

**LIVING IN THE SHADOWS:
MIGRATORY EXPERIENCES AND
COPING STRATEGIES OF
PAKISTANI IRREGULAR MIGRANTS
IN ISTANBUL**

**Doctoral Thesis
Waheed Ahmad QURESHI
Eskişehir 2024**

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DOCTORAL THESIS
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Eskişehir
Anadolu University
Institute of Graduate Studies

February 2024

JÜRİ VE ENSTİTÜ ONAYI

ÖZET

GÖLGELERDE YAŞAMAK: İSTANBUL'DA PAKİSTANLI DÜZENSİZ GÖÇMENLERİN GÖÇ DENEYİMLERİ VE BAŞA ÇIKMA STRATEJİLERİ

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Anadolu Üniversitesi, Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü, Şubat 2024

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Çalışma, İstanbul'daki düzensiz göçmenlerin hayatta kalma ve başa çıkma stratejilerini incelemekte, özellikle de hem göçmenlerin menşesinde hem de transit ülkede düzensiz göçün kolaylaştırılmasında rol oynayan bireyler ağına vurgu yapmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Pakistan'ın farklı bölgelerinden Avrupa ülkelerine düzensiz göçün kolaylaştırılmasını ve örgütlenmesini incelemektedir. Pakistan'dan gelen düzensiz göçmenlerin izlediği ağırlıklı güzergâh, İran ve Türkiye topraklarından geçmeyi gerektirmektedir. Daha sonra, üç farklı rotadan geçerek Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya doğru bir yolculuğa çıkmaktadırlar. İlk yol onları Yunanistan'a götürüyor, ardından Bulgaristan üzerinden bir sonraki geçiş geliyor. Son olarak da İtalya'nın büyüleyici kıyılarına ulaşmak için deniz yolunu tercih ediyorlar. Bu çalışmanın ampirik verileri, kartopu tekniği kullanılarak İstanbul'un çeşitli yerlerinde gerçekleştirilen nitel saha çalışmasından elde edilmiştir. Toplam 28 yarı yapılandırılmış, derinlemesine mülakat gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışma, İstanbul'a düzensiz olarak gelen ve uygun belgeleri olmadan ikamet eden katılımcıların karşılaştıkları zorlukları incelemektedir. Bu zorluklar, sağlıksız yaşam koşulları, sömürü, tutuklanma ve sınır dışı edilme endişesi, işkence tehdidi, mali kayıp potansiyeli ve insan kaçakçıları tarafından kaçırılma riski gibi bir dizi konuyu kapsamaktadır. Bu çalışma, finansal kaynakların sınır ötesi hareketine katılan karmaşık aktörler ağını incelemektedir. Bu girişimdeki başlıca aktörler uluslararası sınırlar ötesinde güçlü bağlantılara sahiptir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Düzensiz göçmenler, Hayatta kalma stratejileri, Pakistanlı düzensiz göçmenler, Göçmen kaçakçılığı, Fidyeye ve göçmen kaçırma, İstanbul

ABSTRACT

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The study examines the survival and coping strategies of irregular migrants of Pakistani origin in Istanbul, with a particular emphasis on the network of individuals involved in facilitating irregular migration both at the migrants' origin and in the transit country. This study scrutinizes the facilitation and organization of irregular migration from different regions of Pakistan to European countries via Türkiye. The predominant trajectory followed by irregular migrants originating from Pakistan entailed traversing the territories of Iran and Türkiye. Later, they embark on a journey from Türkiye to Europe, crossing three distinct routes. The initial path leads them through Greece, followed by a subsequent passage via Bulgaria. Finally, they opt for a sea passage to reach the enchanting shores of Italy. This study's empirical data is derived from qualitative fieldwork conducted in various locations within Istanbul, by employing the snowball technique. A total of 28 semi-structured, in-depth interviews were carried out. This study explores the challenges faced by the participants who are sheltered in Istanbul without proper documentation. These challenges encompass a range of issues, including unhygienic living conditions, exploitation, apprehension regarding arrest and deportation, the threat of torture, financial loss, and the risk of being abducted by human smugglers. The study also investigates the intricate web of actors that participate in the cross-border movement of financial resources. It is found that the principal actors within this enterprise possess robust connections across international borders.

Keywords: Irregular migrants, Survival strategies, Pakistani irregular migrants, Smuggling of migrants, Ransom and kidnapping of migrants, Istanbul

*“Dedicated to my beloved mother, whose prayers and sacrifices
laid the foundation for my success, though she departed to her
eternal abode before seeing the fruits of
our shared dreams.”*

ETİK İLKE VE KURALLARA UYGUNLUK BEYANNAMESİ

Bu tezin bana ait, özgün bir çalışma olduğunu; çalışmamın hazırlık, veri toplama, analiz ve bilgilerin sunumu olmak üzere tüm aşamalarında bilimsel etik ilke ve kurallara uygun davrandığımı; bu çalışma kapsamında elde edilen tüm veri ve bilgiler için kaynak gösterdiğimi ve bu kaynaklara kaynakçada yer verdiğimi; bu çalışmanın Anadolu Üniversitesi tarafından kullanılan “bilimsel intihal tespit programı”yla tarandığını ve hiçbir şekilde “intihal içermediğini” beyan ederim. Herhangi bir zamanda, çalışmamla ilgili yaptığım bu beyana aykırı bir durumun saptanması durumunda, ortaya çıkacak tüm ahlaki ve hukuki sonuçları kabul ettiğimi bildiririm.

Waheed Ahmad QURESHI

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My Ph.D. journey was not a solitary endeavour. The unwavering support, guidance, and encouragement I received from my family, mentors, friends, and colleagues made this academic pursuit possible. I owe a debt of gratitude to my research advisors, Prof. Dr. Fuat Güllüpinar, Prof. Dr. Bekir Sıddık Gür, and Prof. Dr. Zafer Çelik. Their invaluable assistance, support, and understanding were instrumental throughout my research. I am deeply appreciative of their willingness to adapt to my evolving ideas, which led to a different path than initially envisioned. Their dedication enabled me to grow and mature as a researcher. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, Vice Chancellor of the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, for his trust and confidence in me. Without his support, this journey would not have been possible to complete. I am grateful to the Yükseköğretim Kurulu (YÖK), Türkiye for providing me a generous financial support. My humble thanks go to the jury for their constructive feedback, which enhanced the quality of this dissertation.

I am indebted to the former Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Habib-ur-Rehman, Prof. Dr. Raja Nasim Akhtar, Professor Dr. Syed Dilnawaz Gardezi, and Prof. Dr. Khawaja Farooq Ahmed for their patronage, guidance, and encouragement throughout my academic and professional journey. I also pay tribute to Muhammad Yaqoob Chaudhary (late), whose inspiration propelled my academic aspirations forward. My deepest gratitude goes to my family for their kind support and understanding. Their sacrifices, particularly my wife's dedication and care, enabled me to focus on my studies. I am immensely grateful for her strength and love. I am deeply touched by the love and support of my parents. I express my sincere thanks to my father for his enduring affection and prayers. While my mother left for her eternal abode during this journey, I cherish her memory and wish she were alive to witness this milestone she always prayed for.

During the data collection phase, I received immense support from various individuals. I extend special thanks to Muhammad Haris Javed for his hospitality and assistance during my visits to Istanbul. I am thankful to Prof. Dr. Zafar Iqbal Lilla for his guidance and support in data analysis. I express my sincere gratitude to all the participants of the study for their time and cooperation. Lastly, I am profoundly grateful to all those who contributed to my Ph.D. journey. Your support has been invaluable, and I am deeply appreciative of your positive role in my academic success.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJK	Azad Jammu and Kashmir
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CIMRAD	Centre for International Migration, Remittances and Diaspora
DGMM	Directorate General of Migration Management
EU	European Union
EURODAC	European Dactyloscopy
EUROPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
EUROSUR	European Union Border Surveillance System
FIA	Federal Investigation Agency
FRONTEX	European Border and Coastguard Agency of the European Union
GB	Gilgit Baltistan
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy and Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migrants
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
MoPHRD	Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development
SOM	Smuggling of Migrants
SRPEC	Scientific Research and Publication Ethic Committee
TÜİK	Turkish Statistical Institute
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

CHAPTER-I

1. INTRODUCTION

“One is not born a migrant but becomes one, Thomas Nail.” The phenomenon of migration¹ is a dynamic social process (Massey et al. 1990, p. 7) that has always persisted among the constant features of human history. In other words, it can be said that *‘human history is the history of human migration’* (Khondker, 2017, p. 174). It starts with the mobility of individuals from their villages to towns or from one region to another in their own country. In contrast to internal mobility, when migrants opt to move between the countries of their origin and continents, international migration occurs (Castles, 2000). Essentially, international migration entails crossing borders that separate one nation-state from another (Lüthi, 2013) and does not belong to any geographical or specific state. It does not occur uniformly across the globe, but as Sachs, (2016) notes, it mostly happens in the corridor between lower-income and higher-income nations. Foreseeing the global scenario, Nail (2015) claimed that “twenty-first century will be the century of migrant,” in which remarkable human mobility is occurred so far (UNICEF, 2021).

Pakistan, a British colony in the past, has a long migration history. The people from the sub-continent emigrated to European countries, especially United Kingdom, as economic and labour migrants. After the independence in 1947, Many Pakistanis migrated to the United Kingdom (UK) to meet the demand for the post-war labour force there. Before the early 1970s, it was feasible to travel by road from Pakistan to Europe via Afghanistan or Iran, across the Middle East and Türkiye, without encountering significant border restrictions, by following the historical silk routes. Pakistan’s western and northern borders remained secure and peaceful. The oil boom had not yet happened, and Türkiye was almost European. For young males, this expanded their perspectives while offering an economic justification for immigration: to provide a more stable future for their families. At that time, the British government encouraged Commonwealth countries’ citizens to migrate to save the factories (Amjad, 2017). In 1967, the British government extended an invitation to thousands of Pakistanis to live in the United Kingdom. These Pakistanis were employed as domestic servants, nurses, and workers in

¹Migration is a complex and multifaceted social phenomenon, and there has been an ongoing debate surrounding terminology. There have been various terms and definitions suggested to describe this phenomenon: irregular, illegal, undocumented, clandestine, unauthorised, informal, unregistered, sans papier, and so on (Vasta, 2011; Baldwin-Edwards & Kraler, 2009; Triandafyllidou, 2009).

textile mills in the United Kingdom with the purpose of solving the labour shortages that existed in health departments and textile mills in the aftermath of the Second World War (Henry, 1985). Many young men of working age emigrated to the United Kingdom in search of economic opportunity. Over ninety-five percent of migrants belonged to rural areas, such as some villages of Mirpur Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The remaining five percent came from other cities like Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, Gujrat, Jhelum, Rawalpindi, and Lyallpur (Dahya, 1973, p. 244).

Being labour exporting country, Pakistan also provides labour migrants to Saudi Arabia and Middle Eastern states. As a result of chain migration, the labour migrants later took their relatives and colleagues abroad for work and settlement purposes. It is also a fact that overseas Pakistani considerably contribute to the national economy by sending remittances. Around four million Pakistani nationals live abroad with half of them in European region. Pakistan is among those nations that export its workforce to various countries, and its overseas citizens contribute enormously to the national economy through their remittances. According to the MOP&HRD (2019, p. 15), country's Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment has registered that about 419625 Pakistani citizens have emigrated to other countries during the fiscal year 2017-18.

The process of migration from Pakistan to Europe has advanced through three distinct stages (Zafar, 2017). The first factor may be attributed to the need for inexpensive workforce in Europe during its post-war recovery phase. Passports were not required for travel until after the First World War, and only a few supplementary papers were needed until the 1960s. This facilitated unrestricted mobility for the proletariat, explorers, and affluent individuals hailing from the colonies. The second migratory wave in Europe may be linked to a combination of government policies and demographic shifts. The membership of countries to the European Union (EU) in 1993, along with their aging population and declining employment, has resulted in advantageous circumstances for both legal and undocumented immigrants. However, there has been a shift in the overall pattern of migration from legal migration to irregular migration after the events of September 11, 2001. More young men with lower levels of education were exceeding the duration of their visitor visas (Gazdar, 2003).

The state of Pakistan has served as both the origin and transit point for various migrant movements. According to the data, in 2004, there were approximately 3.351 million irregular migrants in Pakistan (UNODC 2012). Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and

Myanmar are the three primary source countries for these irregular migrants in Pakistan. It is also among those countries that host refugee populations on a large scale. The government provided refuge to approximately 1.6 million Afghanistan nationals as a neighbouring country. This socially rooted experience of migration, both within and outside the country's boundaries, has formed and characterized its demographic composition and exhibits the structure and understanding of the country's culture since its inception in 1947. During the 1950s, many young Pakistani men migrated to the UK for better earning opportunities and extended their services to the construction industry. In a subsequent migration phase, middle-class young educated Pakistani nationals migrated to Norway, UK, and Denmark, which led to the establishment of their community in destination countries. These settlements also facilitated the irregular movement of migrants started during the 1990s (Yousef, 2013).

According to Suter (2006), there are two distinct groups of irregular migrants: survival migrants and opportunity-seeking migrants. The primary drivers for the surviving migrants are poverty, unemployment, and economic adversity, whereas the absence of possibilities to improve economic well-being is a motivating factor for those seeking better prospects via migration. The former are primarily motivated by economic desperation; the potential for punishment and suffering is unlikely to deter them from migrating. They are susceptible to human trafficking and illicit smuggling. The second group exhibits more prudence in assessing the possible risks and benefits associated with irregular migration, and they are more inclined to remain in their nation of origin if the risks and penalties associated with the movement are too high. Nevertheless, migrants who actively seek opportunities may choose to accept the risk of becoming undocumented by either overstaying their visas or changing their employers/sponsors to reap the advantages of working abroad.

Irregular migration continues to pose obstacles and raises compelling humanitarian, political, social, economic, and security issues (McAuliffe & Koser, 2017, p. 3) as it involves a complicated network of individuals that facilitates the whole process. Due to several associated factors, an increasing trend has been witnessed during the last few decades towards the irregular mobility of people from different parts of the world. According to Donato & Massey (2016), there is a higher risk of irregular migration now than in the past. More countries will have to deal with an increasing number of individuals with precarious legal statuses. According to Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz (2018, p. 4), the

heterogeneity among migrants is manifest across several dimensions, including the political, economic, and social opportunities available to them in their destination countries, the responses elicited from the public, the perceptions of inclusion, marginality, and discrimination they face, and the resources and networks at their disposal to cope with precarious conditions.

About ten years ago, UNODC (2013) placed the country among the top ten most detected nationalities whose citizens are involved in ‘irregular migration’ or migrants’ smuggling to the EU member states. Moreover, it is consistently placed in the top ten countries of origin of migrants who were forcibly or voluntarily returned from Europe during the last few years. Only in 2021, about 19,400 return decisions were issued to irregular migrants of Pakistani origin. Most of these irregular migrants belonged to the Punjab province ranging in age from 16 to 28. However, a rise in trends of undocumented migrants associated with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province is also observed (Frontex, 2021). Like many EU countries, the Türkiye government has also tightened its policies against irregular migratory flows. According to its latest statistics, more than 15,000 Pakistani irregular migrants were detected in Türkiye in 2022. It is the third largest number of irregular migrants in Türkiye after the nationals of Afghanistan and Syria (Göç İdaresi, 2023).

