kabakchieva, & Gitano, 2012).

An estimated 10–12 million Romanians live in parts of the European Union where prejudice, intolerance, discrimination, and social exclusion are daily experiences. They are socially and economically marginalised and lead extremely impoverished lives. In the early years of the twenty-first century, the European Union (EU) cannot tolerate this. According to Tarnovschi et al. (2012), there are three primary contexts in which Roma people face discrimination: employment searches, health facilities and hospitals, and social service offices.

Regarding migration and language variety, there are two significant normative viewpoints. Language problems are a common topic of conversation regarding immigrant integration. It is frequently believed that learning the host nation's language is essential for immigrants to acquire access to the job market, engage in political processes, and for cultural or symbolic reasons pertaining to identity and belonging. From this perspective, however, individual-level multilingualism—that is, immigrants learning the host nation's language in addition to their original tongue—is the desired result. This strategy may have the drawback of excluding immigrants due to overly strict requirements for cultural (including language) assimilation (Gustafson and Laksfos Cardozo, 2017).

Diversity is crucial and can undoubtedly be an asset to any nation. Immigration can generate cultural knowledge and enhance a city's human capital, a critical component of the new economy. A nation with a diverse population of worldviews, languages, and life experiences always has room for racial and cultural mixtures, which fosters an atmosphere that highly supports innovation and creativity (Papillon, 2002).

4.2 Integration of Ukrainians in Poland after the Invasion by Russia

Poland decided to open its borders and direct those fleeing the conflict to border crossings following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The Polish government made a brave move by reducing the number of attempts to enter the

border outside of the authorised crossings. While lines at the border were not eliminated, they were shortened by the use of streamlined control processes. Nonetheless, the decision to open the border to immigration into Poland made it simple for the refugees to assimilate into Polish society. On the one hand, the decision to implement the European Union Temporary Protection Directive established equal guidelines for war refugees from Ukraine to reside in EU Member States, including their access to social services and the labour market. In theory, refugees from war shouldn't be treated any differently from citizens of the country in which they are currently living. However, different Member States have made quite diverse decisions about how to include war refugees in the social security system, the educational system, or the job market (Duszczuk, Górny, Kaczmarczyk & Kubisiak, 2023).

Importantly, after obtaining an individual identity number, Ukrainian refugees are provided unrestricted and complimentary access to the Polish healthcare system (Kopec, 2022). Furthermore, Hungary and Poland have adopted integration-supporting programs, including streamlined job paths. However, two factors are more significant than others in affecting immigrants' mental health and assimilation into the new country. Even before the war broke out, Poland was a popular destination for Ukrainian immigrants, which facilitated integration. The 1990s began the current wave of migration from Ukraine to Poland. Most immigrants in Poland are now Ukrainians, and Poland is the primary European Union nation that Ukrainians choose to work in. As a result, those with a Ukrainian cultural background in Poland could provide significant social support to war refugees. Social assistance can help refugees feel less alone and isolated by strengthening their sense of belonging and easing their transition into a new community. Furthermore, linguistic proficiency significantly impacts how well cultural adaptation works (Kovács, Csukonyi, Kovács, Liszka & Walawender, 2023).

4.3 Acculturation and Biculturalism

Over time, immigrants give up their native tongue and culture in favour of one that "fits" better with mainstream society and mental health. The idea of acculturation has recently come under scrutiny because of research showing that immigrants from many nations who want to quickly "Americanize" or assimilate experience more psychological issues than those who at least partially preserve their language, cultural links, and customs. The diversity that discusses the fight, political activism, laws, and institutional results adopt an accommodating stance that, rather than eradicating or erasing differences, at least partially acknowledges them (Falicov, 2015; Mishar & Kurma, 2014). The premise of biculturalism, which differs from acculturation theory and involves cultural alternation and hybridisation, is that it is possible to know two languages and two cultures and to use this knowledge appropriately for different contexts without giving up one for the other or that it is possible to integrate parts of cultures.

4.4 The importance of multiculturalism and diversity in host communities

According to Mansouri and Lobo (2016), social inclusion policies focus more on institutional recognition of ethnic minorities, redistributive measures, and civic engagement in nations like Canada and Australia that have historically had robust immigration programs. Although the notion of social inclusion has been widely implemented in Canadian cities' policy agendas since 2003 and is supported by rigorous empirical research, ethnic minorities still face exclusion from opportunities because "practice typically lags behind philosophy." For instance, adopting an integrated approach to lessen disadvantage, improve social, civic, and economic involvement, and provide individuals with a greater voice and opportunity is one of the aspirational guiding principles of Australia's recently proposed Social Inclusion Agenda.

A social-intellectual movement known as multiculturalism advocates treating all cultural groups equally and with respect, viewing diversity as a fundamental good. This can be viewed as an ongoing practice and a framework that formally governs cross-cultural interactions (Howartha & Andreouli, 2020).

