



# Exploring lived experiences and perceptions of well-being: insights from forced migrant women in Finland

Laleh Golamrej Eliasi, Sohana Zahan & Merja Anis

To cite this article: Laleh Golamrej Eliasi, Sohana Zahan & Merja Anis (08 May 2026): Exploring lived experiences and perceptions of well-being: insights from forced migrant women in Finland, *Nordic Social Work Research*, DOI: [10.1080/2156857X.2026.2671050](https://doi.org/10.1080/2156857X.2026.2671050)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/2156857X.2026.2671050>



© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 08 May 2026.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 182



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

# Exploring lived experiences and perceptions of well-being: insights from forced migrant women in Finland

Laleh Golamrej Eliasi\*, Sohana Zahan\* and Merja Anis

Department of Social Research, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

## ABSTRACT

Immigrant women are often perceived as vulnerable and socially isolated, with their viewpoints and experiences often overlooked in academic research. This study prioritizes their perspectives and lived experiences, focusing on the well-being of forced migrant families and children. This research examines both the risk factors threatening the well-being of forced migrant families and children and the coping strategies employed to address these challenges. Drawing from two interlinked qualitative studies, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and ethnographic observations with forced migrant women in Finland. Thematic analysis of the data revealed four themes and ten sub-themes. For risk factors, two main themes emerged: pre-migration stressors and post-migration challenges. Regarding coping strategies, two primary themes were identified: individual solutions and close relationships, and structural adaptation and resource navigation. These findings illuminate the complex interplay of personal resilience, community dynamics, and structural support systems in shaping the well-being of forced migrant families. This research contributes to an understanding of the lived experiences and perceptions of forced migrant women in Finland, emphasizing the importance of incorporating their voices into policy-making and social work practices. It highlights the need for targeted interventions to address their unique challenges and strengths, ultimately promoting more effective support systems for migrant families.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 20 January 2025  
Accepted 4 May 2026

## KEYWORDS

Forced migrant; coping strategies; asylum seekers; Finland

## Introduction

The topic of forced migration is multi-faceted and complex. There is no single explanation of what distinguishes the causes and motivations for 'voluntary' migration from 'forced' migration. Different definitions do not necessarily correspond to migrants' own experience and understanding of the reasons for migration (Hynes 2021). We generally know that forced migration is distressing and disruptive, often involving experiences of trauma, uncertainty, and dislocation (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014; Ford-Paz et al. 2020). Individuals categorized as forced migrants are typically moved under coercion, pressure, or without consent (International Organization for Migration 2019), prompting host countries to receive them, at least formally, on humanitarian grounds. Within the broader context of forced migration, it is important, though often confusing, to distinguish between two legal categories: asylum seekers and refugees. Refugees are individuals who have demonstrated, through a formal legal process, that they face ongoing threats to their lives in

**CONTACT** Laleh Golamrej Eliasi  Laleh.l.golamrejeliiasi@utu.fi

\*Laleh Golamrej Eliasi and Sohana Zahan contributed equally to this work.

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

their country of origin, resulting in their recognition and protection by host countries. In contrast, asylum seekers are those who have fled similar risks but are still undergoing legal procedures and awaiting a decision regarding their protection status (Farahani et al. 2025). This distinction impacts migrants' rights to welfare services, which shapes their well-being. The present study examines both the risk factors that threaten the well-being of forced migrant families and children and the factors that promote coping; the study draws from the experiences and perspectives of forced migrant women in Finland. This focus is grounded in the understanding that women often navigate the intersection between the private sphere of the home and the public sphere of the host society. Consequently, their perspectives offer critical insights into the systemic challenges and protective factors that impact the family ecosystem as a whole. It is essential to prioritize academic research on immigrant women within the Finnish context because these women are frequently perceived as vulnerable and socially isolated, with their viewpoints often overlooked. Nordberg (2015) emphasizes that their perspectives and personal experiences hold considerable significance, particularly in their roles closely connected to forced migrant children.

The context of migration is becoming increasingly significant in global discussions, especially as countries' like Finland transition from being historically emigration countries to becoming destinations for immigrants (Leitzinger 2008). Recent data from the Finnish Immigration Service (2024) indicates that in 2023, 4,559 individuals applied for international protection for the first time, including 387 unaccompanied minors. The main countries of origin for asylum seekers were Somalia, Syria, Russia, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Iraq. In 2023, 19,426 individuals applied for temporary protection, most of them Ukrainians. Worldwide, Afghans are one of the largest refugee groups (Monsutti and Balci 2014), and especially because women's rights in Afghanistan have been severely restricted, this group is particularly vulnerable (Amnesty International 2023). According to Official Statistics of Finland (2022), there are 13,050 Afghan immigrants in Finland, including 3,541 women and 3,879 children. Immigration and asylum policies as well as the integration legislation are constantly subject to conflicting political interests in Finland as in many other countries, which may have consequences for the everyday lives of immigrants.

Forced migrant women arriving in Finland enter a welfare-state context shaped by universalism, gender equality policies, and a highly institutionalized service system. Finland's social protection model is designed to provide comprehensive support through publicly funded health, education, and social services, yet migrants' access to these systems is mediated by legal status and administrative structures (Kalliomaa-Puha 2020). Recent reforms under the Social and Health Care Service Integration Act have aimed to reduce fragmentation in service provision; however, research shows that migrants continue to encounter gaps in culturally responsive care, limited information accessibility, and inconsistencies in service pathways across regions (Tiirinki et al. 2022). At the same time, the political climate surrounding immigration has become increasingly polarized, with asylum and family reunification policies tightening over the past decade, shaping migrants' sense of security and belonging (Masoud et al. 2023).

This study addresses a significant gap in forced migration research by exploring the stress factors and coping strategies in the light of lived experiences and perceptions of forced migrant women in Finland. In this study, we define 'forced migrants' as a broad category encompassing both legally recognized refugees and individuals currently seeking asylum, as both groups navigate similar structural and psychological challenges post-migration. While many previous studies (e.g. Anis and Turtiainen 2021; Käkelä 2019) have mainly investigated social work and services provided to forced migrants from the perspective of social workers, this research brings to light the perspectives of the forced migrants. Given the pressing need to understand and address the well-being of forced migrant families and children, this research focuses on two key questions derived from the lived experiences and perspectives of forced migrant women in Finland. This approach is rooted in family systems and ecological frameworks, which posit that maternal perspectives are a primary lens through which family-level stressors and child adjustment are understood (Beiser et al. 2010). Because women often serve as the primary interface

between the family unit and Finnish resettlement services, their narratives provide a comprehensive view of the household's collective well-being. We are interested in how they describe the stress factors that impact well-being of forced migrant women, their children, and their families, as well as how they describe resilience and coping strategies. This article combines two related studies on the obstacles faced by forced migrant families, with a focus on the well-being of children and women. We highlight women's perspectives, as migrant women often report lower well-being and are perceived as less integrated than men (Nordberg 2015; Skogberg et al. 2019). They also face gender-based and other forms of violence, which welfare services often overlook (Goodman et al. 2017; Hiitola and Vuori 2018). Both studies share a focus on forced migrant women in Finland but differ in scope: one includes women of various nationalities, while the other concentrates on Afghan women. Merging them enables a more comprehensive analysis of the challenges and coping strategies of forced migrant women in Finland.