The journey of irregular migrants from Pakistan usually starts with the support of local and transnational human smugglers (migrant handlers). This type of migration is commonly known as *Dunki*² (sometimes spelled differently, e.g., *dunkey* or *dinki*) in Pakistan and some other countries like India and Bangladesh. The exact origin of this word is unknown. Still, it is associated with irregular migration or clandestine travel that violates the prescribed laws and procedures of the origin, transit, and destination countries. It seems that the word “*Dunki*” is used as a metaphor for irregular migration because, during the travel, all the irregular migrants cover most of their distances on foot with their belongings.

Due to the laborious and painful journey, they might have associated themselves with Donkey, and later such a journey also took the name “*Dunki*”. Similarly, the agent or human smuggler that supervises the irregular journey does not travel by foot like the migrants; he usually uses a donkey or mule for his convenience. The migrants have also given him the name “*Dunker*”. It can be said that the word ‘*dunki*’ is used for irregular

²Slang word of Punjabi language used for the irregular migration in Pakistan and India.

migrants or irregular migration, and the person who acts as an agent or human smuggler in transit as a guide is known as a '*dunker*'. According to Amjad (2017), dozens of individuals suffer losses in their attempt to emigrate to other countries, especially European states, by adopting unauthorized migration channels. While attempting to go to Europe, most of them face detention in various nations or lose their lives en route to Greece.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

It was a hot day in July 2019, and I was enjoying the scenic beauty of Istanbul and its surroundings. During my visit to Eyup Sultan³, I encountered some Punjabi-speaking young boys sitting near a shady tree near the shrine. One of them was dressing up in traditional *Shalwar Qameez*⁴, and they talked about their good days in their homeland (Pakistan). Being in a foreign land (Türkiye), when I heard their conversation in Punjabi (the language I am also familiar with), I felt eager to interact with them. I inquired further about their presence in Türkiye. They told me they had travelled from Pakistan to Türkiye irregularly without obtaining a visa, and it took more than one month to reach Istanbul.

Interestingly, about two weeks before this encounter, I also heard through social media that around 30 irregular migrants drowned in the sea while attempting to enter one of the European states illegally. Our informal conversation lasted about an hour and left many questions unexplored in my mind about their dream journey that ended up in Türkiye. At first, the question came to my mind: why would these young people have opted for irregular migration? How they managed their travel, who facilitated them during this process and how they survive in Türkiye without their legal status where they are living like a stranger?

Migration has been a significant part of Pakistan's history and greatly influenced the country's demographic and economic landscapes. In parallel to authorized out-migration, it also faces the issue of irregular or unauthorized migratory trends within its population. In the past, many Pakistani citizens migrated to the European states through unauthorized means (Papadopoulou, 2004), either with the help of human smugglers (Van Liempt, 2007) or on their own. The process of leaving the country through irregular

³Famous place in Istanbul adjacent to the shrine of Hz. Ayub Ansari (one of the companions of Prophet Muhammad PBUH)

⁴National dress of Pakistan

means by many young Pakistanis has not been halted yet (Papadopoulou, 2004). The major determinants of international migration in Pakistani society are unequal access to resources, poor economic opportunities, and demographic behaviour (Farooq et al., 2014). Other factors such as access to migrants' smugglers, family support for emigration, individuals' aspirations, and availability of friends and family members at various destinations abroad play an essential part in irregular migration. Most Pakistani irregular migrants are young populations that start their journey using irregular means and try to reach European states via Iran, Türkiye, and Greece. This migration process involves an invisible network of smugglers (Van Liempt, 2007) charging enormous prices for providing their services in illegal border crossing (Maroufof, 2017).

Irregular migration from Pakistan begins with the involvement of several contributing factors that influence the behaviour of migrants and play an essential role in motivating them to make risky decisions. As a result, an unauthorized journey starts with various aspirations, hopes, and dreams. It also causes many issues for the countries in transit and at the receiving end. Being staying in Türkiye, the irregular migrants not only interact with the local population and local environment but also with other people having different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. While living irregularly in a transit country, they might face some challenges and find solutions to their sociocultural and socio-economic problems. While living in a new country and during their journey, especially the irregular one, there would be several lessons, skills, and strategies they might have learned. How do these migrants gauge the outcomes of their irregular migration in terms of losses and gains they received and what type of opportunities and limitations they have? This whole story revolves around the subjective experiences of the migrants. The current dissertation is about migratory experiences of Pakistani irregular migrants and their various coping strategies while sheltering irregularly in Türkiye from last several years.

1.2. Research Objectives

The current research is carried out to examine the irregular migration of Pakistani migrants to the EU states via Türkiye. The study is of three folds: *firstly*, it explores the migrants' aspirations, motivations, and imaginative processes (retrospectively) that pushed them to opt for an 'irregular journey' from Pakistan for EU countries and their actual experiences of migration; *secondly*, it is tried to uncover their experiences, survival tactics and coping strategies while living as an 'irregular migrant' in a present transit

country. *Thirdly*, it discovers the unauthorized flow of money utilized for irregular migration and the role of various actors involved in this process. Apart from the study of various reasons, risky decisions, and their outcomes, this study has tried to question the multifarious encounters they have faced and their influences on the lives of migrants. From this point of view, the current study has explored what it is like to live as an “irregular migrant” in Türkiye from the perspective of ‘*waiting*’. To attain the objectives of this research inquiry, the following questions were also considered: 1). How Pakistani irregular migrants imagined or dream of their journey at origin, and what they found in reality? How did they experience the situation of being an undocumented migrant in Türkiye? What was the modus operandi of key local and transnational migration actors?

1.3. Significance of the Study

While diving into the literature, it has been revealed that the focus of various studies related to irregular migration was either migrants’ origin or destination countries. The existence of irregular migrants in transit states remains with less focus due to several unknown reasons. The practices of irregular migrants might differ in transit countries from the destination countries due to differences in regulations and other opportunities. For example, in his recent ethnographic work, Garha (2020) has highlighted the causes and consequences of irregular migration from Indian Punjab to Italy and Spain. Out of three, the researcher took two countries as the destination by considering India as the origin state. The author found that people from India prefer to migrate to Spain or Italy due to the migrants’ regularization opportunities in destination states. The one who touches the land of any of these countries thinks about settling there for a longer period and seeking asylum or citizenship rights. Although such migrants reached their destinations using irregular means in the shape of forged documentation for border crossing or with the help of human smugglers (Van Liempt, 2007) and traffickers. In contrast, the existence of such migrants in transit countries faces different issues. They remain in limbo and encounter associated with other social, economic, and psychological problems (Myhrvold & Småstuen, 2019). So, the presence of irregular migrants in transit seeks the attention of the academia.

The whole process of irregular migration is not free from risks. Uncertainties and various risks are involved at every step of this journey. It is essential to know whether the aspirants of irregular migration take the risk factors into their consideration or jump into the field with illusionary feelings. Khan & Awan (2020) discussed the significant

stakeholders of irregular migration, including irregular migrants that were repatriated from EU countries to Pakistan. Still, the reflection of repatriated irregular migrants' dreams when they started their journey to Europe is missing. Moreover, the question related to risk-taking behaviour related strategies of the migrants is also not discussed. The current study took the opportunity and tried to discuss such questions from the Pakistani irregular migrants stranded in transit or on their journey in Türkiye.

Several recent statistics regarding irregular migration from Pakistan have been highlighted that also demand independent research on such topics. Awan (2019), reported in a national newspaper, 'Daily Times', that Pakistan is repatriating thousands of its citizens, mostly irregular ones, from Türkiye and Greece with a plan led by a committee of government officials. The goal was also to target human smuggling networks and crack down on those involved. The government of Pakistan has also launched an operation in areas including Gujranwala, Lahore, Swabi, and Jaranwala to curb human smuggling and trafficking. This action was part of a larger international effort to counter human smuggling.

Similarly, according to Anadolu Agency (2020), during the last five years, 1219368 illegal migrants were captured in Türkiye, of which 175529 were Pakistan nationals. According to Duz (2021), about 90 irregular migrants were held in Türkiye who were trying to enter the country illegally. Out of 90 migrants, twenty were of Pakistani origin. Recently, the Pakistan Consulate in Istanbul published a notice which offered voluntary return to its irregular migrants in Türkiye due to their undocumented status (Pakistan Consulate General Istanbul, 2021). According to the Turkish Interior Ministry, 21425 Pakistani irregular migrants have been detained in Türkiye during the last two years (Göç İdaresi, 2023).

1.4. Research Question

The research question at the heart of this study is: "What are the survival strategies of Pakistani irregular migrants?" This overarching inquiry sets the stage for a detailed exploration into the experiences and coping mechanisms of Pakistani irregular migrants. The sub-questions that accompany this central query provide a multifaceted approach to understanding the phenomenon. Firstly, "How do Pakistani irregular migrants interpret their experiences?" probes into the subjective perspectives and narratives of the migrants themselves, allowing for an in-depth analysis of their lived experiences. Secondly, "How do they cope with various situations they face due to their irregular status?" inquires the

resilience and adaptive strategies employed by irregular migrants in navigating the challenges posed by their precarious legal status. Lastly, “How does the money flow among different actors involved in irregular migration?” investigates the intricate financial dynamics inherent in irregular migration, shedding light on the economic transactions and power relations that shape the migration process. Together, these research questions and sub-questions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the survival strategies and socio-economic dynamics of Pakistani irregular migrants.

1.5. Thesis Structure

The second chapter of the dissertation serves as a comprehensive literature review aimed at elucidating the intricate dynamics of migration on a global scale. Through a thorough examination of existing scholarly works, this chapter endeavors to unravel the multifaceted phenomenon of international migration while shedding light on the diverse factors and actors that shape migration processes. Through a synthesis of diverse literature sources, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of international migration dynamics, offering valuable insights into the myriad factors and actors that shape migration processes on a global scale. By critically examining existing scholarship, it lays the groundwork for subsequent chapters by establishing a theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding the complexities inherent in international migration phenomena.

Chapter three exhibits the historical and present migration between Pakistan, Türkiye, and Greece is covered in this chapter. It examines migration trends and how these areas are key nodes in global migration networks. The story opens with pre-partition migration, illustrating population migrations in the past. It also highlights Pakistanis pursuing economic possibilities overseas to improve their lives. It examines irregular migration from Pakistan, its causes, and its obstacles. Türkiye is a key gateway to Europe for migrants from diverse locations. The chapter covers irregular migration under Türkiye’s migration policy and records the flow of migrants across decades. Türkiye is also considered a transit route for irregular migrants to Europe. It also describes Türkiye’s significance as a key stop on Pakistan-Europe migrant routes and the problems and possibilities of this journey.

Chapter four describes the detailed mechanism underlying the methodology and methods utilized within the current study, thereby fostering a comprehensive

comprehension of the research framework, philosophical underpinnings, and methodological approach applied. The chapter expounds upon the research design, elucidating the rationale behind the adoption of semi-structured interviews as the primary method of data collection. Furthermore, it deliberates upon the formulation of a meticulously crafted interview guide and the criteria employed in the selection of study participants. Sequentially, it delineates the steps undertaken to gain access to the field. Additionally, it meticulously examines the ethical considerations entailed in the research process, furnishing a comprehensive exposition of the measures implemented to uphold ethical standards and addressing the challenges encountered during fieldwork. The chapter furnishes invaluable insights into the data gleaned from the participants and elucidates the methodologies employed to faithfully translate recorded interviews, thereby preserving the integrity of the original material. Moreover, it expounds upon the procedures employed in data analysis, furnishing a comprehensive overview of the coding techniques utilized to systematize and decipher the collected data. Furthermore, it presents diagrams fashioned to underscore the study's baseline and the sources from which data is generated, thereby facilitating a lucid comprehension of the data's nature and subsequent analysis.

Chapter five delineates the findings of the study vis-à-vis the research question and sub-questions. The data, procured from participants through semi-structured interviews, is presented in the form of descriptive narratives and visual aids. Subsequently, the migration-related experiences of participants and their perspectives on various coping strategies are meticulously expounded upon. Leveraging qualitative investigation, narrative and thematic analysis techniques are employed. The overarching themes derived from the interview data are organized to scrutinize the coping strategies of study participants and construct a coherent narrative by establishing a systematic correlation between emergent themes and categories.

Chapter six entails a comprehensive analysis encompassing the socio-demographic characteristics of participants, their mode of travel preferences, and their detailed accounts of the irregular journey from Pakistan. Major migration catalysts at origin, primary sources of information, and the family role in migration decisions are explored. Additionally, their skills profile at the time of departure from Pakistan and the role of human smugglers in facilitating their migration journey are scrutinized, alongside the various means and arrangements for the requisite funds for the journey and the

significant challenges encountered en route from Pakistan to Türkiye. Subsequently, their experiences regarding living conditions, exploitation, and principal insecurities are scrutinized in detail. Furthermore, the chapter delves into the coping strategies of participants pertaining to income generation sources, health concerns, psychological issues, detection avoidance, and the procurement of work, food, and shelter. The study findings also encompass participants' narratives concerning the financial channels and principal actors facilitating irregular migration at origin and in transit. Chapter seven draws the conclusion and implications of the current study.

1.6. Study Limitations

While conducting thesis research study, several limitations were encountered. Firstly, the study's qualitative nature, although valuable in providing rich insights into the experiences of migrants, inherently limits the applicability of findings to broader populations. Moreover, the sample size of 28 semi-structured in-depth interviews, while sufficient for qualitative research, may not entirely capture the complexity and diversity of migratory experiences. Additionally, the reliance on the snowball sampling technique introduces the potential for sampling bias, as participants may have referred individuals who share similar characteristics or experiences, thereby limiting the representativeness of the sample. Furthermore, the locale of the study being confined to Istanbul may restrict the transferability of findings to other geographical contexts or migrant populations in different regions of Türkiye or elsewhere. Moreover, while observation, field notes, and photographs were utilized during the analysis to enrich the understanding of participants' experiences, the subjective interpretation of these qualitative data sources may introduce researcher bias. Despite these limitations, the study contributes valuable insights into the migratory experiences and coping strategies of Pakistani irregular migrants in Istanbul, providing a foundation for further research in this field.

CHAPTER-II

2. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: FACTORS AND ACTORS

2.1. Chapter's Summary

The current chapter presents existing scholarships on international migration, global statistics, push and pull factors and various factors involved in irregular migration. A significant portion of the chapter is dedicated to the emergence and evolution of irregular migration as a distinct phenomenon within the broader migration debate. It further delves into the phenomenon of smuggling of migrants (SoM), conceptualizing the networks and mechanisms through which irregular migration is facilitated. By exploring migration as a business enterprise, the chapter unpacks the economic incentives and social networks that underpin the migration industry, thereby shedding light on the actors involved in the facilitation and regulation of migration flows. In addition, the chapter examines the role of migrants' social capital and social networks in navigating migration pathways.