Human movement is still encouraged by the interdependence and interconnectivity processes. Furthermore, there are only two choices that migrants must make when adjusting to a new cultural setting:

(a) Do they want to stay connected to the culture of their home country, or

(b) Do they want to establish ties with the dominant culture of the new society they are joining, known as the host society? Migrants are said to choose one of the following integration strategies, depending on how they handle these two issues:

1. To fully embrace the dominant culture and disassociate oneself from one's heritage culture is known as assimilation; to preserve one's heritage culture without incorporating aspects of the dominant culture is known as separation;

2. Marginalisation, which is the act of distancing oneself from one's native culture as well as the mainstream culture of the new society;

3. Integration refers to establishing or preserving relationships with both one's nation of origin and the dominant culture. It is the most effective method for adaptation outcomes (Howarth & Andreouli, 20120).

4.5 Giving importance to differences

As Mishra and Kurma (2014) put it, recognising differences means giving them meaning. The negative difference is thus replaced with a positive difference. The nature of difference is addressed through group mobilisation and assertiveness, institutional and policy reforms that address the claim of marginalised groups, and the conversion of negative differences into positive ones, even though in most modern situations something of each is likely to present. From a sociological perspective, Modood (2007) states that when we discuss differences instead of culture, we should acknowledge differences both internally (i.e., from the perspective of the minority culture) and externally (i.e., in how the outside world treats these minorities).

It also acknowledges the characteristics of minorities and how they interact with the majority population. Culture is more than a stand-alone substitute for factors like race, nationality, religion, etc. Therefore, multiculturalism encompasses more than just cultural rights; it also involves political equality and economic access.

Politics is what gives post-immigrant groups legitimacy. It raises awareness of these group-differentiating characteristics' crucial role in their social production. Additionally, demands for recognition are not for special treatment beyond what majority culture members already enjoy; instead, they seek some form of compensatory subsidy to guarantee backgrounds against which decisions can be made.

5. Problem statement

A subjective sense of connection and belonging, as well as general social involvement and access to social services, can all be included within the broader definition of social inclusion. However, inadequate or non-existent communication and differing cultural and religious beliefs are among the reasons why most host communities in South Africa are not welcoming to migrants (Oucho and Williams, 2019). Conversely, social isolation is the term used to describe those who choose to live a socially isolated life. Another factor in this exclusion is the immigration status of the migrants; when they are not allowed to be in the nation, they tend to isolate themselves. In certain places, immigrants' sojourners or other actions contribute to their marginalisation by the local community (Hungwe & Gelderblom, 2014). The employment environment is also riddled with discrimination and xenophobia, where some local South Africans will approach migrants, telling them that they are taking jobs that belong to the locals.

6. Objectives

The present study seeks to:

Determine the impact of international migration and Social inclusion in host communities

Find out the fundamental importance of multiculturalism in communities of South Africa

7. Methodology

The qualitative research methodology was used in this study so that the researcher could explain social cohesion concerns and immigrant assimilation. Language data was collected using a qualitative research methodology to prepare it for theme analysis. According to Hignett and McDermott (2015), a qualitative study primarily focuses on meaning comprehension. Qualitative researchers are curious about how people see and understand the world and how they interpret and engage with various events.

When gathering and analysing data, this approach typically emphasises words more than quantification (Hammersley, 2012). The methodology uses reasoning comparable to solving riddles to create a setting where participants' opinions may be examined and comprehended (Kamogelo and Lucky, 2022). Because qualitative research focuses on understanding a research question as a humanistic or idealistic approach, researchers and scholars in the social sciences use it more frequently (Pathak, Jena & Kalra, 2013).

The respondents or participants in any research project are given a voice thanks to the qualitative research approach. Nonetheless, in this research, the methodology enables the participants to discuss their experiences with social inclusion in various South African groups.

7.1 Sampling techniques

In the study, the researcher employed a convenience sampling strategy. The researcher chose all the study subjects from two provinces: Mpumalanga and Limpopo. Convenient sampling is a widely used sampling technique in scientific research chosen for highly homogeneous populations, and the research participants are selected for the study, according to Noor, Tajik, and Golzar (2022). Easy accessibility: The most straightforward and popular technique is sampling, which involves choosing the sample unit by unit at each draw with an equal chance of selection for each unit.

With this sampling strategy, every person in the population has an equal probability of being chosen for the sample. Every member of a population has an identical chance of being selected as a response when convenience sampling is used (Noor Tajik & Golzar, 2022).

The researcher used blinded group sampling to include a group of immigrants and members of the host community in each of the four group talks.

