



Post Migration: A Conceptual Continuum

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ABSTRACT

Living in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) world, the unprecedented pace of change and confusion has the potential to create conflicts and unintended consequences. Consistent global tensions potentially modify foreign relations, and political polarization exposes deep cracks within nations. Existing conceptual and theoretical academic work on the topic of 'migration' majorly focuses on either hosts' or migrants' perspectives. Recognizing the necessity of bringing the two perspectives together, this paper focuses on identifying and discussing the enhancing factors and challenges faced by both immigrants and the host community in the process of migration. This paper attempts to discuss the push (challenges) and pull (protective) factors rooted in the process, space, and discourse of migration in a single frame by presenting it in a conceptual continuum. We also discuss how this model is different from the existing push and pull factor theory on the same topic.

Keywords: Discriminatory socio-political events; Host community; Immigrants; Life Satisfaction; Migration.

POST MIGRATION: A CONCEPTUAL CONTINUUM

“Migration is an expression of the human aspiration for dignity, safety, and a better future. It is part of the social fabric, part of our very make-up as a human family.”

–Ban Ki-Moon, 2013

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2019) estimated that there are 272 million foreign migrants worldwide. International migrants make up 3.5 percent of the world’s population (UN DESA | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2019). It was seen that the socio-economic reasons for such relocations were to pursue a job or economic opportunity, to live with family, or go to school. Other reasons for migration are conflict, persecution, extremism, or human rights violations, which are more socio-political in nature (World Bank, 2019).

Though there is no universal definition of migration, the United Nations Migration Agency defines migrants as people who move intranationally or internationally from their place of birth or habitual place of residence, voluntarily or involuntarily, irrespective of their legal status, cause of movement, and length of stay (United Nations [UN], 2022). Significant socio-economic and political changes globally have led people into a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex & Ambiguous (VUCA) world (Lawrence, 2013). The demands of the VUCA world have accelerated both intranational and international migration, and created a need for critically analyzing migration beyond mere mobility, including its psychological, economical, and sociological implications within host environments. Multiple texts on international migration (Castles, 2004; Delgado Wise et al., 2013) portray it as a political tool, undermining all of its benefits. Although there are instances of intense hostility and Xenophobia towards migrants, along with violence, systematic persecution, and marginalization; the discourse of shared space and harmony also necessitates exploration. In his book "What is Literature," Sartre (1988) claims that it is the universal responsibility of both governments and ordinary people to take a stand amid political and humanitarian conflicts and that legal limits should not constrain the security and welfare of human beings. The current paper critically evaluates the existing limitations as well as opportunities in a shared space and infrastructure.

Depending upon the physical environment in which people migrate, the social, cultural, and political contexts may vary (Cohen & Kassan, 2018). As a result, there are a handful of benefits and challenges of migration for both the host community and immigrants. The majority of the studies (Brandon, 2008; Dietrich-Ragon, 2017; Martinez-Callaghan & Gil-Lacruz,

2017) have looked at the elements that help or restrict migration either from the perspective of the immigrant population or the host community. This paper aims to explore the process, space, and discourse of migration from the perspectives of both immigrants and the host population in the post-migration context. This paper uses concepts of push and pull factors within the host community to explain a post-migration continuum, contrary to the established theorization of push factors at the origin of migration and pull factors at the destination.

Research Questions

1. What is the pattern of the functionality of push and pull factors within host societies in shaping the post-migration experiences of migrants and host communities?
2. What are the ways in which the post-migration settlement process gets enhanced or weakened?
3. In what ways do shared spaces, interactions between migrant and host communities, and socio-political contexts mediate shifts toward harmonious or conflicting post-migration discourse?

Primary Arguments

- The push (challenges) and pull (protective factors) rooted in post-migration discourse present themselves on a continuum.
- Major challenging and protective factors enhance and weaken the post-migration settlement process.
- The creation and nurturance of a ‘shared space’ has a pivotal role in movement along the continuum of post-migration towards the harmonious end.
- Discriminatory socio-political events have a pivotal role in movement along the post-migration continuum towards the conflicting end.