2.2. The Phenomenon of Migration

Migration is at the heart of the “trans-nationalized social question” that exists between the Global South and the Global North. People move abroad to find a better life or get away from living situations that cannot be sustained (Faist, 2019). Why do people leave their home countries and prefer to migrate abroad? It is the question that comes to our minds while diving into the migration-related literature. Similarly, recent researches have questioned why international migration is not being controlled despite increased structural limitations to prevent population mobility (Ambrosini, 2017; Bauernschuster et al., 2014). The studies also indicate that international migration is driven by social changes and a combination of complicated socioeconomic causes and crises (Castles, 2010; IOM, 2019).

A range of factors has been involved the possibility that push the people to leave, such as low income, lack of jobs or opportunities, religious persecution, a high crime rate, oppressive governments or war and conflicts. Conversely, destinations countries attract or pull migrants due to factors such as greater economic opportunities and high living standards or better education opportunities and good healthcare or because they have peaceful, free and democratic societies. These factors can be grouped into categories such

as economic, social, and political and in most cases, a migrant chooses to move to another country due to a mix of both push and pull factors (Morsut & Kruke, 2020).

The international migration is based on several fundamental principles as a dynamic and cumulative process (Massey et al. (1990, p. 6). Such as structural changes between receiving and sending nations, social infrastructure and linkages, households' survival strategies, migrants' experience, anchorage⁵ in receiving societies, and migrants' strong connections with their origin. Subsequently, with the settlement of migrants in destination countries, sustainable social structures are created, defining the process of international migration as "self-perpetuating" (de Haas, 2010).

Generally, it is believed that globalization and technological advancements have contributed to the increased diversity, volume, geographical scope, and overall complication of international migration (Czaika & De Haas, 2014b; Massey et al., 1998). The globalization and digitalization have significantly influenced the technological landscape, leading to a transformation that has far-reaching implications. This transformation has not only enhanced people's awareness but has also played a pivotal role in shaping their aspirations towards migration. The convergence of environmental crises and political conflicts engenders a multitude of adverse consequences, including the distortion of societal structures and the destruction of individuals' means of subsistence. Consequently, a significant number of individuals find themselves compelled to seek refuge and protection in foreign nations as a means of safeguarding their well-being and securing their livelihoods (Migali & Scipioni, 2019; Flahaux & De Haas, 2016; Sirkeci & Cohen, 2016; Lilleør & Van den Broeck, 2011)

Moreover, globalization has also increased the interconnectedness and interdependence of people, economies, and cultures worldwide. It also facilitated the movement of people across international borders through various mechanisms, such as trade, investment, and the exchange of ideas and information (Sassen, 1996). It can be held responsible for the dislocation of millions of people and set in motion population movements that are now difficult for anyone to control. Likewise, it has a prominent role in technological developments such as transportation infrastructure and communication technologies, but its neoliberal model also created inequalities between Global North and Global South. Both conditions have provided an environment conducive to international

⁵Support and cooperation the migrants may receive in transit or destination due to their already established social networks. Sometimes, the faith or religion can also be a powerful anchorage for people on the move.

migration and will continue to influence future migration trends (Portes, 1999). Consequently, migration pressures are getting worse in many parts of the world because of globalization. The disruptive effects of modernization and capitalist development have forced many people to move globally (Taran, 2001).

Due to the asymmetrical nature of globalization, migration can be globalized for destination countries, but the situation is different for origin countries (Czaika & De Haas, 2014b). The increased volume and diversity of international migration have had several impacts on host countries, including both positive and negative effects (Ghosh, 2011). On the one hand, migration can bring economic benefits to host nations through the share of migrant workers to the labour force and the economy (OECD, 2016). At the same time, it can also create challenges for host countries (Gaston & Rajaguru, 2013), such as cultural tensions and the strain on social services and public resources.

Whatever the reasons or factors driving international migration, the arrival of migrants in a foreign land is not always welcome by citizens and states in various destinations. Palidda (2021) synthesized that influential people in the world see migration as an enemy of the twenty-first century because the world's population is increasing at a faster pace, and the flow of migrants could cause the depletion of world resources by disrupting migration invasions in rich countries. The journey of migrants continued in this world to fulfill their dreams for a better future in prosperous and developed countries around the globe. Resultantly, recent human history has experienced a remarkable increase in international migration. The proportion of migrants to the overall population increases every decade. Forecasting future migration flows may be challenging since international migration is intimately linked to events such as economic, social, political, and technical disparities between origin and destination countries.

The ongoing demographic explosion, urbanization, and economic slowdown have significantly impacted contemporary societies' social and economic landscape. Particularly, young people are increasingly shouldering the burden of supporting their families in a context where job security and economic stability are increasingly hard to catch. This dynamic has increased the emphasis on mobility to secure livelihoods and improve the financial situation. The trend towards mobility highlights the changing nature of work, family, and community in contemporary societies and the complex interplay between demographic, economic, and social factors that shape the lives of young people (Charrière & Frésia, 2008). Considering the contexts mentioned above, it can be argued

that migration has improved the lives of individuals in both the country of origin and the country of destination and has enabled millions of people throughout the globe to carve secure and meaningful lives. (D. S. Massey et al., 1999; Dustmann & Frattini, 2014; IOM, 2018, p. 1). However, despite all these facts, it is essential to recognize that not all migration flows happen under favourable circumstances (Taran, 2001).

2.3. Global Statistics of Migrants

As an outcome of excessive human mobility across international borders, the growing number of international migrants has gradually become one of the core issues of the current globalized world. According to McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, p. 23; International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2021, the number of international migrants has increased from around 84 million to 281 million during the last five decades (1970 to 2020), which is about 3.6 percent of the total world population. The most recent estimates also confirm that the figure of international migrants is closer to 4% of the entire world's population (7.8 billion). If they establish their independent state, it would be the fourth most populous country after China, India, and the United States. The significant shifts in international migration have been observed as directional and skewed to the European states, Asia, and the Gulf. (Czaika & De Haas, 2014a). However, in specific regions, there has been a significant increase in the number of people migrating from Asia to Europe in recent years (D. S. Massey et al., 1999), driven mainly by fewer economic opportunities, political instability, and conflicts in certain parts of Asia. At the same time, there has also been an increase in the number of people from Europe migrating to Asia, particularly to countries with rapidly growing economies such as China and India (Castles et al., 2005a).

The distribution of migrants is quite variable, e.g., Asian and other migrants, who often enter under temporary worker programs, go to rich nations like the United States and Europe for the better economic opportunities and social stability they provide. Moreover, half of all the foreign migrants lived in Northern America and Europe (Batalova, 2022). The overall number of international migrants worldwide is likely to rise in the following decades as economic considerations continue to entice migrants to more affluent nations, and dire circumstances and crises drive individuals to flee their home countries.

The projected increase in migration velocity during the next quarter century is more significant than the previous quarter century (Nail, 2015). For example, from 2010

to 2021, the net outflow of migrants from the top ten emigration countries was more than one million. It is noted that temporary labour movements were one of the major factors in the outflows from several of these nations, such as Pakistan (a net flow of -16.5 million), India (-3.5 million), Bangladesh (-2.9 million), Nepal (-1.6 million), and Sri Lanka (-3.5 million) (-1.0 million). A large exodus of migrants from other countries like Venezuela (-4.8 million), Syria (-4.6 million), and Myanmar (-1.0 million) was caused by conflicts and instability (UNDESA, 2021). These days, environmental, economic, and political unpredictability have made migration an absolute necessity for the survival of humans. Particularly during the next 40 years, climate change may cause a doubling of worldwide migration (Nail, 2015). The precise trajectory of the predicted rise in the number of foreign migrants will most likely be determined by how 'push and pull' factors and other opposing forces interact. Most migrants will continue to leave their homes freely in search of better economic prospects. In 2019, about two-third of global migrants were voluntary workers, with just 11% being refugees fleeing conflicts, wars, and instabilities (National Intelligence Council, 2021, p. 2).

Migration is constructed as not merely an act of mobility across borders but as tied to life events (Kaytaz, 2016). It seems that the notion of unsettledness of the migrants in transit is sometimes misunderstood. According to Ghassan Hage, "*a viable life presupposes a form of imaginary mobility, a sense that one is going somewhere.*" When this sense of going somewhere is lost, individuals experience existential immobility, which he calls *stuckedness*. To be stuck in transit is thus not necessarily a physical condition. Rather, it points to an emotional and social condition. This phenomenon is explained as existential immobility. It means that people are stuck not only because they cannot migrate but cannot reach a socioeconomically recognized position. They cannot become the men and women they wish to be and grasp the future they aspire to for themselves and their families (Biloni, 2019, p. 90). Similarly, when people are place-bound, their imagination can be in movement, traveling to other places and times. It can be argued that even in movement, one's imagination can be focused on a particular place. For example, people in the diaspora re-forming their imagined homeland) and that these imaginaries of rigidity can influence one's experience of mobility (Salazar, 2013) similar argument can be built for the irregular migrants stuck in transit.

2.4. Emergence of Irregular Migration

In recent decades, we have witnessed a remarkable increase in displacement and migration due to war, oppression, conflict, climatic change, and a lack of human security and better opportunity (IOM, 2018). In addition to such insecurities and uncertainties, with the creation of the global economy during the late 20th century, a relatively new phenomenon of “irregular migration”⁶ emerged (Bloch & Chimienti, 2011) as a structural feature of the second era of capitalist globalization. There are also some interchangeable terms for irregular migration, such as unauthorized migration, illegal migration, and undocumented migration⁷. It is a contentious issue with important national, regional, and global repercussions, mainly in Europe but also beyond. It can be viewed as a response by ordinary individuals to the exclusive nature of globalization carried out by influential economic and political entities, such as international organizations, multinational corporations, and financial markets.

During the 1950s and 1960s, irregular immigration was relatively more accepted as Western economies were experiencing growth and development. However, in the second half of the 1970s, particularly in Europe, irregular immigration began to raise political concerns. This shift in attitude was influenced by factors such as the first oil crisis and the decision to halt the influx of new working immigrants (Andersson, 2016). The discourse of unauthorized migration in developed nations was attracting significant attention from the general populace. The phenomenon’s exponential growth was a direct consequence of the strictness in immigration regulations that had been enacted in most OECD nations. Instead of diminishing the magnitude of immigration flows, this policy resulted in altering the proportion of legal to unauthorized migration (Coniglio et al., 2009).

Furthermore, the widening income gap between wealthy and poor countries could be one of the reasons to the increasing number of irregular migrants. Another problem that linked with irregular migration is absence of sufficient skill development programmes for the youth in developing countries. Quoting statistics from India, UNODC

⁶“Movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the origin, transit, and destination countries” (IOM, 2015, p. 197).

⁷“Movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination.” Even though there is not a single, agreed-upon definition of “irregular migration,” the term is usually used to describe people who move outside of the normal channels for migration (IOM, 2011). However, additional phrases such as undocumented, unauthorized, illegal, and unlawful are also employed in the text. The objective is to guarantee the contextual meanings and originality of the referenced research.

(2009), reported that about twenty thousand young unskilled Indian aspirants attempt to migrate irregularly every year as the option of regular migration for unskilled migrants are limited in the country.

However, a significant economic and social effects resulted from this pattern for both the sending and receiving nations. Both lawful and unauthorized migrants encountered a multitude of incentives and restrictions that significantly impacted their patterns of migration (Coniglio et al., 2009). In the 1990s, there was a shift in the way immigration was perceived, leading to stricter provisions. Immigration started to be viewed through the lens of security, resulting in a more stringent approach (Andersson, 2016).

2.4.1. Phenomenon of Irregular Migration

In past, several terms have been used interchangeably for this type of migration. However, at the International Symposium on Migration held in Bangkok in April 1999, the notion of “irregular migration” was introduced as a substitute for the commonly used terms “illegal migration” or “unauthorized migration” due to the negative connotations associated with these terms (Öksüz, 2019, p. 39). While the term “illegal migration” is often utilized to describe illegal border crossings, some scholars argue that “irregular migration” is a more appropriate term as it considers the often-desperate circumstances that lead individuals to engage in such actions (Ün & Paydak, 2017). Similarly, the IOM’s Glossary on Migration Terms portrayed the pejorative nature of the term “illegal migration” and its restricted use to solely refer to migrant smuggling and human trafficking (Perruchoud & Redpath-Cross, 2011). Thus, it is not surprising that the concepts of “illegal migration” or “illegal migrant” are frequently marginalized in academic literature.

In the legal realm, the phenomenon of “irregular migration” is highly dependent on geographic and global factors, such as the diversity of illegal phenomena it covers, the lack of documentation for asylum seekers, and the varying approaches taken by states towards this issue (Atasever, 2021, p. 14). In his work, (Koser, 2005, p. 4-5) highlighted the difficulties of analyzing irregular migration, including confusing terminology, unclear concepts and insufficient data. He argued that the importance of precise and consistent language use and accurate data in the highly politicized and emotional debates surrounding irregular migration. He used the terms “irregular migration” and “irregular migrant(s)” instead of the commonly used term “illegal”. The use of the word “illegal” is

problematic as it associates irregular migrants with crime, denies their humanity and can undermine their asylum claim. The terms “undocumented” and “unauthorized” are also often misused. Many international organizations such as International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Council of Europe (EC) and the Security Organization, and the Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) preferably used the term “irregular migration” instead of other associated terminology (Öksüz, 2019, p. 40).

Due to war and conflict, the people usually force to leave their homeland and become a refugee. Sometimes, the refugees also enter other countries irregularly, but these kinds of irregular migrants cannot be sent back to their home country because they have the right to seek refuge under international protection law. An irregular migrant could be anyone, a man or woman, young or old, and from any part of the world. Some of them take huge risks to move from their origin country to other countries. Some may face oppression and force to leave their homes. What common among all these migrants is that they do not hold legal rights to stay in the country where they are living. Without legal rights, the irregular migrants do not have the access to the public services as normal people of that country do. They also face exploitation due to their irregular status (Castles et al., 2005b) and do not raise voice for their rights due to the fear of apprehension and deportation. As a result, the irregular migrants often live their lives in destitution and marginalization.

2.4.2. Irregular Migrant

According to the International Glossary on Migration, an irregular migrant is defined as an individual who lacks legal status in a transit or host country due to illegal entry, violation of entry conditions, or expiration of the validity date of a visa (Perruchoud & Redpath-Cross, 2011, p. 31; Ün & Paydak, 2017). Those who cross international borders without authorized permission or documents are recognized as “irregular migrants”⁸. As such, there is no universally accepted definition of an irregular migrant. However, World Health Organization (2017, p. 7) defined an “irregular migrant” as “someone who, owing to illegal entry or the expiry of visa, lacks legal status in a transit

⁸“A person who, owing to unauthorized entry, breach of a condition of entry, or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. The definition covers, inter alia, those persons who have entered a transit or host country lawfully but have stayed longer period than authorized or subsequently taken up unauthorized employment.”(IOM, 2015, p. 198).

or host country. The term applies to migrants who infringe a country's admission rules and any other person not authorized to remain in the host country." Hence, the people who cross international borders outside the legal and regulatory norms of the sending, transit, or destination countries or staying or working in a country without lawful authority are irregular migrants. It could be living in a country without a valid passport or forged documents and entering, staying, and working in the transit or destination country without a valid visa, residence, or work permit. Some migrants enter a country legally on a visa but then overstay the visa period or violate the term of the visa, for example, by undertaking work without authorization. This process changes their status from legal to irregular.