### **Literature review**

Forced migrants often encounter challenging circumstances that can significantly affect their well-being (Jervelund, Krasnik, and Rosenkranz de Lasson 2020; Skogberg et al. 2019). Social exclusion, self-isolation, overthinking, and symptoms like insomnia and anxiety can have detrimental effects on their mental health (Farahani et al. 2024). These psychological and social stressors can be further compounded by feelings of invisibility, racism, institutional discrimination, and uncertainty about the future in the host country (Castaneda 2019; Farahani et al. 2025; Rask et al. 2018). As a result, some individuals or groups may be marginalized within the majority society (Kaya and Bee 2024) or resort to high-risk behaviours as coping mechanisms, such as criminal behaviour, substance use or engaging in unprotected sexual activities (Addelyan Rasi et al. 2021). However, despite these adversities, there are protective factors that support resilience.

Factors such as religion, strong community networks, family reunification, and access to safety and healthcare can play significant roles in enhancing migrants' ability to cope in a new environment (Chung et al. 2018; Farahani et al. 2025; Tinghög et al. 2017). In Finland, which shares a social and cultural framework with other Nordic societies, the emphasis is on equitable access to healthcare, education, and social services for all residents, including those from migrant backgrounds (Smith, Krasnik, and Rosenkranz de Lasson 2020). However, despite this well-established welfare system, forced migrants still face significant barriers when trying to access specialized services (Kieseppä et al. 2022; Turtiainen and Anis 2024).

Social workers in Finland have identified some major barriers that hinder access to social and health care services. For example, lack of a residence permit or asylum-seeker status restricts adult's access to specialized services beyond basic needs. Language barriers also create communication challenges between service users and providers. Even though interpreter services are widely available, forced migrants may hesitate to use them due to concerns about potential biases or practical limitations. All minors are entitled to health and social services to the same extent as residents, but this right is not always exercised equally in practice (Anis and Turtiainen 2021). The limited access to services highlights the gaps in support that persist despite Finland's strong welfare system.

Moreover, the relationship between social workers and forced migrant families is often seen as needing improvement (Anis and Turtiainen 2021). According to forced migrants, the lack of a strong and trusting relationship with social workers can negatively impact the well-being of their families (Fylkesnes, Iversen, and Nygren 2018; Golamrej Eliasi et al. 2024). This strained relationship may further exacerbate issues like social exclusion and mental health challenges. Indeed, research by Kraav et al. (2023) highlights several factors that can hinder access to child protection and mental health services in Finland, such as cultural misunderstandings of psychiatric

symptoms, a lack of culturally competent specialists, and structural barriers like poverty and unemployment.

### ***Stress and coping theory and its neoliberal implications***

Stress and coping theory are essential for understanding the psychological well-being of forced migrant women and their families. These families encounter unique and layered stressors related to the migration process itself, acculturation into a new society, economic precarity, and the challenges of parenting in displacement (Alsharaydeh et al. 2022; Yakhnich 2008). These cumulative stressors significantly impact child psychological well-being, underscoring that effective parental coping mechanisms, such as reframing strategies and accessing social support, are crucial predictive factors for positive adjustment outcomes (Kvarme, Früh, and Lidén 2017; Roer-Strier 1997).

In this difficult context, resilience is broadly defined as the ability to ‘advance’ amid threatening and challenging circumstances, arising from latent opportunities within a specific society and serving as a crucial element for survival (Farahani et al. 2025). Beyond individual psychological fortitude, lived experiences reveal that resilience strategies are often profoundly communal and cultural. For instance, cohesive community support highlights the significance of strong social networks and collective actions in fostering resilience, while religion provides essential spiritual comfort and a guide for moral behaviour during periods of overwhelming instability (Farahani et al. 2025).

The literature classifies stress management into three distinct coping strategies: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidance coping. Problem-focused coping involves actively seeking information or taking direct action to solve the stressor itself (Fang et al. 2021; Woodrome et al. 2011). Emotion-focused coping centres on regulating the emotional response to the stressor, often through positive reframing or acceptance (Atasoy and Sevim 2018). Conversely, avoidance coping entails distancing oneself from the stressor through denial or behavioural disengagement. While problem-focused coping generally correlates with better long-term adjustment, understanding this trifecta is crucial for designing targeted clinical and social interventions that help individuals effectively manage distress and promote sustained well-being (Woodrome et al. 2011).

Despite its utility in describing survival, the concept of resilience has been heavily criticized for its alignment with neoliberal governance rationalities in forced migration studies (Chandler and Reid 2016; Joseph 2013). When applied to forced migrant women in contexts like Finland, resilience operates as a form of ‘governmental rationality’, unjustly shifting the burden of structural failure, such as discrimination in the labour market or cuts to integration services, onto the individual (Chee 2020; Sundbäck 2024). This focus transforms a need for state-led structural reform and comprehensive welfare support into a moral obligation for the woman to be a ‘hyper-resilient subject’. This depoliticizes well-being by masking the state’s withdrawal, ultimately limiting policy to offering individual psychological support rather than challenging the deeply embedded social and economic structures, like unequal power relations and segmented labour markets, that fundamentally determine their equitable integration (Ndomo and Lillie 2023). We recognize the limitations of the concept of resilience but still consider it as a useful theoretical perspective in the analysis of our data, which highlights not only individual but also communal and societal factors.

### **Research materials and methods**

This study aims to explore forced migrant women’s lived experiences and their perceptions of the risk factors affecting the collective well-being of their children and families, as well as the coping strategies they employ to navigate these challenges within the resettlement context. The research

questions are: (1) How do forced migrant women describe the stress factors that impact well-being of forced migrant women, their children, and their families? (2) How do forced migrant women describe resilience and coping strategies?

### ***Sample description and data collection***

The present study constitutes a component of a broader project known as Social Work Expertise in Child Protection with Migrant Children and Families (LAMPE in the Finnish language). LAMPE, undertaken by three Finnish universities (University of Jyväskylä, University of Turku, and University of Eastern Finland). The project seeks to examine the necessary expertise required from social workers in protecting migrant children and supporting parenthood.