MIGRATION: CONSTRUCT, PROCESS, AND DISCOURSE

Migration, as a construct and a process, has been debated in academia for the last few decades. Such deliberations discussed varied topics, extending from the characteristics of migrants to the host population. According to the American Psychological Association (2022), 100 million individuals have migrated to different countries solely for reasons like socio-political conflict, poverty, and the desire for a better life. Migration alters an immigrant's physical location, simultaneously carrying profound socio-economic, cultural, and psychological impacts.

Difference from the existing theory of Push and Pull factors:

Push and Pull theory by Everett Spurgeon Lee (1966) is a path breaking theory on migration which throws light upon the factors that explain the volume of migration between the origin and destination. Lee termed these factors as push and pull factors of migration. According to this theory push factors encourage out-migration and it exists at the point of origin; while pull factors exist at the host country or destination point and it attracts migrants. The push and pull factors of Lee represented the cause of migration. This model very clearly explains the volume and nature of migration flows based on disparities between origin and destination contexts.

This paper presents post-migration settling experience in a continuum. Unlike Lee’s theory, both the push and pull factors of our model discuss the factors lying within the host country and explain the factors from both migrants and host perspectives. Here the push and pull factors are representatives of ‘challenges’ and ‘supportive’ factors functioning within the host country, in the post-migration space. Rather than focusing exclusively on push factors rooted in the place of emigration or on pull factors operating at the destination of migration, this model integrates both migrant and host community perspectives to explain post-migration processes and settlement outcomes at the destination. The primary focus of this continuum model is to explain the process of cohabitation of host and migrants at the destination. It looks at how those factors inherent to the host society—such as resource availability, xenophobia, social policies, and societal attitudes— act either as enablers (pull factors) or inhibitors (push factors) of harmonious migration experience. This model has the potential to serve as the explanation of the creation and perpetuation or alteration of the post-migration discourse.

Table 1 contrasts the key distinctions between Lee’s Push–Pull Theory of Migration and the proposed Post-Migration Conceptual Continuum Model, highlighting the novel conceptual contribution of the proposed model.

Table 1
Comparison of Lee’s Push–Pull Theory and the Post-Migration Conceptual Continuum Mode

| Element | Lee’s Push-Pull Theory | Conceptual Continuum Model |
|----------------|--|--|
| Primary Focus | Decision-making process for migration based on origin and destination factors. | Dynamics in the host society post-migration. |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Push Factors | Exist at the country of origin; these include poverty, conflict, lack of opportunity, etc. | Emerging from the host society; covering stereotypes, lack of resources, xenophobia. |
| Pull Factors | Exist at the destination/host country; these include better job opportunities, safety, etc. | Contain hospitality, cultural acceptance and social responsibility of the host society. |
| Primary contributors considered | Migrants weighing decisions relative to benefits and hurdles available at the origin and the destination. | Migrants and host communities are reciprocal contributors to post-migration outcomes |
| Significance of the contexts involved | Primarily between origin and destination; the main emphasis is on determinants of migration flow. | Host-specific; covers the sociocultural, political and economic dynamics of the host society |
| Temporal frame | Pre-migration (decision to migrate). | Post-migration (integration and relations in the host society) |
| Theoretical Application | Volume of migration, patterns, and flows. | Post-migration discourse and its movement towards concord or conflict. |

NOVELTY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF MODEL

While Lee's push and pull theory of migration has been crucial in migration studies, its attention is still on the decision-making process during migration, not on the post-migration dynamics within the host society.