To comprehensively understand the various irregular migration statuses, the following is a detailed list of the different forms of irregular stays that migrants may experience (Triandafyllidou & Bartolini, 2020, p. 16). It also serves the purpose of highlighting the complexities that are inherent in the process of immigration, residence, and work-related statuses:

- Individuals with forged documentation or those with legitimate documentation have assumed false identities;
- People with apparent legal temporary residency status, such as "working tourists" who have entered on a touristic visa and are engaged in irregular work activities. This demographic is often believed to comprise most irregular migrants in certain countries. Furthermore, migrants with temporary conditional residence permits, such as seasonal and contract workers, may also be subject to deportation if they breach the terms of their agreements (e.g., if they remain employed for a longer duration than permitted);
- Those who lose their residence permits due to the inability to meet the conditions, such as those who are unemployed, can no longer exhibit an employment relationship to acquire a work permit or students whose course of study has ended;
- People who never held an authorized status due to their irregular entry to a country also lack a means of regularizing their status;

- Individuals who enter a country by irregular border crossing register with government authorities, e.g., those who have sought asylum and live under protection;
- People without regular immigration status (who are allowed to stay despite not having a document that verifies the suspension of their removal and their semi-legal residence status). Their repatriation is not possible due to a absence of agreements with their country of origin or a transit country or when their nationality cannot be determined;
- Children born to such parents who reside irregularly and thus lack fully documented status.

2.5. Undocumented Folks in the US and the EU

The irregular movements of migrants at a larger scale create several issues for the states, due to which many countries take necessary measures to control the irregular migration flows. It is a fact that despite taking structural and other associated steps, the entry of irregular migrants to many countries has not been restricted entirely, and irregular entry of migrants through various international borders is still happening. It is challenging to gather accurate statistics on irregular migrants due to insufficient data. However, according to O'Brien et al. (2019), about 12 million undocumented migrants are living in the United States, while the European Commission claimed that the number of illegal migrants in the EU ranges from 4.5 million to 8 million, with an estimated increase of 350,000 to 500,000 per year. Likewise, Clandestine Project (2009, p. 6-20) reported the irregular existence of about nine million migrants in Russia. According to Triandafyllidou & Bartolini (2020, p. 11), irregular migrants represent 15% to 20% of the total migrants, which is approximately 1% of the world population and may include 30-40 million people worldwide. Although the accurate number of migrants with irregular status is unknown, according to (Castles et al., 2012b, p. 14), about 10-15% of the entire migrants live with the status of "irregular migrant" globally. If we take the example of irregular migrants in EU countries, it has also been noticed that most of such migrants arrive through regular and authorized channels but later become irregular in various ways (Krause, 2011). However, there is another important category of migrants who have reached the EU states by land or sea routes without any lawful authorization. They have crossed international

borders with the support of human smugglers (Jurat, 2023; Spena, 2016) or with the help of transnational agents.

There are three stages involved in the process of migration. The first stage focuses on what happens in the countries of origin, known as “mobilization.” The second stage, called “enroute,” deals with the actual act of migration from point A to point B. Finally, the third and final stage involves the “insertion and integration” of migrants into the country of destination. In the countries of origin and destination, various entities are recognized, such as governments, employers, and host societies. When it comes to everything in between, specifically the process of migration, individuals who support or assist migrants in moving from one place to another are referred to as “intermediary agents.” (Salt & Stein, 1997).

2.6. Smuggling of Migrants (SoM)

According to (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012b, p. 6), when individuals decide to migrate without proper documentation, they often rely on the assistance of certain agents or networks to help them enter and live in another country without authorization. It is noteworthy that in the past decade, there has been a significant development in the field of migrant smuggling⁹, specifically in terms of the increased professionalism and global reach of the associated networks and criminal organizations. Similarly, Kyle & Koslowski (2001), highlighted in their study that the fact that migrant smuggling has been a longstanding issue. However, what they found to be novel was the widespread and evolving nature of this phenomenon on a global scale. Over the past decade, there has been significant progress in the expansion of migrant smuggling and trafficking networks. These criminal activities have seen a substantial increase in their operations and financial gains.

Many people leave their homes in search of a better life. Sometimes by undertaking dangerous journeys either on their own or with the help of human smugglers (Van Liempt, 2007) or criminal groups after paying a handsome amount to them (Papadopoulou, 2004). Castles et al. (2012) highlighted in the book “Global Perspectives

⁹“In the year 2000, the United Nations officially adopted a definition for the act of smuggling migrants. This was a component of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which was accompanied by a protocol addressing the smuggling of migrants. According to this Protocol, the smuggling of migrants is the “procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.” (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012b, p. 6)

on Migration and Development” that a vast and complex network of human smugglers is present at national, transnational, and international levels. The role of human smugglers or migration agents facilitates the irregular migrants (Ambrosini, 2017b) in illegal border crossing one or many times during the whole journey (e.g., from Pakistan to the UK via Iran, Türkiye, Greece, Italy, and France). The networks involved in human smuggling sometime may include former migrants, corrupt officials, and intermediaries (T. H. Shah, 2020) along the migration routes. Moreover, this act of human smugglers is not only against the law but also exposes these migrants to extreme risks, including death. Many migrants lost their lives during illegal border crossing. For example, from 1994 to 2009, between 4000 to 6000 migrants died in connection with US-Mexico border crossing attempts (Jimenez, 2009, p. 18).

Smuggling of migrants is considered a serious criminal activity involving the unlawful assistance of individuals in entering a country where they do not have the right to stay. This activity often intersects with the issue of human trafficking. Human smugglers carry out their operations from various locations. In a study conducted by Adeniran (2020), classified such entities into three categories: Initial network facilitators, Transitory network facilitators, and Terminal network facilitators. It is worth mentioning that certain scholars have put forth the argument that the proliferation of transport and communication technologies on a global scale, coupled with the tightening of migration regulations in economically advanced nations, has resulted in the heightened professionalization of the smuggling industry (Kyle & Koslowski, 2001; Salt & Stein, 1997). The rise of migrant smuggling and trafficking has been fueled by global circumstances that have led to a surge in both the demand for and supply of trafficked and smuggled individuals. In today’s interconnected world, criminals have taken advantage of the increased mobility and trade facilitated by globalization to engage in illegal activities across borders. The increase in migration flows has led to a concerning rise in illicit trade, which is now intertwined with the movement of people. The growing inequalities in society, economy, and demographics, along with the presence of poverty, terrorism, and conflicts, have contributed to the ongoing issue of migrant smuggling and trafficking (Shelley, 2010).

The approach commonly employed to estimate the occurrence of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants from Pakistan to other countries follows a specific approach. Firstly, researchers have identified three main routes through which trafficking

occurs: (i) Pakistan-Iran-Oman, (ii) Pakistan-Iran-Türkiye-Greece, and (iii) Pakistan-Middle East-West Africa-Spain. Additionally, the ICMPD migration report on Pakistan (ICMPD 2013) has identified other routes leading to Malaysia, Indonesia, and Australia. Secondly, individuals from Pakistan who have used these routes to unlawfully reach countries such as Iran, Türkiye, Oman, Greece, and Spain, and have subsequently been deported, are categorized as trafficked individuals or smuggled migrants (UNODC 2011).

Looking at it from an economic standpoint, migrant smuggling can be seen as a business, although an illegal one. The financial elements of the smuggling industry and the methods employed by smuggling networks to move funds, along with the economic benefits that migrants and their families anticipate when participating in unauthorized migration and utilizing the assistance of smugglers (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012b, p. 12). In another study (Koser, 2008) has also emphasized the importance of conducting an economic analysis to fully comprehend the dynamics of the migrant smuggling phenomenon. Indeed, Koser has assessed the economic costs and gains experienced by families in Afghanistan and Pakistan who sent a family member to the UK through the assistance of a smuggling network. The study has revealed that individuals who managed to remain in the UK and secure employment were able to repay the initial fee to the smugglers within a span of two years. Afterwards, the family's income doubled. Therefore, all things considered, the initial investment and risk were deemed to be valuable.

Several studies found that majority of the people migrated irregularly due to their poor economic conditions in their home countries. For instance, migration among smuggled or trafficked migrants in Eastern Mediterranean, Ukraine, ASEAN region and Eastern Sudan was primarily driven by economic hardships (Baird, 2016, p. 83; Uehling, 2004; Rahim et al., 2009) and poverty (Ati, 2017). It is noted that migrants are less likely to leave their home country if they do not perceive better economic prospects abroad. Within the realm of migrant smuggling, there is no legally binding agreement between the smugglers and the migrants. Thus, the absence of mutual contract for migrants leaves them vulnerable to both exploitation (Castles et al., 2005b) and a lack of compensation. Furthermore, those who utilize smuggling services entails relinquishing control over the assets, including their bodies and labour. Smuggled migrants are unfortunately vulnerable to exploitation by smugglers and traffickers (Tamura, 2010; Castles et al., 2005b).

In the context of Pakistan, the cases of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants are frequently derived from the data found in the annual reports of esteemed international organizations like UNODC and ICMPPD, as well as reports detailing the apprehension of human smugglers by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). The annual reports of UNODC offer valuable insights into the issue of human trafficking across borders. A recent report on human trafficking in Pakistan has also been released by the US Department of State. Two conclusions are typically reached in all these reports. Pakistan plays a significant role in both the sourcing, transit, and destination of human trafficking and migrant smuggling. This issue is not confined within the country's borders but extends beyond them. EU also fights with Irregular Migration since long.

There has been a significant increase in the number of people migrating to the European Union (EU) irregularly in recent years. The European Union (EU) has noted that more than one million irregular migrants entered any EU country illegally in 2015 alone (Apan, 2018). To combat this issue, the EU has made significant investments in developing and expanding various agencies and technologies to strengthen border control and deter unwanted migration. These agencies include FRONTEX (European Border and Coast Guard Agency), responsible for coordinating the management of the EU's external borders (Horsti, 2012), EUROPOL (EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation), which facilitates cooperation among EU member states in the fight against serious crime and terrorism, EUROSUR (European Border Surveillance System), which aims to improve the surveillance of the EU's external borders, and EURODAC (European Dactyloscopy Fingerprint Database), which is used for the identification of asylum seekers and irregular migrants.

FRONTEX was established in 2004 to monitor and restrict the unauthorized entries of irregular migrants to the European Union territories (Horsti, 2012, p. 297) by the EU. It has been reported that 22,8240 irregular border crossings were detected at the multiple external borders of the EU during the first nine months of 2022, which are 70 percent higher than the previous year (FRONTEX, 2022). The unauthorized border crossing by irregular migrants of various nationalities and their stay in transit or at destination countries involves multiple risks, including deaths (Weber & Pickering, 2011). These are directly linked with human lives (Spijkerboer, 2007; Triandafyllidu & Eliamep, 2015) and cannot be overlooked. Most of the irregular migrants in Europe belong to Asian and African countries (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012a) who entered

Europe illegally via seven major migratory routes (identified by the Frontex); commonly used for irregular border crossing in the region (Morehouse & Blomfield, 2011).

In addition to these agencies, the EU has also employed highly sophisticated border control technologies to track and deter unwanted migrants systematically. These technologies include biometric identification systems, advanced surveillance equipment, and data-sharing systems that allow for information sharing between EU member states and other countries. The EU's investments in these agencies and technologies have been designed to enhance surveillance capacities and develop cooperative border policing at the outer edges of the EU. This is intended to prevent unwanted migration, reduce the number of irregular migrants, and improve the security of the EU's external borders. Additionally, the EU's efforts aim to improve the identification of asylum seekers and irregular migrants and to facilitate their return to their countries of origin where appropriate. Overall, the EU's investments in agencies such as FRONTEX, EUROPOL, EUROSUR, and EURODAC, as well as the use of sophisticated border control technologies, reflect its commitment to strengthening its border control capabilities and managing migration comprehensively and effectively (Agier, 2011; Bellais & Boulanin, 2014; Dimitriadi, 2017).

However, the EU also faces difficulties in repatriation of the irregular migrants to their origin. It has officially recognized the limited effectiveness of its removal procedures, stating that each year, around 400,000 to 500,000 foreign people are instructed to depart from the EU due to their illegal entry or stay. However, on average, only one-third of them repatriate to their home country or to another third nation via which they first went to the European Union (European Commission, 2020).

2.6.1. Other Side of the Coin

The liberalization of borders within Europe in previous decades, through the implementation of agreements such as the Schengen Agreement, the EU's single market, and the free movement of people, goods, and services, facilitated greater ease of movement and increased economic and social integration within the EU. However, the recent trend towards fortifying EU borders, as seen in the implementation of stricter border controls, increased surveillance, and physical barriers, represents a shift towards a more security-centric approach. This "unprecedented securitization" of EU borders can be seen as a response to various challenges, such as the perceived threat of irregular migration, terrorism, and the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment.

However, this approach has been criticized for being overly restrictive and potentially undermining the EU's commitment to freedom, democracy, and human rights (N. De Genova et al., 2016). Additionally, it is said that this securitization of borders may have unintended consequences, such as creating a "Fortress Europe" mentality, criminalizing migration, and developing a two-tier system in which EU citizens have greater mobility than non-EU citizens (Walters, 2004). It may also lead to a rise in certain negative attitudes and beliefs towards migrants, particularly those perceived as Muslim or outside of the EU. Some political leaders have responded by calling for stricter border controls and tighter immigration policies to prevent further migration. This thinking is often referred to as right-wing, xenophobic, anti-Muslim, and anti-migrant sentiment. These attitudes and beliefs can manifest in various ways, such as through political rhetoric, discriminatory laws and policies, and even acts of violence against migrants (Bigo, 2007; Bellais & Boulanin, 2014; Newman et al., 2018; Sicurella, 2018).

2.7. Conceptualization

2.7.1. Migrants' Social Capital

Some migration related theories were taken into the consideration for the conceptualization of the phenomenon under study. The set of these theories include social capital theory, migration business theory and social networks theory. In addition to the neoclassical theories, a fresh set of theories has emerged to elucidate the persistence of migration over time. The social capital theory is a combination of three different theories within this perspective. Some theories that have been explored in previous research are *the migrant network theory*, *the cumulative theory*, and *the transnational migration theory* (Massey & Aysa-Lastra, 2011; Faist, 2000). These theories of social capital focus on the intermediaries that enable or sustain migration, rather than the factors that trigger migration. The theory of migration networks investigates how individuals are influenced by their family, friends, and peers in their decision to migrate (Garip & Asad, 2015; Liu, 2013; Haug, 2008; Taylor, 1986). Migration networks can have an impact on individuals' inclination to migrate through the dissemination of information (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014; Haythornthwaite, 2002). The information shared through direct interaction or online platforms can significantly reduce the expenses and potential dangers faced by migrants. The cumulative causative theory posits that migration is sustained and perpetuated by various factors such as networks, culture, and the distribution of human

capital (Massey, 2009). The transnational migration theory emphasizes the collective aspects of migration, the integration of migrants in their new countries, and the important role they play in maintaining communication with their countries of origin. According to Faist (2000), migrants are anticipated to drive social, political, and economic transformations in their countries of origin through diaspora or transnational groups.