This article also is a combination of two different research studies from the LAMPE project, which have common objectives. These two studies were conducted by two researchers working within the LAMPE project, who subsequently decided to integrate their findings in order to develop a joint article. In the first study, nineteen asylum seekers participated, and all participants were over 18 years old and mostly women. One criterion for participant selection was that they were awaiting the decision on their asylum application. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, a flexible guided method that allows for in-depth exploration of participants' lived experiences while maintaining comparability across cases.

This approach enabled the researcher to follow a thematic structure while also adapting to the flow of conversation, encouraging participants to share their perspectives, emotions, and reflections in their own words (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). The main focus of the interviews was on their life in the reception centre for asylum-seeking families or those provided by the reception services, such as living in a private residence before receiving a decision on their asylum application. The interviews were about an hour each. Interpreters were present during most of the interviews; some were done in the researcher's native language.

The second phase of data collection involved ethnographic fieldwork, conducted through participant observation in various settings within the reception centres. Ethnography in this study emphasizes sustained immersion in the field to capture the social dynamics, material conditions, and everyday practices of participants in their natural environments (Gobo 2008). The researcher participated in and observed daily routines such as language classes and communal activities, with particular attention to the physical environment, social interactions, and behaviours of both staff and asylum seekers. While the ethnographic observations were not systematically coded or analysed as primary data, they served as a valuable supplementary source, deepening the contextual interpretation of the interview material and contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the research setting.

The participants in the second research study were Afghan women, who were over 18 years old and living in Finland. This study specifically focused on exploring Afghan women's perceptions of domestic violence and the coping strategies they employ within the Finnish context. The interview was the data collection method and the main focus of the interviews was the perception of the participants concerning risk factors for the well-being of forced migrant children and families in Finland. The research aimed to achieve data saturation. In the second study, data saturation was reached after 10 interviews; however, to ensure robustness, data collection was extended to include a total of 13 participants from different cities in Finland. As mentioned before, in the second research, all the questions were about the participants' perceptions. However, sometimes, the participants described their personal experiences. To build trust with participants in the second research study, the researcher offered the flexibility to select their preferred interview format, including face-to-face, video call, or voice call, to ensure their comfort and ease. Ultimately, one interview was conducted face-to-face, while the remaining sessions were carried out via online voice

calls. All interviews were conducted in Farsi or Dari, as one of the authors is a native Farsi speaker with substantial experience working with Afghan communities.

To recruit participants, the researchers established contact with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and reception centres. They disseminated research information and flyers at these institutions. Following discussions between the staff and their service users, individuals expressing an interest in participating were provided with the researcher's contact details, facilitating voluntary engagement in the study.

Timeline of data collection for the first research is from February to October 2023. Age, gender and nationality were asked just for general background information to describe the data as a whole. Most participants in this research are women and only the women participants' interviews are used in this article. The participants' waiting period in Finland ranges from 3 months to 7 years. Majority of the nationalities were Somali, Iraqi, Syrian, Rwanda and Nepali. Twelve participants were living in the reception centre, seven participants were living in a shared apartment paid for by themselves, and five participants moved to Finland with family including children and lived in the reception centre at the time of the interview.

Data collection in the second research took place between 2021 and 2022, concluding when data saturation was reached, allowing for a thorough analysis. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 56, with an average age of 34. In terms of marital status, participants were single, married, or widowed, with the majority being married and the fewest being widowed. Eight participants had children, with an average of three children per family. On average, participants had been living in Finland for 10 years, with a range from 5 to 22 years at the time of the interview. Most participants had migrated directly from Iran, while one had previously lived in Afghanistan and another in Russia before moving to Finland. This reflects the migration context in which Iran, as a neighbouring country of Afghanistan, has long served as a major transit and host country for Afghan migrants.

### **Data analysis**

In the data analysis, thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006; Mason 2002) is used to examine the participants' experiences and perceptions through the lens of stress and coping strategies. Researchers began with a thorough review of the interview transcripts, and read and re-read the data to identify passages relevant to the research questions. Guided by the theory, researchers generated initial data codes based on the ways participants articulated their stressors and coping mechanisms about these services. Once the initial coding was complete, researchers organized the codes into subthemes that aligned with the theoretical concepts of stress and coping. These subthemes were then grouped into broader categories that represented overarching themes. This iterative process of coding, organizing, and refining the data was conducted with close attention to the participants' narratives and perceptions, ensuring the theoretical framework remained central to the analysis. Finally, the initial codes and themes were presented to other authors for review, with any discrepancies discussed and resolved collaboratively to ensure the themes were both theoretically grounded and reflective of the participants' lived experiences.

### **Research ethics**

It is important for research ethics to take into account the possible negative consequences for the participating women and families. The research should not reinforce prejudices, but generate knowledge to highlight the risks of well-being and factors of resilience, as well as the ways in which to develop equal services for forced migrant children and families (Skivenes et al. 2015). We are aware that although in terms of research the participating women can be defined as forced migrants, their countries of origin, backgrounds, and family situations are diverse. Our study can only capture a fraction of their experiences and perceptions (Hynes 2021). Nevertheless, academic research focusing on immigrant women in the Finnish context is crucial, as these women are often

seen as vulnerable and socially isolated, and their perspectives are not often heard (Nordberg 2015). As individuals with close relationships to forced migrant children, their perspectives and personal experiences are highly significant also regarding the wellbeing of migrant children.

The research acknowledged the influence of power dynamics and researcher positionality (Goundar 2025). The researcher's gender, cultural background, and professional role shaped interactions with participants, and careful attention was paid to building trust. For example, in the first study, the researcher declared clearly that participation in this research does not impact the asylum application and the researcher has no power or authority to influence any decision. The researcher also mentioned that declining to participate in the study at any point will not have any negative impact on the participant's asylum application status. The presence of interpreters, while necessary, added complexity, as some participants hesitated to speak freely particularly in the presence of male interpreters. Interpreters were therefore selected based on language proficiency and gender when possible, and the researcher engaged in reflective discussions about the potential influence of translation and positionality on the data. This reflective approach ensured that participants' voices remained central and strengthened the ethical and methodological rigour of the study.

Both research studies obtained ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of XXX. The first research was approved on 19 January 2022, and the approval date for the second research was 29 September 2021.

## Results

The data analysis resulted in four major themes and ten subthemes, which are summarized in Table 1. Each theme will be elaborated on the following sections, and at the end of each example, it is stated whether the quote was from asylum seeker participants or Afghan women.