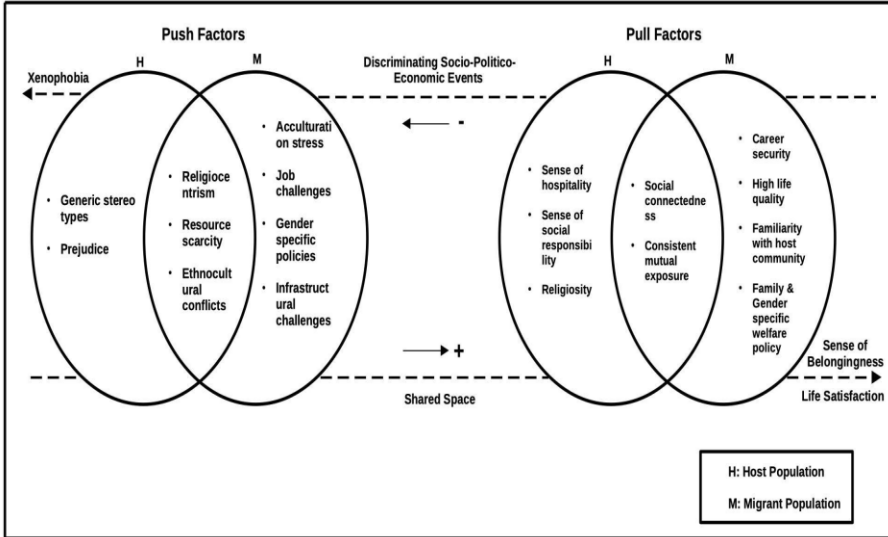
In contrast, the Conceptual Continuum Model presented here shifts the attention to the host society. It emanates from the understanding that conceptualization of the migration experience is incomplete without an evaluation of the post-migration space dynamics. This model elaborates on how push and pull factors work within a host context, taking their role in shaping harmonious or conflictual post-migration discourses into account.

Contrasting this model with Lee's, the former views push and pull factors as exclusively associated with origin and destination, focusing primarily on migrants. By situating post-migration space and experience

within a continuum, the current model allows for a bidirectional understanding of how interactions between migrants and hosts evolve over time, thus shaping the migration experience.

This distinction underlines the necessity of extending the theoretical scope of migration research to encompass these nuanced relational dynamics in post-migration context.

Figure 1
Conceptual Continuum Model of Post-Migration



Push Factors: Migrant and Host Community

As presented in figure 1, migration, as a construct and a process, can be conceptualized on a continuum where harmonious and conflicted migration discourses are on opposite ends. Both the migrant and the host communities contribute to the push and pull factors, leading to the two opposite ends; and at times the push and pull factors tend to overlap with each other.

Analysis of the challenges related to migration indicates that factors like generic stereotypes and prejudice towards migrants are significant challenges rooted in the host community, which inhibits them from promoting migration and smooth transitions (Domalewska, 2016). On the other hand, acculturation stress, gender, and job challenges are some significant push factors faced by the migrant community (Dietrich-Ragon, 2017; Miao & Xiao, 2020; Salami et al., 2019). As presented in the continuum model, there

are some common or overlapping push factors for both communities. These are usually socio-political in nature, with the possibility of directly or indirectly impacting economic, cultural, and psychological spaces. Factors like religiocentrism, resource scarcity, and ethnocultural conflicts (Guschina, Titova, & Frolova, 2016; Salami et al., 2019; Settler, 2017) constitute those dimensions. These challenges cumulatively restrict migration through reinforcement of existing xenophobic attitudes and associated discriminative behavior.

Push Factors Rooted in Host Community

Generic stereotypes and prejudice are the two main inhibitors rooted in the host community that fuels multiple migration challenges. Socio-cognitive psychological constructs like stereotypical belief systems, colored with perceptions like migration is a security threat to the host country or it increases corruption, are frequently associated with increased stigma towards migration. Such notions, coupled with tendencies of over-generalization of crimes committed by migrant communities (Bologna Pavlik et al., 2019; Forrester et al., 2019; Ullah et al., 2020), create a generic disdain towards migration, both as a construct and as a discourse. The unsubstantial and stereotypical nature of such belief systems is corroborated by multiple research findings, which reveal a lack of association between immigration and terrorism, rendering public worry futile (Forrester et al., 2019).

Push Factors Linked to Migrant Communities

Acculturation stress, work obstacles, gender-specific policies, and infrastructural challenges are among the inhibitors linked to migrant communities. Academic research shows that hypertension, shorter duration spent in the host community, language barriers, and low attachment levels result in high acculturation stress (Fenta et al., 2004; Kusuma et al., 2009; Salami et al., 2019). These studies indicate that acculturation stress is higher among first and second-generation immigrants than third-generation immigrants, as they face more lifestyle threats, pre-immigration trauma, and post-immigration stress resulting from the transitional process (Fenta et al., 2004; Kusuma et al., 2009). Delving into the job-related inhibiting factors that migrants encounter, research indicates the pivotal role of long working hours, adverse xenophobic work environment, low pay, and lack of stability (Salami et al., 2019; Singh, 2015). Dietrich-Ragon (2017) illustrates the contributory role of gender-specific infrastructural and welfare policies as push factors, like men being least welcomed and accommodated as migrants.