Critics argue that the social capital theories tend to be overly optimistic and fail to provide comprehensive insights into how networks can hinder migration. For example, incomplete or fake information can influence networks to encourage irregular migration decisions, which in turn puts migrants at greater risk. Having access to accurate information is crucial in empowering individuals and diminishing the ability of traffickers and smugglers to take advantage of vulnerable migrants. It also helps to counteract the misleading information spread by criminals involved in facilitating irregular migration (Pécoud, 2010). Many network theories fail to consider individuals or entities that are not connected to any network. They fail to consider that individuals may obtain information from alternative sources that are not necessarily part of their network, such as underground networks like human traffickers and smugglers. It has been noted that social capital theories have its own limitations (Arango, 2000).

2.7.2. Migration as a Business

The concept of “migration as a business” was coined by Salt & Stein (1997). The theory is based on four major assumptions. It acknowledges migration as a business that involves both legal and illegal aspects. The migration business is seen as a network of established connections with intricate financial records. The migrants are often viewed as commodities, while smugglers are depicted as individuals engaged in illegal business. This theory views human trafficking and migrant smuggling as a crucial component of the global migration industry, enabling the movement of individuals between their home countries and their intended destinations. Aronowitz (2009) asserts that the growth of smuggling and trafficking is closely tied to the influence of powerful market supply and demand forces. Aronowitz also points out that smugglers display characteristics like those of entrepreneurs, finding ways to bypass legal regulations through corrupt practices. Unethical practices and disregard for national security.

The migration business theory is notable for its emphasis on three key areas: the countries of origin, the transit countries, and the destination countries. During the process, mobilization and recruitment of migrants occur, and it is during transit that facilitation to

smuggle or traffic migrants enroute to their destination occurs. Integration of migrants into the diaspora labour markets and host societies occurs in their destination country. Another crucial aspect of migration business theory is its focus on shifting the attention towards immigration controls, highlighting the interests and institutions involved rather than solely focusing on the migrants who are often seen as victims of the trade. However, the theory suggests that the law of demand and supply plays a significant role in facilitating this illegal trade. However, it is important to consider other underlying factors, such as inequalities between source and destination countries, the intent to join criminal organizations, and enabling social networks, among others. The limitations of migration business theory prevent it from providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of migrants smuggling and trafficking in persons, which was considered for this study as majority of the study respondents were smuggled by the human smugglers from Pakistan to Türkiye. This deficiency is further strengthened by the social network theory, which clarifies how established social networks facilitate the operations of smugglers and traffickers in their illicit enterprises.

However, it aligns with the concept of “*supermarket model*” coined by (Shelley (2011) which depicts smuggling networks with low costs, frequent failures at border crossings, multiple actors operating independently or loosely connected, and a lack of strong hierarchy or violent organizational discipline. Their business model revolves around maximizing profit, and they engage in intense competition with each other. Expenses rise as border security is intensified. Typically, migration is primarily driven by the need for labour. There seems to be a significant lack of accountability within smuggling networks.

2.7.3. Social Networks and Migration Industry

Barnes introduced the concept of “social networks” back in 1954. Being one of the pioneer proponents of the social network theory, (Mitchell 1974), argued that the impression of the social network was elevated as of metaphorical concept to a concrete representation of social associations in social settings. The concept of the social network highlights how the connections between individuals in a society spread throughout that society. Exploring the concept of social networks aims to understand how this interconnectedness impacts the individuals within the network.

Herman (2006), suggests that existing social networks play a role in the smuggling process. The smugglers portray themselves as helping migrants rather than

being driven by profit. Social networks have been found to facilitate the operation of smuggling systems that function like organized crime networks, spanning various countries and regions. Some theories suggest that migrant smuggling is believed to be part of a highly organized and structured international network.

Social network theory focuses heavily on the criminal networks involved in the illicit activities of smuggling and human trafficking. It is crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of the networks involved to effectively combat the trade of migrant smuggling and human trafficking, regardless of their location. It fails to acknowledge the fact that criminal networks operate internationally and possess advanced levels of sophistication. They can involve other legal institutions and professionals, which adds to the challenge of preventing their actions. The approach to understanding these networks needs to be comprehensive. It is essential to engage stakeholders in source, transit, and destination countries. One aspect that can be improved in social network theory is its failure to acknowledge the structural issues that contribute to the operation of criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling and human trafficking. By solely focusing on criminal networks, it overlooks the underlying systemic failures that enable their existence. The limitations in social network theory hinder its ability to fully explain the phenomenon of migrant smuggling and human trafficking, which was one of the aspects of the current study.

MIGRATION AS A FAMILY BUSINESS

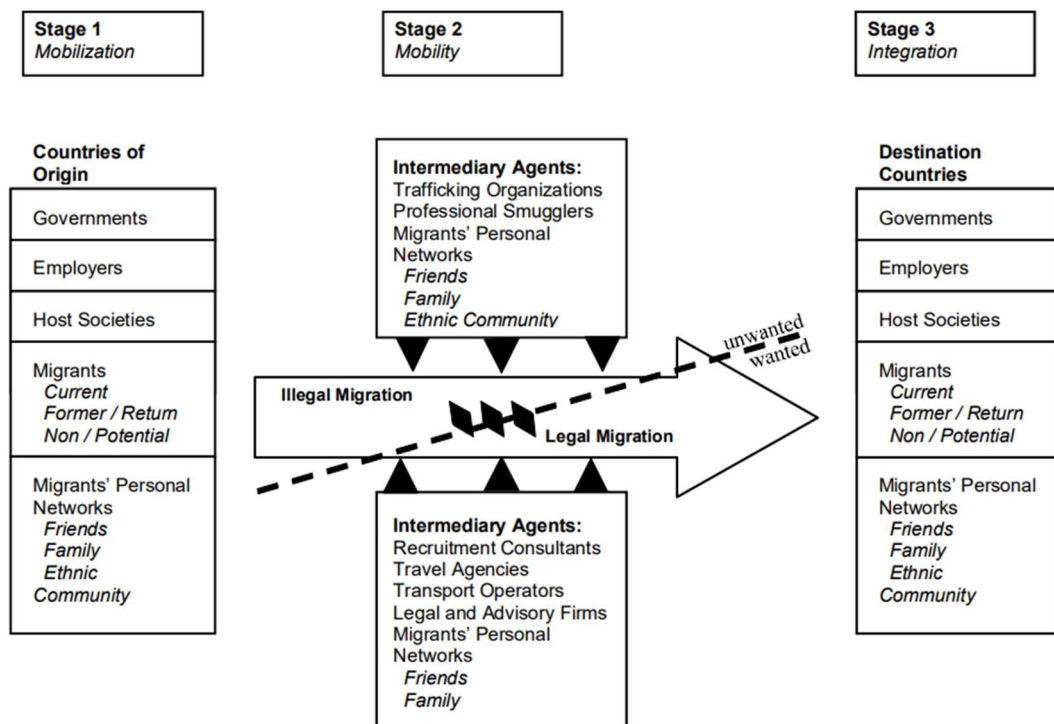


Figure 2.1. Migration conceptualization based on Salt and Stein work (Herman, 2006).

Salt and Stein (1997) contributed significantly to the migration debate, but they viewed all individuals involved in the migration industry as driven by profit, disregarding the fact that many help out of personal goodwill (Herman, 2006) not always for the profit purpose.

2.8. Conclusion

The literature presented in this chapter offers a comprehensive exploration of the phenomenon of migration and its various dimensions. Global statistics of migrants provide valuable insights into migration trends and patterns worldwide. The emergence of irregular migration is scrutinized, highlighting the challenges and complexities associated with this phenomenon. The chapter delves into the characteristics of irregular migrants, particularly focusing on undocumented individuals in regions like the US and the EU. Moreover, the discussion extends to the smuggling of migrants (SoM), elucidating the conceptualization and operational mechanisms of this illicit activity. The analysis underscores the role of migration as a business, shedding light on the economic benefits and social networks that operate the migration industry. Additionally, the chapter

explores migrants' social capital and the significance of social networks in facilitating migration processes. By examining the interplay between social ties and migration dynamics, the chapter offers insights into the complexities of migrant experiences and integration into destination communities.

CHAPTER-III

3. PAKISTAN-TÜRKİYE-GREECE: CONNECTING NODES

3.1. Chapter's Summary

This chapter explains the past and contemporary dimensions of migration between Pakistan, Türkiye, and Greece. It traces the evolution of migration patterns and explores the interconnectedness of these regions as crucial nodes within global migration networks. The narrative begins with an exploration of migration in the pre-partition era, highlighting the historical context of population movements within the Indian subcontinent. It then examines the post-partition migration timeline of Pakistan, shedding light on significant events and trends that have shaped Pakistan's demographic landscape. It further discusses the phenomenon of Pakistani nationals seeking opportunities abroad, driven by economic aspirations and the pursuit of better livelihoods. It scrutinizes the patterns of irregular migration from Pakistan, delineating the factors contributing to this trend and the challenges faced by irregular migrants. Türkiye emerges as a pivotal bridge to Europe within the migration narrative, serving as a gateway for migrants from various regions seeking access to European countries. The chapter traces the influx of migrants into Türkiye over decades and examines the phenomenon of irregular migration within the context of Türkiye's migration policies and practices. Moreover, Türkiye is explored as a transit territory for irregular migrants en route to European destinations. It also elucidates the role of Türkiye as a crucial junction within the migration routes from Pakistan to Europe, highlighting the challenges and opportunities inherent in this migratory journey.

3.2. Migration: Pre-Partition Era

Emigration from eastern and central Punjab to western Punjab (now Pakistan) started in the 1880s when the British undertook their largest social engineering project in India, canal colonization. The concept included establishing villages around canals to attract Punjabi agrarian castes and boost Indian agricultural productivity (Gazdar, 2003; Krishan, 2004). In 1947, with the partition of the Indian sub-continent, most of the Hindu and Sikh families living in these canal colonies relocated to Eastern Punjab, now a part of India (Gazdar, 2003). Although the canal colonies were a major destination for refugees, emigration was not restricted to them only. As a result of the partition of the

Indian Subcontinent, over 6.4 million refugees migrated to Pakistan from India in 1951 (Karim & Nasar, 2003). Until 1971, there had been a constant flow of people moving back and forth between India and Pakistan. While the advent of passports in 1953 made legal travel between the two nations possible, illicit migration continued over the Rajasthan-Sindh border. Once this border was sealed off following the 1965 war between India and Pakistan, the influx of refugees shifted to the other (India-East Pakistan) Border. After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, this border was also sealed. Since the breakage of Pakistan into two countries, about 500000 migrants who considered themselves Pakistanis have been left behind in Bangladesh.

3.2.1. Post-Partition Migration Timeline of Pakistan

Pakistan is of immense importance to the many stakeholders in the field of the migration industry. It is regarded mainly as a nation of emigrants (particularly to Europe and the Middle East). Since its inception in 1947, it has also been a country of immigration and a host to refugees. These refugees migrated from India during the early days of partition; later, in the 1980s, many refugees migrated from Afghanistan to Pakistan because of the Russian war. Moreover, it is a significant transit hub for migrants from Southeast Asia to Europe. Pakistan, a South Asian nation bordering the Arabian Sea, is a link between Central and South Asia and the Middle East. Its geographical location and some historical events in the country during the last 75 years significantly contributed to the migration patterns and growth to and from Pakistan. The country's federation comprises four provinces: Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (previously known as the North-West Frontier Province), Punjab, and Sindh. The other two units are Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The GB is a federally controlled territory; AJK is considered an independent state to some extent, but Pakistan's federal government also administers it.

Since the beginning of the 1950s, the first significant immigrant group of Pakistanis, most of whom came from the regions of Azad State of Jammu & Kashmir and Northern Punjab, went to the United Kingdom to fulfill the needs for the labor force of the construction industry in the UK (Vihé, 2007). This system of lawful emigration continued until the year 1980. In 1961, it was believed that there were 32,000 Pakistanis residing in the United Kingdom (Arif et al., 1997). Beginning in the early 1960s, Pakistani emigrants started moving to other European nations in addition to the United Kingdom. These countries included West Germany and Norway. A short while later, they settled in

other Nordic nations like Denmark. As of 2010, there were around 27,000 Pakistanis living in Norway. During the 1970s and 1980s, many Pakistani women traveled to the United Kingdom and Norway to reunite with their families. Back in the early 1990s, migrants from Pakistan started entering Europe illegally. It is of particular relevance that illegal emigrants from Pakistan belong to the lowest socioeconomic strata of the population and that they go to Europe with the assistance of human smugglers. Nearly 4 million Pakistani migrants were living in Europe in 2013, with approximately half of them residing in the UK.

3.3. Pakistani Nationals in Search of Greener Pastures

The expression “greener pastures” seems appropriate in connection with migration from Pakistan to other countries across the globe. One of its interpretations is that it indicates a disparity in economic prospects across regions, domestically and internationally. The absence of economic opportunities at home is seen as a justifiable reason for leaving the country, which encourages emigration either through traditional means or with the help of some unauthorized channels used in border crossing (NIOC, 2019). Pakistan has a special connection with international migration. When looking at migration patterns within Asia, Pakistan falls among the top twenty countries in terms of emigration and immigration (IOM, 2018, p. 56). Recent statistics from the MoPHRD, Govt. of Pakistan (2021, p. 56) indicate that over 8.4 million Pakistani citizens live, study, or work in 139 countries of the world.

Pakistan falls among the top ten emigration countries in the world, with 6.3 million emigrants, which constitute 3% of its population. The most common type of emigration from Pakistan is labour migration¹⁰. However, the Gulf States are the leading destinations for Pakistani immigrants, especially labour migrants; according to UNDESA, about one million Pakistani emigrants of the worldwide Pakistani migrant’s population resides in Europe. The share of Pakistani immigrants moving to Europe has grown significantly over the previous two decades (IOM, 2020, p. 1). Amjad (2017), in his book *“The Pakistani Diaspora: Corridors of Opportunity and Uncertainty,”* he explained that in the 1950s, people from the working class began migrating to the United

¹⁰“Movement of persons from one State to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment”. According to the concept of migrant, labour migration includes both migrants moving inside the country and migrants crossing international boundaries. This option is also supported by the large number of people who move inside the same country for employment reasons and often encounter the same barriers as international migrants, such as prejudice and integration issues (IOM, 2011).

Kingdom, while in the 1960s, highly qualified professionals started going to the United States and Canada. In the 1970s, unskilled and semiskilled labourers started going to the Middle East. In the 1990s, as countries began relaxing their visa regulations, migrants from Pakistan started to move to Europe, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and Australia. The Pakistani diaspora in various countries comprises about 9.1 million, representing roughly five percent of its total population. Figure 3.1. represents the Pakistani migrants' outflow of twelve years spanning from 2010 to 2021.