### *Stress factors impacting the well-being of forced migrant women, children, and families*

#### *Pre-migration stressors*

The gender-based violence and trauma, rooted in some communities of the origin countries of forced migrant women, play a significant role in shaping the well-being of forced migrant families in our study. These forms of violence are often rooted in cultural practices and societal norms, such as gender-based violence, forced marriages, and oppressive family dynamics. Such traumatic experiences leave lasting physical and psychological scars,

**Table 1.** Stress factors and coping strategies identified by forced migrant women.

Main questions	Theme	Subtheme
How do forced migrant women describe the stress factors that impact well-being of forced migrant women, their children, and their families?	Pre-migration stressors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gender-based violence and trauma</li> <li>● War and conflict</li> </ul>
	Post-migration challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Structural and environmental challenges</li> <li>● Parenting under scrutiny</li> </ul>
How do forced migrant women describe resilience and coping strategies?	Individual solutions & Close relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Avoiding interaction (with family members, community and authorities)</li> <li>● Religion</li> <li>● Supportive community</li> </ul>
	Structural Adaptation and Resource Navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessing services &amp; resources</li> <li>● Learning the language &amp; new skills</li> <li>● Stability and distraction through work</li> </ul>

especially on women and children. The impact of these experiences continues to influence family dynamics and personal well-being even after migration, as seen in the following quotes:

It doesn't matter if the girls are raised here; they still have to get married according to the family's opinion. A person chosen by the family, mostly from their own country. Most of the time, no one asks the opinion of girls. The least important issue in a girl's marriage is her opinion.

Another participant talked about women circumcision:

My daughter and I escaped women circumcision after my ex-husband was killed in the war, and we moved back to our parents' house. They locked us in a room and beat us every day. Those memories will never be erased from my daughter's brain.

War and conflict in the countries of origin have profound and enduring effects on forced migrant children and women, impacting their mental and emotional well-being long after resettlement. The trauma of war often affects every aspect of daily life, with parents and children alike suffering from the psychological aftershocks. These families continue to experience anxiety over the safety of their loved ones still living in conflict zones, and the guilt of having escaped while others remain behind. Such emotional distress can lead to strained family relationships. The following quote illustrates these ongoing struggles.

War embraces our whole life. My kids are still bedwetting. We did not learn anything in the war. Even now that we are here, we are worried about our loved ones who live there. We eat fruit here as if we are eating poison because they don't have it there. This makes us misbehave with our children.

In conclusion, the experiences of gender-based violence, war and trauma have deep and lasting impacts on the well-being of forced migrant families. These traumatic events shape mental and emotional health, family dynamics, parenting, and personal relationships after migration.

### *Post-migration challenges*

The well-being of forced migrant families is influenced not only by the trauma experienced in their countries of origin but also by various structural and environmental risk factors present in the new environment. Challenges such as inadequate housing, overcrowding, and administrative policies during the often long-lasting processes of asylum seeking create additional stress for families. One of the participants mentioned:

My son sleeps in the bathroom. He came to Finland as a child. It was ok for us to sleep in one bedroom and one living room, but now the children are teenagers and adults. As there was no space and the reception center could not move us, my son decided to sleep in the bathroom. It breaks my heart. The reception center cannot change our housing arrangements as it is not based on need; it is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Parenting under scrutiny from the participants' personal experiences is a significant risk factor for the well-being of forced migrant children and families, particularly in the context of adjusting to new cultural norms and child-rearing practices in the host country. Migrant mothers often face heightened anxiety about meeting the expectations of local authorities and social workers, fearing that deviations from the dominant parenting style could lead to negative consequences, such as child welfare interventions. This fear can create a sense of vulnerability and self-doubt, limiting open communication with social services and preventing parents from expressing their concerns or cultural preferences. As a result, parents may feel pressured to adopt unfamiliar practices, leading to increased stress and potential conflicts within the family. One participant stated that:

I am very afraid about my parenting, as it is different in our culture. Here I heard they may take your child away if you do not do parenting in the Finnish style. We have a social worker who checks on our children, but somehow, I am afraid to tell her how I feel about the parenting style she recommends.

The well-being of forced migrant families in Finland is significantly affected by both the trauma of displacement and the structural and environmental challenges they encounter in the host country. Inflexible administrative policies during the asylum-seeking process add layers of stress to families already coping with past trauma. Lack of proper information and uncertainty about child welfare policies as well as insecurity about one's own parenting skills prevent migrant parents from trusting and seeking help from social services.

## **Resilience and coping strategies**

### **Individual solutions and close relationships**

According to the results in our study, avoiding interaction with violent family members, the community, and authorities emerges as a significant coping strategy. Many<sup>1</sup> participants choose this approach to protect themselves from further stress or conflict. For women who have experienced domestic violence, avoiding interaction with violent family members is often used as a coping mechanism to reduce tension and conflict in their close relationships. Participants describe how they choose silence and withdrawal during disagreements to prevent escalating fights, particularly with their spouses.

I am silent. My husband doesn't understand anymore. He doesn't understand. I just keep silent so that the fights will end soon. I was not like this in the beginning, but now nothing matters to me. Whatever he says, I go to the kitchen and don't say anything.

This represents avoidance coping within intimate relationships, aiming to reduce emotional conflict (Fang et al. 2021). While such strategies may bring temporary emotional relief, they may also perpetuate unhealthy dynamics (Sudarji, Panggabean, and Marta 2022).

Similarly, social avoidance, distancing oneself from the broader migrant community, may result from a desire to avoid judgement or gossip, particularly when dealing with personal struggles.

I prefer to stay away from my friends and family. When I approach them, they ask why I am upset. Is something wrong? I don't like to talk to them. Anyway, they are strangers. We should not talk about the family and its problems with them.

Avoiding authorities was also a self-protection strategy. Interactions with authorities, such as social workers or immigration officials, are often avoided due to fear of scrutiny, cultural misunderstandings, or the belief that their concerns will not be properly addressed. This avoidance, while a temporary form of self-preservation, may lead to increased isolation and create barriers to accessing necessary support and services, ultimately impacting their resilience in the long term.

I lived with my ex-husband, who harmed my child, as we are both asylum seekers, and he told me that if I complained, they would kick both of us out of the country.

This again shows avoidance coping, underpinned by systemic mistrust and fear of negative consequences (Yakhnich 2008). These avoidance strategies, while protective, can exacerbate isolation and reduce access to services, undermining long-term resilience (Roer-Strier 1997).

On the other hand, supportive communities can play a vital role in the coping of forced migrant families. For many migrants, building connections with others who share similar cultural backgrounds or migration experiences creates a network of emotional and practical support (Cáceres-Titos, García-Navarro, and da Silva Barreto 2025). These communities provide a sense of belonging, offering assistance with everyday challenges such as navigating new systems, accessing resources, or addressing emotional struggles. Being part of a supportive group fosters resilience by reducing isolation and reinforcing the idea that they are not alone in their journey, helping families adapt more effectively to their new environment.