7.2 Data collection techniques

To obtain raw data for this study, the research team used qualitative methods of inquiry, such as in-depth interviews and first-hand observations. Focus groups with immigrants and host communities in both provinces were used to gather data. Convenience sampling was used to select 40 important research informants from whom primary data was collected. Four groups were created: two blindfolded groups with immigrant Migrants from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Swati origin who live closer to the borders of Mpumalanga and Limpopo provided information for the study. The research team employed qualitative methods of inquiry, including in-depth interviews and first-hand observations, to acquire raw data for this study.

The research was conducted by migrants from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Swati origin who reside closer to the borders of Mpumalanga and Limpopo. Respondents who have lived in South Africa for three years or longer were the target audience. There was a gender balance among the participants in this study, consisting of both male and female individuals. Because the study was qualitative, the researcher used open-ended questions such as "why," "how," and "what" to collect data. In addition, the researcher had to delve deeper when needed to elicit further information from the participants and promote engagement.

Most of the participants had been in South Africa for more than five years; therefore, getting in touch with them was very easy. They negotiate their belonging by speaking the local tongues to be accepted. The interviews used four languages: English, Tshivenda, siSwati, and Xitsonga. The three bordering nations of Swaziland, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe also speak the same languages.

7.3 Study area

Two research locations were used for the study: Komatipoort in the province of Mpumalanga and Musina, located in the northern region of Limpopo Province immediately before the Beitbridge border. Most refugees and immigrants settle in Musina, a small township close to the Beitbridge border, before moving on to other regions of the nation to connect with their fellow citizens. Komatipoort is nearer to Mozambique's border at Lebombo.

7.4 Target Population

The study's target group included members of the host community and immigrants. Among them were immigrants from Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Ruanda, ESwatini (Swaziland), Mozambique, and Malawi.

8. Study findings

8.1 Social inclusion of migrants in South African communities

Participants in both blinded group discussion and immigrants were asked the same question regarding social inclusion and integration in the host communities, and this is how they responded. Most participants agreed that it is very easy to integrate with immigrants, especially those from Malawi, Zimbabwe and other neighbouring countries because they quickly learn South African languages. When they arrive in South Africa, most of them will try to speak the local language so that they can be accommodated. This does not mean they no longer speak their language; they will continue speaking their own language with their fellow compatriots and women. When they are together, they speak their local languages and practice their culture, making them feel so much at home in South Africa.

"We even stay with some immigrants in our yards, so there is proper integration and good understanding in terms of language. Some of our local people eat the immigrant's food, learn to speak their language also, and this is a sign that South Africans are not Xenophobic", said a participant in a blinded focus group discussion.

One respondent in a blinded focus group discussion has indicated that the culture of the immigrants hasn't infiltrated that of theirs, and this is mostly because they share similar cultures in some sort *"when it comes to food, religion, dress codes and conduct, we're all Africans after all",* said respondent.

Based on the information shared by the participants in the focus group discussion, it is apparent that immigrants from neighbouring countries like Swaziland and Mozambique find it easy to integrate with the host communities because of their language and culture. Language and culture contribute to the smooth integration of immigrants into the host communities. When immigrants from Mozambique and Swaziland migrate to South Africa, their first

stop is Mpumalanga because it is closer to the border between Mozambique and Swaziland. There is quite a large number of immigrants who prefer to stay in Mpumalanga because they have relatives, and the other issue is that integration becomes easy. Immigrants do not have to change their language because the language they speak is the same as the locals.

Those who come from Mozambique settle in Mpumalanga province for a certain period, and then they later move to other provinces. The majority are found in Giyani, Elim and Malamulele, and this is because of their similar language and cultural beliefs.

"Life is there, and in abundance, I'd say there is nothing bad present. I tend to find us all the same because there is not much difference between a South African and a Swati person from Swaziland. If you can move from Swaziland to South Africa, people cannot tell because we are not so distinguished. In appearance, we are also similar; I would say there is no prejudice. We thought that when you came to South Africa, the people were not welcoming and lived in similar situations to those who lived in the Apartheid era. Still, we have seen that it is not as we thought", said an Immigrant respondent in a Focus group discussion.

Findings from this study reveal that language plays a crucial role in integration. When migrants migrate to a country and settle in a community which speaks a similar language, they do not experience any form of segregation, and it is easy for them to integrate with the host communities. This is also supported by Adserà and Pytliková (2026) in their paper *Language and Migration*; they reported that knowing the destination language allows immigrants to acquire information about places where they can settle and integrate easily with the communities and have formal labour market access and immigrants 'rights or to learn about natives attitudes towards immigrants.

8.2 Multiculturalism and Diversity in South African Communities

When the participants in a blinded focus group discussion were asked about multiculturalism and diversity in their communities, they highlighted that they do not think the presence of immigrants in their communities is much of an issue to worry about. They further indicated that they live with the immigrants peacefully, and some have accommodated them in their homes.