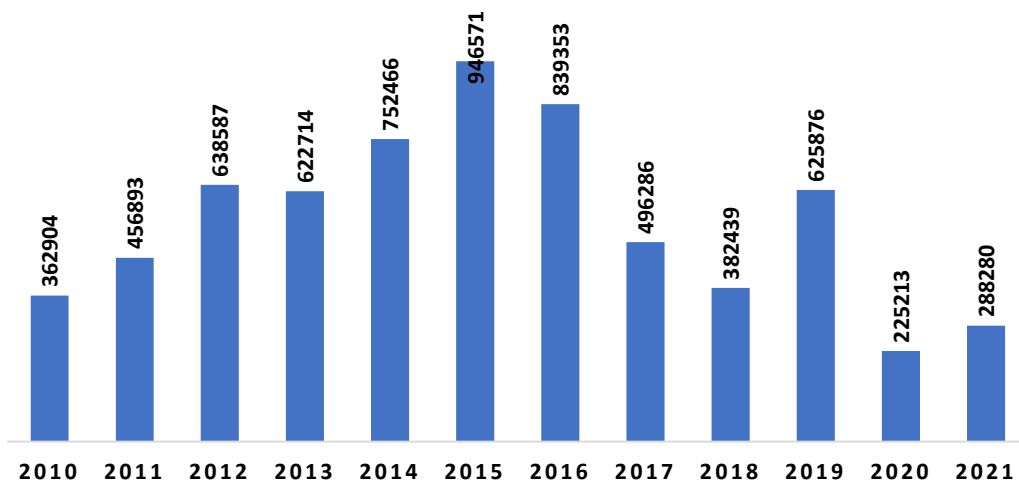


Figure 3.1. *Pakistan's annual outflow of migration (N. M. Shah & Amjad, 2022).*

No doubt that Overseas Pakistani contribute a lot to the national economy in the form of remittances. The recent statistics of the central bank of Pakistan show that the inflow of Pakistani workers' remittances, mainly from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, was about 2.4 billion US dollars during November 2021. On average, overseas Pakistani workers have remitted above two billion US dollars every month since June 2020 (State Bank of Pakistan, 2021). Migration from Pakistan has had both positive and negative impacts on the country. On the one hand, remittances from migrants can provide a significant source of income for households that can contribute to poverty reduction and economic development (M. S. Awan et al., 2015), while on the other, out-migration can lead to a brain drain and a loss of skilled labour in Pakistan (Ahmed et al., 2010).

3.3.1. Irregular Migration from Pakistan

Pakistan has witnessed a significant labour outflow of 11.1 million individuals from 1971 to 2020. Interestingly, this outflow has been accompanied by a rise in irregular labour migration. However, it is worth noting that obtaining accurate data on irregular

migration poses a challenge due to its secretive nature (Qaisrani et al., 2021). According to ICMPD (2013), around 300,000 people left Pakistan by unauthorized ways. This number also includes individuals who were victims of human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Pakistan is home to a significant number of undocumented migrants who go to Western nations in both Europe and North America. According to CIMRAD (2022, p. 15), Between the years 2013 and 2020, the estimated number of Pakistanis living in Europe with an irregular status was 287152; shown in Table 3.1. The figure of Pakistani migrants living irregularly in the United Kingdom during the year 2019 was 1865. A significant decrease from the 8,240 who were living there illegally in 2013. Greece, which acts as a gateway to Europe (Papadopoulou, 2004) for irregular migrants, has seen an increase in the number of Pakistani people who are undocumented migrants. During the year 2015, more than 82,000 Pakistanis were apprehended in Europe for being unlawful immigrants. The figures in Spain and Hungary increased by extremely huge amounts. In terms of the pattern that occurred between the years 2015 and 2020, the number of Pakistanis living in Europe without proper documentation dropped significantly, going from 82,215 to 20,250. Among these countries, the highest percentage of Pakistani irregular migrants was resided in Greece, i.e., 29.69%.

Table 3.1. *Presence of Pakistani irregular migrants in European countries.*

Country	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Austria	2310	880	3145	4050	2810	900	690	495
Belgium	345	365	365	390	290	225	195	100
Cyprus	395	225	200	185	160	490	970	450
France	1600	2370	4210	2815	4000	3010	3815	2425
Germany	3085	2980	11720	8935	3650	2850	2910	2235
Greece	4150	3525	27260	13460	9280	10145	10330	7110
Hungary	3760	425	22695	5895	4400	1035	310	235
Ireland	140	100	310	630	1120	565	350	75
Italy	520	330	650	615	252	715	1100	740
Poland	75	70	100	80	100	110	65	50
Portugal	110	115	245	265	160	95	85	45
Romania	65	55	40	120	150	40	40	85
Slovakia	15	5	35	25	10	15	10	15
Spain	2080	1935	1555	1185	815	770	1030	895
Sweden	125	345	5	30	5	10	15	15
United Kingdom	8240	9790	8210	6115	5545	2895	1865	-
Others	625	770	1470	2115	860	1320	3275	5280
Total	27640	24285	82215	46910	33607	25190	27055	20250

3.4. Türkiye: Bridge to Europe

Türkiye is a country located in both Western Asia and South-eastern Europe. Its land area mostly includes the Anatolian region in Western Asia and East Thrace in South-eastern Europe. Türkiye shares borders with eight countries, which are Bulgaria to the northwest, Greece to the west, Georgia to the northeast, Armenia, Iran, and the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan¹¹ to the east, and Iraq and Syria to the southeast. Additionally, it is surrounded by three seas: the Mediterranean Sea to the south, the Aegean Sea to the west, and the Black Sea to the north. The Sea of Marmara, the Bosphorus, and the Dardanelles¹², collectively known as the Turkish Straits, forms the boundary between Thrace¹³ and Anatolia. These straits also mark the separation of Europe and Asia. Türkiye has been historically important as a crossroad between Europe and Asia, with its geostrategic significance (Ozturk, 2013).

Türkiye's unique geographical location has made it a transit country for migrants seeking to reach Western and Northern countries (Öksüz, 2019, p. iv). It is at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe. It shares 9479-kilometer borders with its neighbouring countries (Armenia 328 km, Azerbaijan 18km, Bulgaria 269 km, Georgia 276 km, Greece 203 km, Iran 560 km, Iraq 384 km, and Syria 911 km). Out of 949 km, 6530 km is connected through sea. Türkiye has 113 border gates which include seven railway border gates, 39 air border gates, 47 sea border gates, and 20 land border gates (Aras & Mencutek, 2020).

3.5. Migration Influx Since Decades

Türkiye has undergone migration flows since the establishment of the Republic, but it transformed into a country of migration in the 1960s due to labor migration. In the 1980s, Türkiye became a transit country and has been severely impacted by various crises in the region (Apan, 2018). The initial migration to Türkiye took place in the form of Muslims and Turkish descendants from neighboring regions for the purpose of nation-

¹¹Nakhchivan is a city and an autonomous republic located in the south-western region of Azerbaijan, near the borders of Türkiye, Iran, and Armenia. <https://azerbaijan.az/en/related-information/222>

¹² The Dardanelles, historically known as the Hellespont and referred to as the Çanakkale Boğazı in Turkish, is a restricted and elongated strait situated in the north-western region of Türkiye. Measuring approximately 38 miles (61 km) in length and between 0.75 to 4 miles (1.2 to 6.5 km) in width, this waterway serves as a crucial connector between the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Dardanelles>

¹³ Thrace is a historical and geographic region located in south-eastern Europe, bounded by the Balkan Mountains to the north, the Aegean Sea to the south, and the Black Sea to the east. It contains parts of modern-day Greece, Bulgaria, and Türkiye. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/thrace>

state building (Bostan & Demiray, 2019). This migration was primarily composed of Turks from Bulgaria, Greece, and Yugoslavia who arrived in Türkiye with refugee status (Korkmaz & Önel, 2022). The invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR in 1979 and the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1978 were two significant events that reinforced Türkiye's place as a transit country (İçduygu & Aksel, 2012b). In addition, events in neighboring countries such as the legal turmoil and wars in the Middle East caused by Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union also led to large-scale migration to more stable countries, causing Türkiye to become not only a transit country but also a destination country (İçduygu & Aksel, 2012b).

3.5.1. Irregular Migration in the Context of Türkiye

Türkiye is an important transit and destination country for migrants, especially for refugees and asylum seekers from neighboring countries such as Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. A significant portion of irregular migrants¹⁴ utilizing Türkiye as a transit country apply for international protection or asylum, with the intention of eventually migrating to another country. İçduygu (2015, p. 279-285) categorized irregular migration after the 1970s into the following four different periods:

- **Emergence period between 1979-1987:** During this period, transit migration was experienced due to the Iranian revolution and the USSR occupation of Afghanistan, leading to around one million people seeking refuge in Türkiye, with a significant portion heading towards Europe.
- **Maturation period between 1988-1993:** This period was characterized by refugee and asylum-seeker migration from Iraq and Bulgaria, transit migration from the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, and circular migration from the Soviet Republics.
- **Saturation period between 1994-2000/2001:** In this period, asylum regulations were introduced, and transit migration increased.

¹⁴In a report prepared by the Turkish Red Crescent, an irregular migrant is characterized as an individual who, due to a lack of financial means or a criminal record, seeks to illegally enter another country from their country of citizenship and lacks the legal right to stay in the country they have migrated to (Türk Kızılay, 2017). However, the concept of whether individuals with a criminal record can be considered irregular migrants remains a subject of debate, as this determination is largely influenced by the extradition treaties that countries have signed with one another (Perruchoud & Redpath-Cross, 2011, p. 31).

- **Theorization period from 2001 until today:** During this period, Türkiye has made efforts to harmonize its migration and asylum system with the EU acquis, and the crime of migrant smuggling was legalized.

According to (İçduygu & Aksel, 2012b), in the early 2000s, Türkiye experienced a significant influx of irregular migrants, particularly from countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Moldova. Although many of these migrants initially entered Türkiye legally with a visa, they eventually started working without residence permits after their visas expired. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to a substantial increase in the number of people seeking temporary work in Türkiye. For example, the number of tourists coming from Bulgaria rose from 33,000 in 1989 to 819,000 in 1992, and the number of tourists coming from Romania increased from 12,000 in 1989 to 567,000 in 1992. However, the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union (EU) and the improvement in the economic conditions of the Russian Federation and Ukraine reduced the number of irregular migrants coming to Türkiye.

Irregular migrants from countries such as Portugal, Poland, the Philippines, and South Korea came to Türkiye during the 1990s in search of higher wages. The monthly wages in Türkiye were higher than those in many Asian and European countries during that time, making Türkiye an attractive option for migrants. The recruitment of workers from Russia, Romania, and Poland, who were employed for lower wages than local workers, was organized by employers who were responsible for promoting irregular migration. This trend continued even after the Syrian Civil War (Tek-Gıda İş Sendikası, 2021).

Different types of unreported (also known as “black”) or semi-informal (sometimes known as “grey”) employments are often supported by and integrated into the official economy, several studies have shown how irregular immigrant workers are inadvertently integrated into the economic functioning of host cultures. The underground economy is fueled by the outsourcing of tasks and services, the casualization and fragmentation of contracts, and what is referred to as “flexibility” in certain neo-liberal discourses. These economies mostly depend on immigrants who lack legal status (Lewis et al., 2015a).

The causes for migration to Türkiye have been the subject of interest for scholars such as Ahmet İçduygu. He categorized migrants into three groups: Firstly, migration

crisis in Western Europe, resulting in restrictive immigration and refugee policies and practices, leading to the migration of thousands of individuals to Europe through transit countries like Türkiye during the 1980s and 1990s (Ün & Paydak, 2017); In the second group of irregular migrants, men and women from countries such as Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, and Romania who entered Türkiye legally (on a tourist visa) and were primarily employed in the informal economy (İçduygu, 2005, p. 31) and those who sought refuge in Türkiye due to political or military crises, coups, foreign military interventions, and civil wars (Tek-Gıda İş Sendikası, 2021). The majority of irregular migrants in Türkiye currently belong to the first and third groups, and the second group has significantly decreased in number.

Furthermore, Türkiye has become a destination for irregular migrants in the post-2000 era, due to a combination of factors including the potential for higher earnings compared to home countries of many migrants, more flexible visa procedures, cultural, religious, and geographical similarities, the welcoming attitude of the Turkish people towards foreigners, and a higher standard of living compared to other neighbouring countries in the region (Öksüz, 2019). It faces the flows of irregular migrants from multiple directions. The Republic of Türkiye is among those countries which encounter such conditions. Due to its location, people from various regions, especially Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, use Turkish borders to enter Europe and North America. The predominant countries are Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Congo, Nigeria, and Somalia. Mostly, these migrants, with their unnaturalized status, prefer to stay in Türkiye temporarily as they always try to reach European countries like Italy and Germany for their permanent settlements. Consequently, they keenly look for escaping opportunities to reach Europe. Over the last few decades, Türkiye is continuously struggling against these large-scale irregular migration movements.

The apprehension of migrants by Turkish authorities reveals the presence of three distinct groups of individuals: (1) irregular migrants who aim to utilize Türkiye as a transit country *en route* to a Western destination, primarily Europe; (2) irregular migrants who arrive in Türkiye for the purpose of residing and working without valid documentation; and (3) asylum seekers who are expected to leave the country but do not, and whose refugee claims have been denied (İçduygu & Aksel, 2012b). In other words, the prevalent issue pertains to the illegal nature of their presence in Türkiye. Following the Syrian Civil War, irregular migration in Türkiye has progressed in accordance with the first and third

categories of migrants as defined by İçduygu. The second group, which encompasses individuals seeking employment in Türkiye from Eastern Europe, is not prevalent after 2011. The majority of irregular migrants apprehended in Türkiye are Syrian individuals who have been granted temporary protection by the country but continue to aspire to migrate to European nations with higher standards of welfare and human rights (Bostan & Demiray, 2019). It has been established through various researches that such migratory flows are closely linked with a worldwide network of smugglers, agents, migrant handlers, and human traffickers that facilitate the migrants (Van Liempt, 2007) in sending, transit, and receiving countries during the whole process. (T. H. Shah, 2020; İçduygu & Aksel, 2012; Sajid, 2010). The irregular migrants use several crossing points to enter Europe. Until 2010, they mostly preferred to use the sea route through Greece, but due to increased surveillance from Greek and Turkish authorities since 2016, the crossing efforts shifted from sea to land border (Aras & Mencutek, 2020).

3.5.2. Türkiye: A Transit Territory for the Irregular Migrants

If Türkiye is a destination for some migrants, it is also a transit for many others. Reaching European states always remains the first choice for irregular migrants, and many of them prefer to stay in Türkiye only for a shorter period. Türkiye is among those transit states struggling with a massive presence of refugees or irregular migrants. Migrants from many neighbouring countries use Turkish land to go to EU states through Greece, and Afghans are on top of the list. Various studies show that most Afghan refugees and irregular migrants that entered Türkiye have some features of irregularity, especially those who have spent some years of their lives in Pakistan or Iran with the status of undocumented migrants (Dimitriadi, 2018, p. 74). Irregular migration from Pakistan to Türkiye involves some fundamental steps. Firstly, some big cities like Karachi and Quetta of Sindh and Baluchistan provinces respectively are the entry point for the neighbouring Iran. After reaching Iran, they move towards Türkiye and cross international border through its eastern city of Van.