We have a WhatsApp group of Somalian women. We do everything together. We have each other's backs no matter what.

According to our study, religion seems to play a significant role in the coping strategies among the women involved. For many, religious beliefs and practices provide emotional support, a sense of continuity, and a framework for understanding their experiences of displacement and hardship. Through prayer, community worship, and adherence to religious values, migrants often find comfort and strength to navigate the uncertainties of their new environment.

In any case, the Quran gives me peace. When I fight with my husband, I turn to the Quran. When children are annoying, the Qur'an. When I worry about my family in Afghanistan, I always read the Quran. The Quran separates me from this world, and I experience a unique feeling when I read it.

This quote aligns closely with Farahani's et al. (2025) and Cáceres-Titos's, García-Navarro, and da Silva Barreto (2025) findings that religion provides psychological comfort and emotional regulation for migrants. The Qur'an here serves as an emotion-focused coping tool, offering spiritual anchoring during distress. Through prayer and recitation, individuals create a sense of inner peace and continuity amid external uncertainty. This form of coping allows migrants to emotionally reframe their struggles, reduce anxiety, and find meaning in hardship when problem-focused solutions are limited or unavailable.

Forced migrant women adopt diverse coping strategies to navigate the complexities of displacement, balancing self-preservation and resilience. Avoiding confrontation with the husband by adapting to uncomfortable situations at home as well as keeping distance from the communities and authorities are tactics to reduce conflict and protect emotional well-being, though it can lead to isolation and hinder access to support systems. Community support and religious practices not only alleviate isolation but also sustain resilience by providing a sense of continuity and meaning in the face of hardship.

### *Structural adaptation and resource navigation*

Participants also engaged in problem-focused coping strategies to actively change their circumstances and reduce stress (Shavaki et al. 2018). While avoidance of authorities may serve as a protective coping strategy in contexts of mistrust or fear, forced migrant families simultaneously depend on social services and support networks to manage essential aspects of daily life. This tension reflects a selective engagement, where migrant women strategically distance themselves from certain authorities while turning to others for crucial support in housing, healthcare, education, and navigating bureaucratic systems. Accessing services and resources is a key aspect of forced migrants women's efforts to navigate and adapt to life in a new country. Although avoiding authorities can be a coping strategy in some situations, forced migrant families often rely heavily on local social services and support networks to understand and meet their basic needs, from navigating bureaucratic processes to securing essential resources like housing, healthcare, and education. For many, professionals like social workers and family support workers become crucial figures in their lives, providing not only practical assistance but also emotional support (Kokkonen 2018). These service providers often bridge gaps in communication, translate official documents, and advocate on behalf of families, fostering trust and easing the overwhelming burden of navigating complex systems in an unfamiliar environment.

Our social worker is more than a friend; she does everything for us. We consider her family.

Another participant mentioned:

The asylum center family worker helps with anything and everything we need. She has helped with translating and understanding immigration documents, for example, multiple times.

Learning the Finnish language and acquiring new skills are vital coping strategies particularly for forced migrant women and their families, as they strive to integrate into Finnish society. For many

women, attending language courses offers more than just practical benefits; it provides an opportunity to strengthen their agency by enhancing their independence and self-confidence. Language proficiency enables them to access employment, education, and social services while fostering their ability to navigate local culture and communicate with authorities, educators, and healthcare providers. Similarly, learning new skills empowers women by increasing their employability and creating avenues for active participation in their communities. These efforts not only build personal confidence but also foster a sense of belonging, offering women a crucial means of reclaiming control over their lives in the context of resettlement.

It is very good that the Finnish language class is mandatory. We don't just learn languages. In addition to learning the Finnish language and being able to integrate into society and find work, we also learn other skills. Little by little, we learn to solve our problems.

Gaining employment is a significant coping mechanism for forced migrant women to achieve stability and distraction through work. For many, securing a job not only provides financial stability but also serves as an important means of psychological relief and personal fulfilment. Work offers a structured routine and a distraction from stress. Even jobs that may not align with their previous skills or aspirations are valued for their ability to foster a sense of purpose and self-worth. Engaging in work allows migrant women to focus on something beyond their immediate struggles, providing a temporary escape from the pressures of adaptation while contributing to their integration into the host society.

Going to work makes me forget about my stress for a while.

Another participant also mentioned:

I did the reception center training for cleaning and got a job, although it is not much, but it keeps me occupied.

In summary, the ability of forced migrant women to access essential services and resources, alongside their efforts to learn the Finnish language and develop new skills, reflects key elements of problem-focused coping, strategies aimed at actively addressing and managing stressors in their new environment (Fang et al. 2021; Shavaki et al. 2018). These practical efforts are crucial not only for improving well-being and parenting but also for facilitating integration and long-term adaptation. Social service providers serve as vital external sources of support, reducing stress by helping families navigate complex systems, which aligns with the role of social support in both emotion- and problem-focused coping (Alsharaydeh et al. 2022; Roer-Strier 1997). Language learning and skill development further foster resilience by enhancing migrants' independence, self-efficacy, and access to employment and education. Collectively, these strategies promote empowerment and a sense of belonging, enabling forced migrant women to manage stress constructively and build more stable lives in the host society.

## Discussion

This study contributes to forced migration research by providing insight into how forced migrant women in Finland experience and negotiate stress factors and coping mechanisms within the broader context of displacement and resettlement. Unlike earlier studies that primarily examined migration through the perspectives of service providers (e.g. Anis and Turtiainen 2021), our research highlights the lived experiences and agency of the women themselves, offering a grounded understanding of how trauma and structural conditions interact to shape family well-being.

The findings reveal that women's lived realities cannot be separated from the intersection of pre-migration trauma and post-migration structures. Rather than viewing trauma as a discrete, past event, our data suggests that it continues to shape women's emotional and relational worlds within the asylum system. This echoes Eruyar, Maltby, and Vostanis (2018) and Voolma (2018), who

found that unresolved trauma complicates family cohesion and parenting in exile. Our findings extend this understanding by showing that the asylum context itself may perpetuate insecurity and emotional distress, thus blurring the boundary between pre- and post-migration stressors.

A particularly salient structural factor concerns housing and living arrangements. Overcrowded and unstable conditions at reception centres emerged not simply as logistical challenges but as mechanisms that reproduce uncertainty and hinder family well-being. Similar to Grønseth and Thorshaug (2022), our findings underscore how the physical and social environments of reception centres shape everyday life, influencing how women perceive safety, privacy, and dignity. By emphasizing the centrality of space in psychosocial well-being, this study adds a gendered perspective to existing debates on asylum accommodation policies.