"The Mozambican culture, for example, is similar to that of people from Limpopo province. Their way of speaking and their Tsonga are understandable. I think we live well with them. Their culture is also not hard to learn because it isn't very different from some South African cultures. They share a lot of similarities with the Tsonga people. People from Swaziland as well. Their culture is similar to ours, and with them, our way of speaking is similar", said the participant in a blinded group discussion

Based on what the participants said, it is obvious that there is integration in the communities. One contributing factor to easy integration and inclusion is the similar culture and language the immigrants share with the locals. This indicates that language and culture play an essential role in social inclusion. The immigrants do not have to abandon their languages and culture because they are now in South Africa; they continue with the same practices as they were doing in their home countries.

All participants in a focus group discussion highlighted that they live well with people from Swaziland and there is multiculturalism. The presence of Swatis, Mozambicans, Zimbabweans, and Nigerians is fine. The majority see multiculturalism as teaching each other's culture and language for proper integration.

When asked about multiculturalism and integration in the South African communities in a group discussion, they responded by indicating that some people believe that immigrants are in South Africa to take the jobs that belong to the locals, and it becomes challenging to integrate. Some of the locals need help understanding the culture of the immigrants, the food they eat and the language.

"Yes, we want to continue speaking our language and practising our culture, but the fear is that some communities do not understand us. We are forced to have our own churches because in South Africa they attend to different churches that y don't find in our country", said the respondent.

However, it is easy to integrate in areas like Komatipoort in Mpumalanga because of similar culture and language. It will be challenging to differentiate between a Swati-speaking person from ESwatini and one from Mpumalanga. The two communities grow together, and attend the same schools and same church. Moreover, those immigrants who do not share anything in common with the host communities find it hard and difficult to integrate because they must first learn the language and culture of the host communities. In that case, they will have to abandon their culture and language to integrate with the host communities easily.

One of the participants highlighted that they encourage the immigrants to speak their language and sing their songs so that the locals can also learn the foreign language.

"I remember singing the "Mamuri ndawana zoro", but I didn't know the meaning. I found a Shona who speaks Zimbabwean, and they helped me translate if we say that we live well with them as we are a rainbow nation. Their culture or presence doesn't affect our lifestyle. One thing I will say, though, is that we get cultural shock on other things, but it's nothing we can't tolerate. We should also consider that these people are here to stay, and some of them have started families with our South African sisters. They can adjust to our culture. What I need clarification on is if we, as South Africans, can adjust to their culture or if we force them to adjust to our culture just because they are in our country. I think learning their culture or not is a personal choice; it is up to an individual".

The culture and religious beliefs of immigrants are not an issue. The challenge comes when they want to practice their culture entirely while in the houses where they are renting since most of them rent rooms. It is okay to practice what they believe in, but at the same time, they should remember that they are in a foreign land and must try to learn the local culture and language.

"When you ask, they will tell you that is their culture, and they are from Mozambique or Swaziland and not from here".

They keep their cultures and customs. For example, let us say an immigrant wants to take my child as a wife, and I want him to follow our culture. They will not; they keep their culture and follow it, and we appreciate this. We should also learn to be ourselves and not try to be them because that can never be.

Conclusion

South Africa is a magnet for immigrants, especially in the developing world. It is a fact that there is an increasing visibility of migrants and ethnic minorities in the public realm, which continues to produce a lack of sympathy, hostility, suspicion, prejudice or discrimination, and uncomfortable feelings of anxiety and fear in everyday spaces. Many factors contribute to migration; among them are the economic conditions in immigrants' home countries. Moreover, the migrants find it very difficult to integrate with the host societies in South Africa due to a variety of reasons, including culture, language and religion. When migrants migrate to South Africa, they abandon their culture and language to fit in and integrate easily. However, those from neighbouring countries like Lesotho, Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Swaziland always keep their culture and language because of the similarities of the languages spoken in South Africa and similar cultural practices.

It is worth noting that integration and social inclusion take time. The most crucial point is that multiculturalism is both a process and unavoidable in the contemporary world. Multiculturalism is not optional; it is not something a society can choose to have or avoid. Moreover, for any country with porous borders like South Africa, multiculturalism is a fact of today, and it is present within the host communities. What is more important is how

the people of a particular locality, including those who exercise governance over them, choose to respond to the cultural and religious diversity that results from the flow of people. Multiculturalism is with us to stay.

Recommendations

The study recommends that everyone maintain their culture without prejudice or disadvantage and be encouraged to understand and embrace other cultures. There should be a multicultural policy that will be seen as a national responsibility. It is further recommended that there should be promotion, understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between host communities and the communities of migrants.

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Data Availability Statement: Raw data or transcripts that was analysed is readily available upon request

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