Although the irregular migrants of Pakistan origin travel through Iran or any other neighbouring country to reach Türkiye, they do not experience prolonged undocumented stay in their lives like Afghans who have already spent years away from their origin. Hence, Türkiye remains the place for Pakistani irregular migrants where they may experience various types of immobility. Still, sometimes, for many reasons, they prolong their stay in transit state. The motivations of irregular migrants who come to Türkiye

varies from country to country. For example, irregular migrants from the Iran-Islamic geography have different motivations for coming to Türkiye. According to a 1995 IOM Report on Transit Migration in Türkiye, these migrants primarily migrated for economic reasons and utilized the services of human smugglers to reach the country. Surveys conducted with these irregular migrants reveal that the majority aimed to ultimately migrate to countries such as Europe, the USA, Canada, or Australia, with only eight percent considering permanent settlement in Türkiye (Ün & Paydak, 2017). In the past, Türkiye was largely viewed as a transit country for these migrants, with a significant number attempting to cross its borders illegally (Avaner & Ocaklı, 2021). This trend can be attributed to various factors, including military and political crises and the intensification of globalization, which has transformed Türkiye's position in international migration systems and its connection with the European migration regime (İçduygu & Aksel, 2012, p. 20).

In Türkiye, there are approximately 368,230 conditional refugees/asylum seekers (from countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Somalia, etc.) under the purview of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It is challenging to provide a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon of asylum seekers and/or irregular migration in Türkiye, including the destinations they aspire to reach, and prevalent trends in migration patterns. This is due to the complexities associated with generalizing about this issue. The records maintained by various public institutions, such as the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), and the Ministry of Treasury and Finance, cannot be easily compared or harmonized (Bostan & Demiray, 2019). For instance, data from TÜİK in 2019 indicate that 677,042 individuals immigrated to Türkiye, however, this data may not accurately reflect the total number of irregular migrants in the country (TÜİK, 2019).

In light of Türkiye's position as a transit country, most European leaders aim to increase financial aid to transit countries such as Türkiye to prevent an increase in irregular migration in their own countries (Ekonomim, 2021). Keeping in view the sensitivity of this issue, recently, the speaker of the Turkish parliament, Mustafa Sentop, addressed the necessity for fair burden-sharing of migration at the Global Parliamentary Conference on Migration held in Ankara. He stressed the importance of accepting refugees in line with international law and emphasized the significance of expanding the

application of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (Duz, 2022). Figure 3.2. represents the data of apprehension of irregular migrants from top three nationalities. According to (Göç İdaresi, 2023), a total number of 228838 Pakistanis were detained in Türkiye during last 10 years.

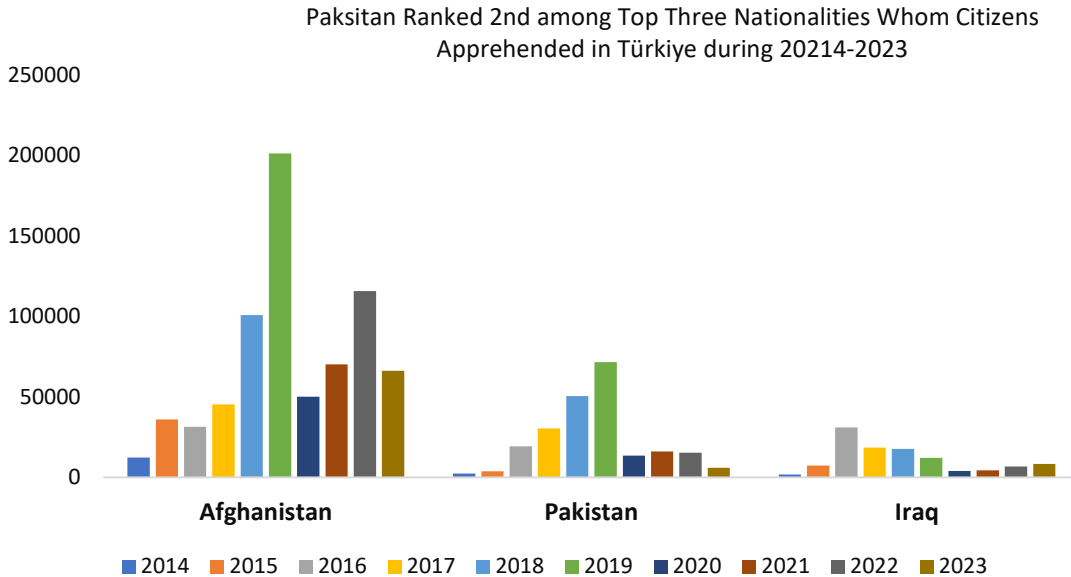


Figure 3.2. Irregular migrants apprehended in Türkiye during 2014-2022.

According to Fabbri (2022), Turkish authorities have recently detained many illegal migrants from Pakistan for their involvement in abduction, gang wars, and other unlawful offenses. In quest of a better life in Europe, illicit immigrants travel from Pakistan to Türkiye through Iran. Moreover, the Turkish authorities confirmed that 3,000 to 6,000 undocumented Pakistani nationals remain in detention at any given time, while many stay in Türkiye until they find a way to enter Europe. Turkish authorities claim that illegal immigration from Pakistan has significantly increased over the last four years. This surge has led to widespread discontent in Türkiye, which is already struggling to accommodate the flood of Syrian and Afghan refugees. Following claims of misbehavior and misconduct against local social behavior in certain districts of Istanbul, a surge of anti-Pakistani sentiment with the popular hashtag “Pakistan Get Out” emerged on social media platforms during the first half of 2022.”

3.6. Unauthorized Migration from Pakistan to Europe

The most familiar route that Pakistani ‘irregular migrants’ used to enter European countries pass through Greece, also known as the gateway to Europe (Papadopoulou,

2004). In the early 1990s, with the emergence of the first migration flow to the EU member states, many Pakistani nationals with impoverished backgrounds emigrated to some European states irregularly with the help of several networks of human smuggling (Yousef, 2013, p. 12; Papadopoulou, 2004). The land connections between Pakistan and Europe are well-established and well-organized, due to which hundreds and thousands of Pakistani individuals arrive annually through sea routes (Papadopoulou, 2004). Pakistan was one of the most commonly reported nations of origin for persons transiting the Western Balkans in 2019 and the second most frequently recorded nationality among sea arrivals to Italy in the same year (IOM, 2020, p. 1). The issue of ‘irregular migration’ is global, and Pakistan, like many other countries, faces it as one of the most pressing problems. According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Pakistan is one of the most detected countries with citizens involved in ‘human smuggling’ or unauthorized migration to the EU member states (UNODC, 2013, p. 1; Papadopoulou, 2004).

There are two known phases of migration from Pakistan to the European countries – legal or legitimate and illegal or irregular. During the first phase, an increasing trend of economic migration from Pakistan to Europe was witnessed between the 1970s and 1980s due to the industrial boom and high demand for labour for various European industries (Azhar, 2007). Consequently, many networks of human smugglers or migrant handlers and agents also came into being to transport individuals to Europe through unauthorized means. Subsequently, the second phase started in the early 1990s when many impoverished males from Pakistan migrated to EU states with the assistance of human smugglers (Yousef, 2013) or agents.

Pakistani nationals who leave the country using unauthorized means (Papadopoulou, 2004) to reach their desired destinations in Europe are proportionally relatively low, as most emigrate in legal or authorized ways (Qaisrani et al., 2022). But overall, this number constitutes a significant part of the irregular arrivals of Pakistani citizens (through land and sea) to Europe, especially in Italy and Greece. According to (IOMDTM, 2022), during the last five years, 2,383 Pakistani nationals arrived in Greece by land and sea routes, the second highest number of Pakistani citizens in a country, followed by Italy. The route for illegal migration from Pakistan to Greece via Türkiye is well-established and historic. That’s why, those leaving Pakistan for Europe, mostly choose the Eastern Mediterranean route (Aksel et al., 2015) that passes through Türkiye and Greece.

Movement of people from Pakistan to Greece started in 1970 at a small stage with the signing of an agreement to fulfill the demand of Greece’s labour force for its shipping industry. (Marouf, 2017) but now it has become the second most common destination for Pakistani irregular migrants (IOMDTM, 2022), especially in the last few years. Being a centre of unauthorized migration and gateway to Europe, Greece also serves as a crossroads for the people of the move from Pakistan to EU countries. Due to strong social connections, many Pakistanis entered Greece irregularly and now become the second largest Asian settlers in the country (Kimourtzis et al., 2017; Yousef, 2013).

3.6.1. Recent Trend of Migration from Pakistan to European Countries

The starting point for writing this piece of research was the data related to the arrivals of Pakistani citizens to some countries of the European Union during the last five years, i.e., 2017-2021. According to (IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, 2022), Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, and Spain were common destinations for Pakistani migrants. It is also noted that Italy and Greece were the leading destinations for the arrival of Pakistani migrants. According to available data, 9236 Pakistani migrants arrived in Italy, while 2383 reached Greece using various land and sea routes. Pakistan is still among the top ten nationalities of migrants’ arrivals to Europe. The number of its citizens who have crossed the borders of different countries and reached Europe by sea or land during 2022 is 2564 (IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, 2022). Figure 3.3. depicts the arrivals of Pakistani nationals in EU states during 2017-2021.

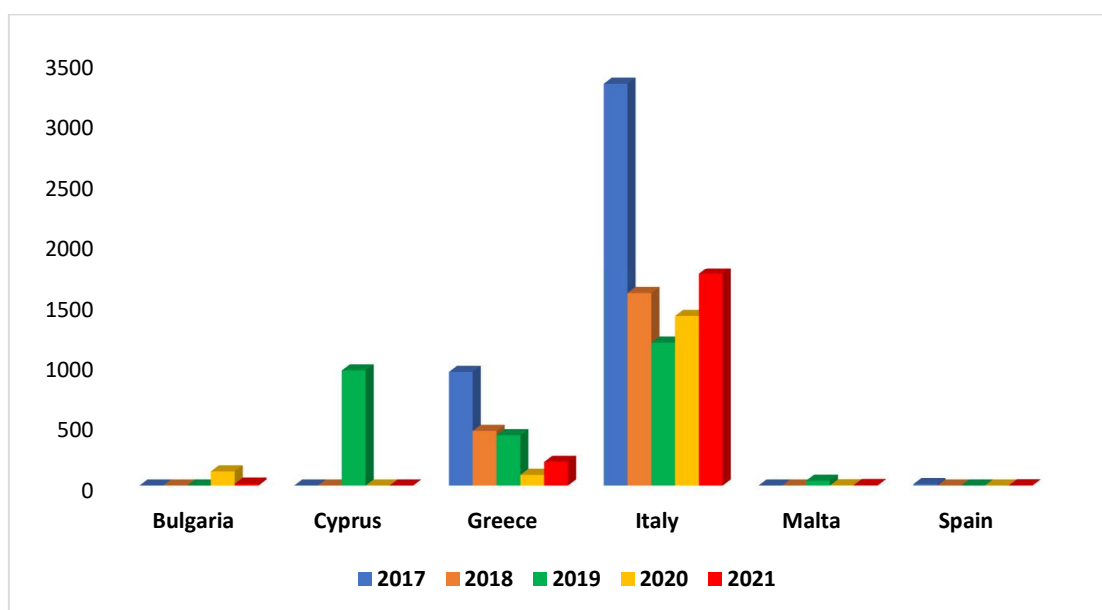


Figure 3.3. Arrivals of Pakistani nationals to EU states (IOM DTM, 2022)

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) collected official statistics on initial arrivals by land and sea from national authorities in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, and Spain. It is possible to get disaggregated data by nationality for arrivals by sea in Greece, Italy, Malta, and Cyprus (only in 2019), arrivals by land in Bulgaria (only in 2020 and 2021), and arrivals by sea and land in Spain between the years 2017 and 2021. The only year for which data on nationalities is available for Cyprus is 2019, and during that year, 950 people with Pakistani citizenship were registered.

The number of people arriving in Malta dropped from forty to four between 2019 and 2021, while the total number of people coming into Spain from Pakistan was thirteen between 2017 and 2021. The number of Pakistani nationals who entered Greece increased from 88 in 2017 to 983 in 2020. The highest number of Pakistani nationals arriving in Italy was 3,318 in 2017, which declined to 1,180 in 2019 and further increased to 1,749 arrivals in 2021.

Similarly, Pakistani nationals are connected to other countries like Bosnia, Croatia, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia to reach the desired destinations in the European Union. Figure 3.4. exhibits the transit routes they used during their journey. The following timelines illustrate the journey of Pakistani nationals across the Western Balkan and Eastern European regions between the years 2017 and 2021. During the period covered by this analysis, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia had very similar patterns of transits involving Pakistani people. Initially, the number of transits increased at an exponential rate. Subsequently, during the last years of the reporting period, the number of transits fell, although it was still high in 2021. Since no data for Albania is accessible after January 2021, the numbers for that year are missing several key months and are consequently inaccurate.

The number of Pakistani nationals who transited through North Macedonia grew from 0 to 1,330 between 2017 and 2020 and then approximately quintupled the following year, reaching 6,587. The number of transits in Serbia grew from 0 to 4,835 between 2017 and 2019. The number of transits continued to fall, hitting a new all-time low of 549 in 2021.

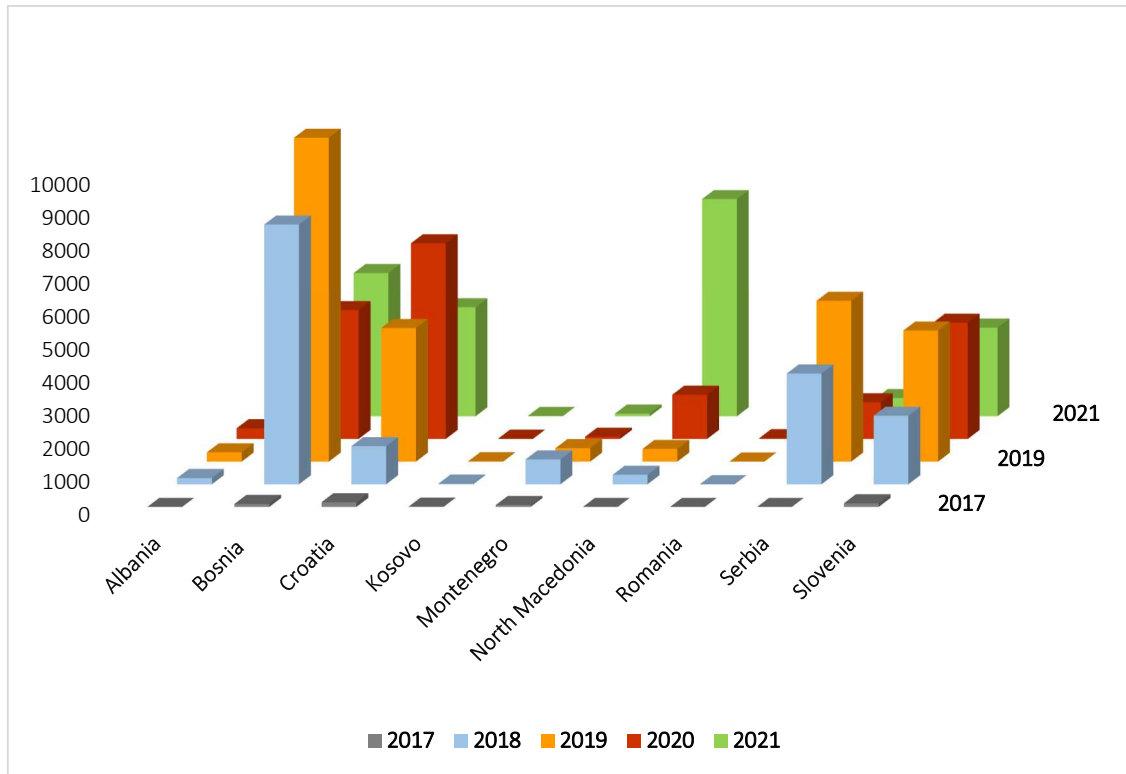


Figure 3.4. *Pakistani transited through Western Balkan and Eastern Europe (IOM DTM, 2022)*

3.7. Conclusion

The chapter offered a comprehensive exploration of various dimensions of migration between Pakistan, Türkiye, and Greece. It delineated the evolution of migration patterns from the pre-partition era to contemporary times, emphasizing the interconnectedness of these regions within global migration networks. The chapter highlighted the motivations driving Pakistani nationals to seek opportunities abroad and scrutinizes the patterns of irregular migration from Pakistan. Türkiye emerged as a pivotal transit point for migrants en route to Europe, reflecting its significance within migration routes from Pakistan. Overall, the chapter provided valuable insights into the complex dynamics of migration between these regions, underscoring the challenges and opportunities inherent in this migratory journey.