Overlapping Push Factors

Religiocentrism, resource scarcity, and ethnocultural conflicts are the overlapping inhibitors for both the host and immigrant communities. Multiple studies (Adjai & Lazaridis, 2013; da Silva Rebelo et al., 2020; Weichselbaumer, 2016) pointed out that people from certain religions and cultures face more discrimination than others in the discourse of migration.

These research studies unveil the critical and socio-political nature of the discourse, where Muslim, Black, and Minority migrants are in a more vulnerable space than other immigrants. Bohman & Hjerm (2014) explained how migrants are more accepted when they follow the religion followed by the majority of the host country.

Studies which critically evaluated the discourse on migration (Fajth et al., 2019; Guschina et al., 2016) revealed that a scarcity of resources in the host society may function as a major determinant of xenophobic attitudes towards immigrants, leading to augmentation in social conflicts. These studies analyzed the social consequences of such scarcity, like high proportion of illegal employment, economic rivalry, and competition over available resources between host and immigrant groups.

Reuveny (2007) argued that ethno-religious tensions can function as as major push factor in migration discourse, which may result in frequent conflicts and violence. Even Host communities with high ethnic tolerance have been seen to be reluctant over accepting immigrants of other ethnic groups in close interpersonal relationships (Kolesnik et al., 2016).

Pull factors: Migrant and Host Community

Protective/enhancing factors are primarily those determinants that make the process of migration easier and smoother, for both immigrants and hosts. As presented in figure 1, such pull factors on the host community's part are rooted in a cultural discourse that promotes a sense of hospitality, social responsibility, and religiosity. Migrating communities identify and capitalize on protective factors like career security, better life quality, familiarity with the host country, family and gender-specific welfare policies (Brandon, 2008; Dietrich-Ragon, 2017; Gunasekara et al., 2014; Martinez-Callaghan & Gil-Lacruz, 2017; Kitchen et al., 2015; Ni et al., 2017; Settler, 2017).

In both migrant and host communities, social connectedness and consistent mutual exposure are strong overlapping protective factors in smoothening the migration process (Martinez-Callaghan & Gil-Lacruz, 2017; Yoon et al., 2008). These protecting factors have the socio-psychological relevance of catalyzing migration by proliferating a sense of belongingness and life satisfaction among migrants (Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015; Brandon, 2008;

Dietrich-Ragon, 2017; Gunasekara et al., 2014; Hashemi et al., 2021; Kitchen et al., 2015; Martinez-Callaghan & Gil-Lacruz, 2017; Yoon et al., 2008; Yuen & Leung, 2019).

Pull Factors Linked to Host Community

The host community's sense of hospitality, social responsibility, and religiosity are the significant interconnected protective factors promoting migration. Religion plays a vital role in shaping the citizens' social responsibility, leading to unconditional hospitality towards the migrants. Migratory theologies are primarily based on models of the church or religious groups characterized by unity, oneness, a focus on shared belief, and, sometimes, empathy (Settler, 2017).

Theologies of migration attempt to invoke a wide range of themes, including hospitality (Groody & Campese, 2008), the church as host/welcoming the stranger (Cruz, 2010), the church as a suffering body (Rivera-Pagán, 2012), and cynosure of inclusion and integration. Hospitality studies emphasize the well-being of the migrants as the responsibility of the host community. Such studies also indicate a direct and positive correlation between social responsibility and hospitality towards migrants (Settler, 2017).

Thus, a hospitable religious structure that reinforces a culture of social responsibility shapes a non-combative space for the development of a third common space and smooth post migration discourse.

Pull Factors Linked to Migrant Community

Opportunities for career security and maintenance of high-quality life, gradual familiarity with the host country, family welfare policies, and gender-specific infrastructural and welfare policies are the major protective factors for the migrant communities. A stable full-time job with a good income and positive worksite experience constitutes career security (Kitchen et al., 2015; Martinez-Callaghan & Gil-Lacruz, 2017). Interest in the host country, expertise in the local language, time spent in the country, and having a local partner helps in increasing familiarity with the host country (Martinez-Callaghan & Gil-Lacruz, 2017). The longer time one spends in the host country, the more familiar one becomes, which functions as a protective factor (Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015; Brandon, 2008; Gunasekara et al., 2014; Kitchen et al., 2015; Martinez-Callaghan & Gil-Lacruz, 2017).