Another key theme concerns the complex relationship between asylum status and women's engagement with social services. Our analysis suggests that legal precarity constrains voice and agency: women with pending asylum applications expressed fear of criticizing authorities, while those with more stable status were able to identify service gaps. This dynamic supports the findings of Golamrej Eliasi et al. (2024) and Käkelä (2019) regarding the structural hierarchies embedded in social service encounters. However, our study adds that socio-economic background and prior experiences also mediate these perceptions, shaping expectations of fairness and entitlement to care.

The women's accounts of parenting reveal an acute tension between cultural continuity and adaptation. The fear of child-protection interventions illustrates how institutional power can inadvertently produce anxiety and silence, leading parents to self-censor or over-assimilate. This resonates with Anis (2008), Fylkesnes, Iversen, and Nygren (2018) and Karimi (2020), who have documented the homogenizing tendencies of Nordic welfare systems. Our findings highlight that these processes are not merely institutional but deeply psychological, affecting self-confidence and identity as mothers. This insight advances the discussion on culturally responsive social work by showing how structural surveillance intersects with intimate family life.

In contrast to the vulnerabilities described above, the study also sheds light on resilience and coping. Religion, social networks, and language learning were central resources through which women sought continuity and agency. While previous research has recognized the role of faith and community in coping (Voolma 2018), our findings suggest that these practices also operate as subtle forms of resistance to marginalization, enabling women to assert meaning and self-worth within restrictive environments. Similarly, language acquisition and skill development were not only instrumental for integration but also symbolic acts of reclaiming autonomy.

These insights have significant implications for social work and integration policy. They call for an approach that is simultaneously structural and trauma-informed, recognizing that many challenges stem less from cultural difference than from systemic conditions, such as prolonged legal uncertainty, inadequate housing, and institutional mistrust. As Nordberg (2015) and Anis and Turtiainen (2021) argue, service systems in Finland and the wider Nordic context often operate under assumptions of sameness. Our findings reinforce the need to move beyond such homogenizing frameworks towards practices that honour diversity and lived experience.

Finally, the concept of pre-integration, the prolonged waiting period in reception centres emerges as a critical analytical lens. Consistent with Kivijärvi and Myllylä (2022), our findings show that this phase shapes future integration trajectories by limiting opportunities for agency, social capital, and psychological recovery. Prolonged asylum procedures and post-migration stressors are associated with elevated levels of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress (Laban et al. 2004; Silove et al. 2007). Legal uncertainty can undermine ontological security, that is, a sense of safety, continuity, and predictability in everyday life. Viewing pre-integration as an active, formative stage rather than a passive waiting period may help policymakers design interventions that foster well-being even before legal status is determined. The precarious status of asylum seekers in relation to welfare services is above all a threat to children's rights and human rights.

This study faced several limitations that may have influenced the depth and breadth of its findings. Establishing trust with participants proved challenging due to the sensitive nature of the

topics, such as personal struggles and interactions with the Finnish welfare system. Furthermore, the involvement of interpreters added to the complexity, as some participants were reluctant to speak freely in the presence of an interpreter. Additionally, some women expressed discomfort speaking in front of male translators, which may have limited their willingness to discuss certain issues in depth.

Another limitation was the interview format. While participants could choose between face-to-face, video call, or voice call interviews, most Afghan women chose for voice calls. This may have affected their focus and engagement, constraining the natural flow of conversation. Moreover, asylum seekers often hesitated to express themselves fully due to fear of potential consequences, possibly leading to underreporting of negative experiences. Furthermore, the small qualitative data inherently restrict the generalizability of the findings. However, the results align with existing literature, reinforcing their validity and offering perspectives to the field.

While grounded in the Finnish context, the implications extend more broadly. The intersection of trauma, structural constraints, and gendered expectations represents a transnational pattern in forced migration. Hence, this study underscores the need for inclusive, gender-sensitive, and trauma-informed approaches in social work that strengthen migrant families' capacities for resilience while addressing the systemic inequalities that compromise their well-being.

## Note

1. Throughout this section, 'many' refers to themes that emerged with near-unanimity across the cohort. Given the high degree of consistency in participants' pre- and post-migration traumas, these experiences are presented as collective themes rather than isolated occurrences.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Funding

This study is a sub-study of a larger research project "Child welfare expertise in social work for immigrant children and families" (LAMPE 2021-2023) funded by Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Besides, the second research was supported by Alli Paasikivi foundation, and Oskar Öflunds Stiftelse.

## References

- Addelyan Rasi, H., L. Golamrej Eliasi, A. Moula, and H. Farahani. 2021. "Intervention-Based Puberty Program: A Study on the Tendency of Afghan Female Youths to Engage in High-Risk Behaviours in Iran." *Humanities and Social Sciences* 9 (6): 290–297. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.hss.20210906.20>
- Alsharaydeh, E., M. Alqudah, R. Lee, and S. Chan. 2022. "Challenges, Coping and Resilience in Caring for Children with Disability Among Immigrant Parents: A Mixed Methods Study." *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 79 (6): 2360–2377. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.15551>
- Amnesty International. 2023. "Afghanistan on 20000000 Naisen Vankila." <https://www.amnesty.fi/afghanistan-on-20000-000-naisen-vankila/>.
- Anis, M. 2008. *Sosiaalityö Ja Maahanmuuttajat. Lastensuojelun Ammattilaisten Ja Asiakkaiden Vuorovaikutus Ja Tulkinnat*, UTUPub. <https://www.utupub.fi/handle/10024/35938>.
- Anis, M., and K. Turtiainen. 2021. "Social Workers' Reflections on Forced Migration and Cultural Diversity—Towards Anti-Oppressive Expertise in Child and Family Social Work." *Social Sciences* 10 (3): 79. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10030079>
- Atasoy, R., and C. Sevim. 2018. "Evaluation of Coping Strategies with Stress of Parents Who Have Mentally Disabled Children in Northern." *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 6 (6): 1129–1140. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2018.060601>

- Beiser, M., F. Hou, I. Hyman, and M. Tousignant. 2010. "Poverty, Family Process, and the Mental Health of Immigrant Children in Canada." *American Journal of Public Health* 100 (2): 288–295. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2009.167684>
- Braun, V., and V. Clarke. 2006. "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology." *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 (2): 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brinkmann, S., and S. Kvale. 2015. *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Cáceres-Titos, M. J., E. B. García-Navarro, and M. da Silva Barreto. 2025. "Migratory Experience as a Factor of Vulnerability: Navigating Loss, Gratitude, and Meaning." *Healthcare* 13 (17): 2109. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare13172109>
- Castaneda, A. E. 2019. "Etnisyyden ja syntyperän mukaiset hyvinvointierot ja syrjäntä niiden taustalla." In *Suomalaisten Hyvinvointi 2018*, edited by L. Kestilä and S. Karvonen, 159–171. Helsinki: Terveystieteiden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos.
- Chandler, D., and J. Reid. 2016. "The Neoliberal Subject: Resilience, Adaptation and Vulnerability." In *The Neoliberal Subject*, edited by D. Chandler and J. Reid, 9–17. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chee, L. 2020. "'Supermaids': Hyper-Resilient Subjects in Neoliberal Migration Governance." *International Political Sociology* 14 (4): 366–382. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/olaa009>
- Chung, M. C., N. AlQarni, M. AlMazrouei, S. Al Muhairi, M. Shakra, B. Mitchell, S. Al Mazrouei, and S. Al Hashimi. 2018. "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Psychiatric Co-Morbidity Among Syrian Refugees of Different Ages: The Role of Trauma Centrality." *Psychiatric Quarterly* 89 (4): 909–921. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s1126-018-9586-3>
- Eruyar, S., J. Maltby, and P. Vostanis. 2018. "Mental Health Problems of Syrian Refugee Children: The Role of Parental Factors." *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* 27 (4): 401–409. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-017-1101-0>
- Fang, C. J., N. Tong, R. J. Villa, A. M. Flores, E. Lim, and A. Tu. 2021. "Adult Attachment, Stress-Coping, and Resilience in First-Generation Immigrants in the United States." *The British Journal of Occupational Therapy* 85 (5): 332–340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03080226211022962>
- Farahani, H., J. Martikainen, L. Golamrej Eliasi, M. Tavakol, and T. Toikko. 2024. "Lay Perceptions of Mental Health Among Afghan Forced Migrants Residing in Finland." *Social Work in Mental Health* 22 (5): 645–674. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332985.2024.2357357>
- Farahani, H., M. Nekouei Marvi Langari, L. Golamrej Eliasi, M. Tavakol, and T. Toikko. 2025. "'How Can I Trust People When They Know Exactly What My Weakness Is?' Daily Life Experiences, and Resilience Strategies of Stateless Afghans in Iran." *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*: 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2023.2199252>
- Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E. 2014. "Gender and Forced Migration." In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee & Forced Migration Studies*, edited by E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, G. Loescher, K. Long, and N. Sigona, 395–408. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ford-Paz, R. E., C. D. Santiago, C. A. Coyne, C. Rivera, S. Guo, D. Rusch, N. St. Jean, A. Hilado, and C. Cicchetti. 2020. "You're Not Alone: A Public Health Response to Immigrant/Refugee Distress in the Current Sociopolitical Context." *Psychological Services* 17 (S1): 128–138. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000381>
- Fylkesnes, M. K., A. C. Iversen, and L. Nygren. 2018. "Negotiating Deficiency: Exploring Ethnic Minority Parents' Narratives About Encountering Child Welfare Services in Norway." *Child & Family Social Work* 23 (2): 196–203. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12400>
- Gobo, G. 2008. *Doing Ethnography*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Golamrej Eliasi, L., H. Farahani, M. Anis, and A. Kaittila. 2024. "Existing and Desired Child and Family Services from Afghan Women's Point of View in Finland." *Children & Youth Services Review* 166:107946. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.107946>
- Goodman, R. D., C. K. Vesely, B. Letiecq, and C. L. Cleaveland. 2017. "Trauma and Resilience Among Refugee and Undocumented Immigrant Women." *Journal of Counseling and Development* 95 (3): 309–321. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12145>
- Goundar, P. R. 2025. "Researcher Positionality: Ways to Include It in a Qualitative Research Design." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069251321251>
- Grønseth, A. S., and R. Ø. Thorshaug. 2022. "Struggling for Home Where Home Is Not Meant to Be." *Focaal* 2022 (92): 15–30. <https://doi.org/10.3167/fcl.2022.920102>
- Hiitola, J., and J. Vuori. 2018. "Afghanistanilaisten pakkomuuttajien arjen kansalaisuus ja toiminnan mahdollisuudet." *Janus* 26 (4): 326–342. <https://doi.org/10.30668/janus.76452>
- Hynes, P. 2021. *Introducing Forced Migration*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315165929>.
- International Organization for Migration. 2019. "International Migration Law: Glossary on Migration."
- Jervelund, S. S., A. Krasnik, and A.-N. Rosenkranz de Lasson. 2020. *Coming of in Exile. Health and Socio-Economic Inequalities in Young Refugees in the Nordic Welfare Societies*. Copenhagen: University: University of Copenhagen. <https://cage.ku.dk/>.