Immigrants who had been in the country for less than five years had a much lower sense of belonging (Kitchen et al., 2015). Above-average education, skills, and a good income can yield good quality of life for immigrants in host countries (Gunasekara et al., 2014). Ni et al. (2017)

showed that higher life satisfaction was observed in married migrants who also owned a home. They highlighted the importance of parental warmth in identity integration by recognizing adolescents with strong parental attachment to be having a better psychological adjustment and a greater sense of hope in the host nation.

Overlapping Pull Factors

Yoon et al. (2008) discussed how social connectedness and consistent mutual exposure to each other's communities and cultures are overlapping protective factors for migrants and host communities. Increased contacts, development of shared space, and personal relationships increase the sense of belongingness of migrants. They also help migrating populations in the process of acculturation and subjective well-being. High social connectedness with the mainstream has been found to be related to less perceived stress, less racial discrimination, and fewer post-traumatic stress symptoms (Wei et al., 2012) among migrants. For host communities, connecting with the migrant community helps them reduce the prejudice and stereotypes associated with migrants. This is corroborated by the model of the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) which proposes that interactions among individuals belonging to diverse groups can reduce intergroup prejudice.

Movement Along the Continuum

The present paper conceptualized post migration discourse as a continuum (Figure 1), emphasizing its flexibility and the possibility of bi-directional movement along the continuum. The presence of specific systemic conditions or organic occurrences mediates the shift towards either side of the continuum. The tendency to shift along the continuum towards the sense of belongingness and life satisfaction is mediated by the systemic pull factors and the creation and nurturance of a shared space. On the other hand, the shift towards a discourse of xenophobia is mediated by socio-politico-economic discriminating events and the contributory push factors.

Migration evokes new diversities, enriching and complicating the host country's community dynamics. Due to migration movements and settlements, host countries undergo constant geopolitical, social, environmental, and technological changes (Papatzani & Knappers, 2020). Public spaces, places where people come across differences (Ye, 2016), have a significant role in shaping migration experiences. Ahmed (2000) articulated that encountering differences by knowing strangers is "a means by which the 'we' of the community is established, enforced and legitimated". Individuals interact with strangers from all backgrounds in shared public spaces such as

schools, markets, and bus stops, where basic yet incredibly delicate principles of coexistence are embedded (Ye, 2016).

These everyday encounters with diversity have received significant attention in studies on different domains. Researchers have considered this concept of shared space and coexistence a site of possibilities as well as limitations. Effects of contact with differences in public space can be explained by the ‘contact hypothesis’ (Allport, 1954), which discusses the role of increased contact in decreasing prejudice. Watson (2009) suggests that even a low level of interaction with individuals who are different from oneself, in public spaces like marketplaces, has the "potential to play a role in countering racist discourses and preconceptions about unknown others" (p. 1582). Ye (2017) argued that such shared places manifest minimal animosity or hatred toward diverse people, emphasizing their relevance in confronting the dread of unknown others. Shared space thus has the promise to mediate the enhancement of migration by strengthening interethnic coexistence.

Jolly & DiGiusto’s (2014) findings can help in arguing about the role of the ‘contact hypothesis’ as a remedy for xenophobic attitude; as it was seen that xenophobia is lowest in countries which has a large number of migrants. Discriminatory socio-politico-economic events function as mediators and reinforcers that proliferate existing attitudes of xenophobia. Multiple instances have been observed across the globe where subsequent to certain socio-political or socio-economic acts of terrorism, specific minority migrant communities have faced scapegoating, which consequently problematized the migratory discourse. Doebler (2014) articulated how such events have the potential to negatively alter migrant identities in host countries.

From a poststructuralist viewpoint (Gontijo et al., 2020), a contributory component facilitating the shift towards this end of the continuum could be the existing ‘Self-versus-Other’ dilemma: a binary, mutual, and socially constructed division in which one perceives oneself at the expense of how one perceives the ‘Other’. This dilemma, coupled with existing hierarchical power distribution in society, expedites the movement along the conceptual continuum toward the xenophobic end.

SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTEXTUAL VARIABLES

Socio-political climate, economic conditions, and cultural norms are few significant contextual factors mediating between post-migration outcomes and the relative strength and direction of push and pull factors along with their interaction with systemic and interpersonal dynamics in the host society.

Socio-Political Climate- Host societies that experience political stability along with strong legal protection of migrants are more likely to provide smooth experiences of migration. Conversely, politically polarized or nationalistic environments often amplify xenophobia and discrimination, pushing the experience toward conflict (Doebler, 2014). For example, discriminatory policies or rhetoric targeting migrants can reinforce stereotypes and prejudice, exacerbating tensions.

Economic Conditions- In times of economic prosperity, host societies may exhibit greater tolerance and willingness to integrate migrants, as resource competition is less pronounced. Economic downturns can enhance perceptions of migrants as competitors for scarce jobs and social services and strengthen conflictual forces in discourses of post-migration (Fajth et al., 2019).

Cultural Norms and Values- Cultures having had experience with pluralism and inclusion may be more likely to include the stranger and reduce tensions between the host and the migrants (Bohman & Hjerm, 2014). Cultures with strong cultural norms or a history of practices which have excluded others may resist integration, further social fragmentation. Contextual variables can change over time. The model can be applied iteratively to account for changes in socio-political climates, economic conditions, or cultural attitudes.

Implications for Future Research and Practice

The conceptual continuum model proposes a framework for expanding migration research beyond pre-migration factors to experimentally explore post-migration dynamics within host communities. Future research may empirically test the model by converting essential push factors (e.g., perceived discrimination, xenophobia, acculturation stress, resource competition) and pull factors (e.g., social connectedness, institutional support, hospitality, perceived fairness) into quantifiable metrics. Longitudinal and comparative study methods will be especially beneficial for investigating movement along the continuum and evaluating how changes in socio-political climate, economic conditions, or policy settings leave an impact on post-migration experiences over time.

The bi-directional structure of the model promotes multi-perspectival research that incorporates the perspectives of both migrant and host communities. The model accommodates mixed-methods approaches, integrating quantitative mapping of structural and attitudinal elements with qualitative analyses that capture lived experiences of shared spaces, discrimination, and belongingness enabling researchers to analyse how

reciprocal attitudes influence post-migration discourse. Intervention-based research may further evaluate the model by determining whether activities like community interaction programs, inclusive public spaces, countering misinformation or anti-discrimination policies contribute movement towards the harmonious post migration outcomes.

Implications for Policy and Community Practice

The model emphasizes that post-migration outcomes are not exclusively dictated by migrant attributes but collaboratively generated within host societies. Therefore, integration policies should consider both structural factors and social perspectives. Anti-discrimination initiatives, equitable access to housing and employment, and regulations against hate speech can serve as systemic pull factors that diminish the probability of conflictual post-migration outcomes.

At the community level, the model underlines the significance of shared spaces and everyday interactions in influencing migration discourse. Institutions such as educational spaces, workplaces, religious spaces, and local marketplaces can be intentionally endorsed as environments favourable to positive intergroup interactions, in alignment with the contact hypothesis. Community efforts that promote conversation, cultural exchange, and collective engagement may enhance social connectedness and reduce mutual bias.

For practitioners working with migrant communities, the model advocates to go beyond interventions centered solely on individual adaptation and instead consider relational and contextual factors. Programs that enhance migrants' understanding of host society dynamics while including host societies in shared responsibilities are more likely to promote a sense of belongingness and life satisfaction. The model offers a practical framework for formulating evidence-based policies and community activities that foster enduring coexistence between migrant and host communities

CONCLUSION

This paper presents a conceptual continuum model of post-migration discourse where there is a possibility of bidirectional movement along the experiential continuum, supported or inhibited by specific contributory factors. The model presents, sense of belongingness and life satisfaction as products of harmonious post-migration discourse at one end of the continuum; whereas xenophobia is presented at the other pole as product of a conflicted post-migration discourse. The primary argument put forth in the paper remains that with facilitating factors and processes a gradual movement

towards the harmonious end is possible, whereas a similar movement is plausible towards the other end with contributions of challenging factors and processes. The presented model argues that there is no absolute position on the continuum and advocates that there is an imminent need for developing and reinforcing nurturing factors to shape a harmonious migration discourse worldwide.

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