- Joseph, J. 2013. "Resilience as Embedded Neoliberalism: A Governmentality Approach." *Resilience* 1 (1): 38–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21693293.2013.765741>
- Käkelä, E. 2019. "Narratives of Power and Powerlessness: Cultural Competence in Social Work with Asylum Seekers and Refugees." *European Journal of Social Work* 23 (3): 425–436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2019.1693337>
- Kallioma-Puha, L. 2020. "Migrants' Access to Social Protection in Finland." In *Migration and Social Protection in Europe and Beyond (Volume 1)*. IMISCOE Research Series, edited by JM. Lafleur and D. Vintila, 149–164. Cham: Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-51241-5\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-51241-5_10)
- Karimi, Z. 2020. "Khanevadehye Mohtaram. Iranian Migrant Parents Struggling for Respectability." In *Family Life in Transition: Borders, Transnational Mobility, and Welfare Society in Nordic Countries*, edited by J. Hiitola, K. Turtiainen, S. Gruber, and M. Tiilikainen, 202–214. Oxon: Routledge.
- Kaya, A., and C. Bee. 2024. "Introduction: Social Movement and Radicalisation in Europe." *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 32 (3): 599–609. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2024.2332311>
- Kiesepää, V., R. Garcia Velázquez, T. Vehko, and H. Kuusio. 2022. "Satisfaction with Access to Health Services among Foreign-Born Population in Finland: A Survey-Based Study." *BMC Health Services Research* 22 (781). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-022-08155-3>
- Kivijärvi, A., and M. Myllylä. 2022. "Layered Confinement in Reception Centers—A Study of Asylum seekers' Experiences in Finland." *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 22 (4): 804–817. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2022.2132341>
- Kokkonen, L. 2018. "Pakolaisten sosiaalinen tuki viranomaiskohtamisissa." In *Maahanmuutto, Palvelut Ja Hyvinvointi. Kohtamisissa Kehittyviä Käytäntöjä*, edited by J. Hiitola, M. Anis, and K. Turtiainen, 98–123. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Kraav, S. L., N. Joubert, M. Anis, J. Anand, M. Malin, M. Karukivi, and T. Tolmunen. 2023. "Scoping Review on Mental Health and Child Protective Services of Migrated and Refugee Children and Youth." *Psychiatra Fennica* 54 (2023): 14–33. [https://www.psykiatriantutkimussaatio.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Psychiatria\\_Fennica-2023-Kraav.pdf](https://www.psykiatriantutkimussaatio.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Psychiatria_Fennica-2023-Kraav.pdf).
- Kvarme, L., E. Früh, and H. Lidén. 2017. "How Do Immigrant Parents of Children with Complex Health Needs Manage to Cope in Their Daily Lives?" *Child & Family Social Work* 22 (4): 1399–1406. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12358>
- Laban, C. J., H. B. P. E. Gernaat, I. H. Komproe, B. A. Schreuders, and J. T. V. M. De Jong. 2004. "Impact of a Long Asylum Procedure on the Prevalence of Psychiatric Disorders in Iraqi Asylum Seekers in the Netherlands." *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 192 (12): 843–851. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.nmd.0000146739.26187.15>
- Leitzinger, A. 2008. *Ulkomaalaiset Suomessa 1812–1972*. Helsinki: East-West Books Helsinki.
- Mason, J. 2002. *Qualitative Researching*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.
- Masoud, A., T. Kurki, K. Brunila, and G. Holm. 2023. "Racialised Integration: Arabic-Speaking Refugees and Immigrants' Experiences on the Paradoxes of Integration." *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 13 (1): 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.543>
- Monsutti, A., and B. Balci. 2014. "Forced Migration in Broader Central Asia." In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee & Forced Migration Studies*, edited by E. Fiddian-Qasmiyer, G. Loescher, K. Long, and N. Sigona, 599–612. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ndomo, Q. L., and N. Lillie. 2023. "Resistance Is Useless! (And So Are Resilience and Reworking): Migrants in the Finnish Labour Market." In *Immigrant and Asylum Seekers Labour Market Integration upon Arrival: NowHereLand*, edited by J. Kujala, P. Tynkkynen, and J. Oinas, 161–184. Switzerland: Springer.
- Nordberg, C. 2015. "Invisibilised Visions: Migrant Mothers and the Recordering of Citizenship in a Nordic Welfare State Context Nordic." *Journal of Migration Research* 5 (2): 67–74. <https://doi.org/10.1515/njmr-2015-0011>
- Official Statistics of Finland: Population structure (e-publication). Helsinki: Statistics Finland 2022 *Access Method: Population 31.12 by Origin, Background Country, Language, Year, Age, Sex and Information*. Helsinki PxWeb (stat.fi)
- Rask, S., I. T. Elo, S. Koskinen, E. Lilja, P. Koponen, and A. E. Castaneda. 2018. "The Association Between Discrimination and Health: Findings on Russian, Somali and Kurdish Origin Populations in Finland." *European Journal of Public Health* 28 (5): 898–903. <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/cky100>
- Roer-Strier, D. 1997. "In the Mind of the Beholder: Evaluation of Coping Styles of Immigrant Parents." *International Migration* 35 (2): 271–288. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2435.00013>
- Shavaki, M., T. Harandi, A. Pourabbasi, and M. Rahimzadeh. 2018. "Coping Strategies in Iranian Mothers of Children with Type 1 Diabetes." *Journal of Diabetes & Metabolic Disorders* 17 (2): 137–142. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40200-018-0352-8>
- Silove, D., Z. Steel, P. McGorry, and P. Mohan. 2007. "Trauma Exposure, Postmigration Stressors, and Symptoms of Anxiety, Depression and Post-Traumatic Stress in Tamil Asylum Seekers: Comparison with Refugees and Immigrants." *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* 97 (3): 175–181. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0447.1998.tb09984.x>
- Skivenes, M., T. Pösö, K. Križ, and R. Barn. 2015. *Child Welfare Systems and Migrant Children: A Cross Country Study of Policies and Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Skogberg, N., K.-L. Mustonen, P. Koponen, P. Tiittala, E. Lilja, A. A. Haji Omar, O. Snellman, and A. E. Castaneda. 2019. *Turvapaikanhakijoiden Terveys ja Hyvinvointi. Tutkims Suomeen Vuonna 2018 Tulleista Turvapaikanhakijoista*. Helsinki: terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos. <https://www.julkari.fi/handle/10024/138298>.
- Smith, J. S., A. Krasnik, and A.-K. Rosenkrantz de Lasson. 2020. *Coming of Age in Exile - Health and Socio-Economic Inequalities in Young Refugees in the Nordic Welfare Societies*. Denmark: Department of Public Health, University of Copenhagen.
- Sudarji, S., H. Panggabean, and R. Marta. 2022. "Challenges of the Sandwich Generation: Stress and Coping Strategy of the Multigenerational Care." *Indigenous Journal Ilmiah Psikologi* 7 (3): 263–275. <https://doi.org/10.23917/indigenous.v7i3.19433>
- Sundbäck, E. 2024. "Exploring Sensemaking of Trust Through the Lens of Time: Finnish Welfare Professionals' Perspectives on Institutional Encounters with Forced Migrants in the Neoliberal Welfare State." *Time & Society* 33 (4): 373–394. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X241255869>
- Tiirinki, H., J. Sulander, T. Sinervo, S. Halme, and I. Keskimäki. 2022. "Integrating Health and Social Services in Finland: Regional Approaches and Governance Models." *International Journal of Integrated Care* 22 (4): 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.5334/ijic.5982>
- Tinghög, P., A. Malm, C. Arwidson, E. Sigvardsdotter, A. Lundin, and F. Saboonchi. 2017. "Prevalence of Mental Ill Health, Traumas and Post Migration Stress Among Refugees from Syria Resettled in Sweden After 2011: A Population-Based Survey." *BMJ Open* 7:e018899. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2017-018899>
- Turtiainen, K., and M. Anis. 2024. "Social Worker's Perceptions on Structural Challenges for Minorities' Social Care." In *Decolonising Social Work in Finland. Racialisation and Practices of Care*, edited by K. Clarke, L. Lee-Oliver, and S. Ranta-Tyrkkö, 105–124. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Voolma, H. 2018. "I Must Be Silent Because of Residency": Barriers to Escaping Domestic Violence in the Context of Insecure Immigration Status in England and Sweden." *Violence Against Women* 24 (15): 1830–1850. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801218755974>
- Woodrome, S. E., K. O. Yeates, H. G. Taylor, J. Rusin, B. Bangert, A. Dietrich, K. Nuss, and M. Wright. 2011. "Coping Strategies as a Predictor of Post-Concussive Symptoms in Children with Mild Traumatic Brain Injury versus Mild Orthopaedic Injury." *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society* 17 (2): 317–326. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1355617710001700>
- Yakhnich, L. 2008. "Immigration as a Multiple-Stressor Situation: Stress and Coping Among Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union in Israel." *International Journal of Stress Management* 15 (3): 252–268. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013002>