CHAPTER-IV

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

4.1. Chapter's Summary

The current chapter presents a detailed mechanism related to the methodology and methods used in the current study, giving a thorough understanding of the research framework, philosophical foundations, and methodological approach employed. It provides the details of the research design, explaining the reasoning behind choosing semi-structured interviews as the main method of data collection. It also discusses the creation of a carefully designed interview guide and the criteria used to select study participants. Subsequently, it summarizes the steps taken to enter the field. In addition, it thoroughly analyses the ethical considerations involved in the research process, providing a comprehensive account of the steps taken to maintain ethical standards, and addresses the difficulties faced during fieldwork. The chapter offers valuable insights into the data collected from the participants and highlights the methods used to accurately translate recorded interviews, maintaining the integrity of the original material. It further elaborates on the procedures used in data analysis, providing a comprehensive overview of the coding techniques used to organize and interpret the collected data. Furthermore, it presents diagrams designed to highlight the baseline of the study and data generated sources, making it easier to comprehend the nature of the data and its analysis.

4.2. Research Framework

A research framework serves as a roadmap for organizing the study, helping researchers to articulate their theoretical perspectives, identify relevant variables, and establish connections between different aspects of the research inquiry. In essence, it serves as a foundational scaffold upon which the research study is built, providing a structured approach to conceptualizing, designing, and conducting empirical investigations while ensuring rigor, coherence, and relevance in the research process (Burian et al., 2010). The relationship among the various components, such as philosophical worldview, research design, and research approach, is shown in Figure 4.1. which exhibits the framework of the study.

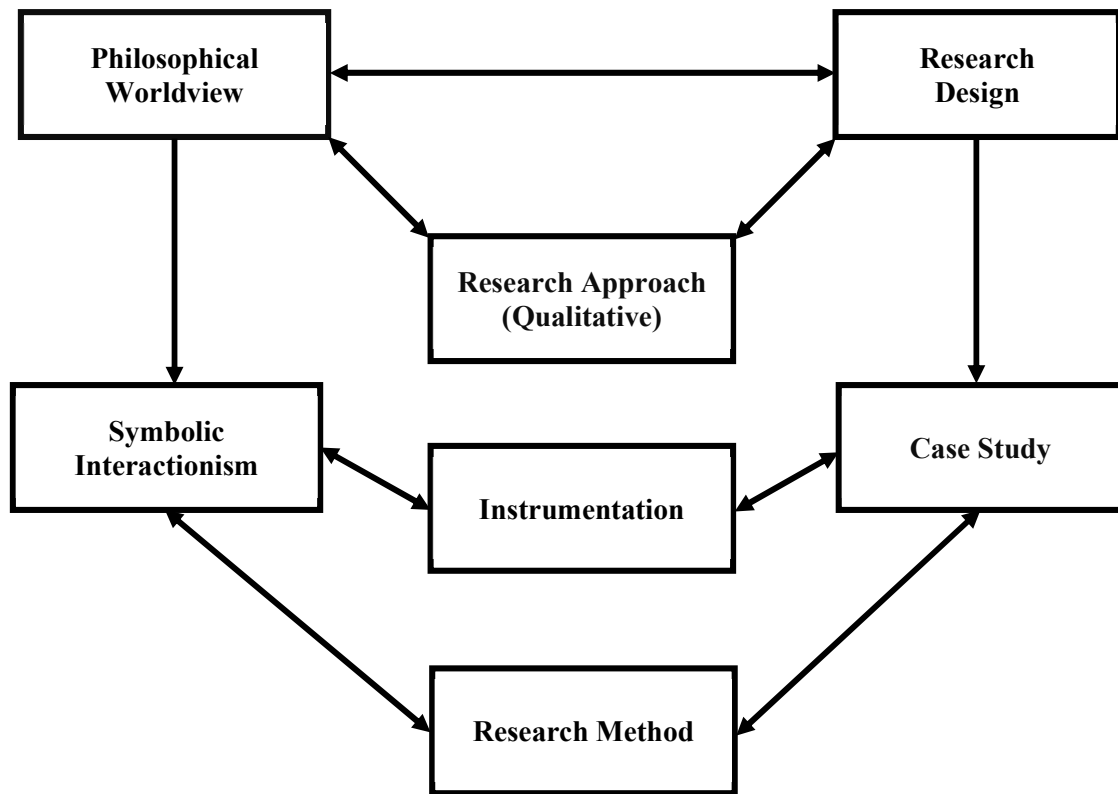


Figure 4.1. *Author's self-generated research framework*

4.3. Philosophical Worldview

The philosophical lens provides the philosophical underpinnings to any scientific inquiry upon which the research process can be built. These foundations encompass the assumptions and fundamental belief that shape how researcher understands the knowledge, reality, and human behaviour. The researcher's philosophical position is one of the fundamental aspects that shapes the choice of suitable methodology in research. Researcher's personal philosophy plays a significant role in shaping the understanding of reality and in determining legitimate means of acquiring knowledge about the world (Birks & Mills, 2015, p. 1-9).

Social research seeks to comprehend the meanings and interpretations that individuals place on their experiences. Since social phenomena are complicated, so researchers shall consider the cultural, historical, and social settings in which they occur. For example, Mead (1934, p. 272) argued that "The human individual who possesses a self is always a member of a larger social community" and the development of the self is an ongoing process that occurs through interactions with other human beings and cannot be understood in isolation. The concept of 'self' as structured through social interaction is particularly relevant for exploring how individuals interpret their identities and attach

meanings to the personal experiences they hold (Mead, 1934) in the context of the whole process of irregular migration. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2005, p. 22):

“All research is interpretive; it is guided by the researcher’s set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Some beliefs may be taken for granted, invisible, only assumed, whereas others are highly problematic and controversial.”

To get a comprehensive grasp of the social interactions, symbols and meanings that define the research setting of the present study, symbolic interactionist perspective seems most suitable as this framework also involves immersion in the study’s environment (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986). For example, Blumer (1986, p. 39) employs a metaphorical expression of “*veil*” that supports the adopted philosophical lens for the current study. According to him, research is a dialogue between the researcher and the subject matter under investigation:

“Lifting the veils that obscure or hide what is going on. The task of scientific study is to lift the veils that cover the area of group life that one proposes to study. The veils are not lifted by substituting, in whatever degree, preformed images for firsthand knowledge. The veils are lifted by getting close to the area and by digging deep into it through careful study.”

I, as a researcher realized that my socio-philosophical thinking is very much align with the perspective of symbolic interactionism, and I was quite comfortable to carry out the current study using this lens because symbolic interactionism is considered as one of the interpretive perspectives used in social research that seeks to understand how individuals make meaning through their socio-psychological actions and interactions. It is a theory and approach that aims to depict and comprehend the process of meaning-making (Schwandt, 1994, p. 123). This approach suits to carry out the current study about the various strategies of Pakistani irregular migrants as this tradition seeks to understand the multilayered world of lived experiences from the people’s perspective who live it (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118).

4.3.1. Symbolic Interactionism

As the premise of symbolic interactionism is derived from the notion that all aspects of a society are socially constituted, encompassing macrolevel power structures to microlevel daily interactions. Mead's argument also highlights the role of social interactions in shaping society and its components. The perspective emphasizes that meanings concerning these power structures and interactions are derived from social interactions at various levels. Mead and Blumer, who subscribe to this perspective, focus their analysis on the individual rather than society or institutions. They refute the idea that social structures, such as socioeconomic statuses, explain outcomes. Instead, symbolic interactionists view structures as groups of people repeatedly engaged in interaction (Leavy, 2014, p. 86). It contributes to the development of shared meanings, resulting in the adoption of common definitions of emotions, experiences, and behaviour. According to social interactionism, people create, negotiate, and modify social meanings through their interactions. As behaviour and meaning are socially constructed, so the self is too (Sandstrom et al., 2006).

Symbolic interactionists emphasize individual agency in shaping and transforming the surrounding world as through assigning meanings, defining situations, and planning courses of action, individuals actively construct the reality of their environment and exert a degree of control over it (p. 6). The interpretation and significance of interactions are subjective and vary individually, leading to the creation of personalized realities. Consequently, the interpretation of the same interaction may differ greatly among individuals due to their unique history of social interactions and personal meanings. Symbolic interactionist theory is grounded in individuals' experiences and meanings shaping their behaviours and interactions. The research methods used by symbolic interactionists allow themes to emerge from data to reflect individual experiences and realities. Among others, ethnography, grounded theory, and narrative analysis are commonly utilized approaches that enable this process. These methods prioritize understanding how people derive meaning from their experiences and prevent researchers' assumptions from influencing the findings. (Leavy, 2014, p. 87).

Charmaz acknowledges that data is both the participants' and researcher's interpretation and construction of lifeworld views, distinguishing it from social constructivism, which only acknowledges participant interpretations and constructions (Charmaz, 2016, p. 127). The emergence of concepts and categories in research is shaped

by the researcher's interactions with the subjects under investigation. As a result, the data that is collected was co-constructed through a collaborative process between the researcher and the subjects (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007). So, the researcher's job is to figure out what people's daily actions mean and explain to them that how others recognize their lives (Barglowski, 2016, p. 125). The collection of data using this approach also enables the gathering of information from a variety of sources with the goal of comprehending the significance of the issues from the perspective of the subjects being studied (Creswell, 2012).

4.4. Research Approach

The qualitative research has been chosen as a methodical approach for the current study as it provides researchers with the opportunity to undertake a comprehensive investigation of a complex phenomenon situation within a particular context. It investigates the human environment, personal experiences, and societal processes through the subjective judgments of the participants. It provides valuable insights into the social dynamics and experiences of people or communities (Hay, 2010, p. 5). This approach strives to answer the "*what*", "*how*" and "*why*" of phenomena (Thorogood & Green, 2004), as it emphasizes the qualities of entities, processes, and meanings that are not quantitatively measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, and frequency (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It diverges from the quantitative research method in its emphasis on providing an in-depth and detailed analysis of meaning patterns associated with one or multiple cases.

Unlike quantitative research, which aims to establish how specific variables influence others by quantifying the relationships and attempting to generalize concepts, qualitative research centres on offering a comprehensive portrayal and interpretation of the underlying factors and complexities at play (Creswell, 2007). The qualitative research method also allows to investigate the research problem in its natural setting rather than having subjects studied in a laboratory (Creswell, 2012).

The importance of qualitative research in migration studies is significant as it is better equipped to examine intricate, conjunctural, and multifaceted aspects of migration dynamics. Furthermore, it is better suited to comprehend the viewpoints of social actors and immigrant groups, particularly those who are marginalized in mainstream society (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2018, p. 2-3). According to De Vries & Beuving (2015, p. 19), "A generic approach in social research" that includes research methods like in-depth

interviews, focus groups, participant observation, document and visual data analysis, and epistemological approaches that range from critical realism to interpretivism. (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz 2018, p. 3).

This approach was chosen because it also gives a contextualized insight of the social phenomena being investigated (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). To understand reality, define and explicate the social world, and construct or reassess theoretical frameworks in social sciences, it is the foremost method of developing explanatory models and theories (Morse et al., 1996) linked with the rich and nuanced world of human experiences helpful to understand the complexities of their behaviour (Lakshman et al., 2000). In contrast to quantitative research approach, it relies on natural language rather than numerical data (Polkinghorne, 2010). The crux of methodological importance lies not in the selection of a particular approach, but rather in the degree of quality inherent in the resultant research findings. In other words, the efficacy of a given method should be evaluated based on the output it generates, rather than based on its theoretical underpinnings or other extrinsic factors (Corbin, 2016, p. 52).

In the context of irregular/undocumented Pakistani migrants, there are numerous hardships and untoward situations they face and cope with such conditions. By adopting various survival tactics, they not only meet their basic needs and navigate unfamiliar environments but also tolerate and minimize the stressful events (Zohry, 2009) they encounter with frequently. The current study focused on the lived experiences and the survival and coping strategies of the Pakistani irregular migrants at their present place of irregular stay and the face-to-face interactions provide an opportunity for the participants to express their experiences and conditions in their own words with a greater detail and in a more personal manner (Tonsing, 2014).

The adopted research approach facilitates the production of knowledge about human experiences by understanding the meanings they attach to their encounters with others, culture, and material objects (Polkinghorne, 2010). Moreover, its interpretive nature also allows for a thorough analysis of data as the purpose of the current study is to collect the experiences of the participants regarding their various strategies of survival associated with their irregular status and to interpret the meanings they ascribe to various patterns (Berg, 2007; Creswell, 2014). It involves the subjects who had gone through a specific phase of 'irregular migration' and their experiences can generate a factual data. It also supports the argument of Straus & Corbin (1998), i.e., "A key idea is that this

theory development does not come “off the shelf,” but rather is generated or “grounded” in data from participants who have experienced the process” as cited in (Creswell, 2012, p. 83).

One of the reasons to choose qualitative research was to gain a deeper insight of the participants (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006) by examining their individual experiences rather than deriving generalization from a large group (Nicholls, 2017) about a particular issue. Coping and survival strategies are the terms often used interchangeably (El-Rayeh Elamin, 2003, p. 20) and generally recognized as the tactics utilized by individuals to address adversities and challenges especially related to behavioural and psychological issues, they face due to the prevalent conditions (Zohry, 2009). These strategies also exhibit significant variations contingent upon the socio-economic conditions of individuals or a community and in their level of flexibility and adaptation (El-Rayeh Elamin, 2003, p. 20).

This method is best suited for the current study as it involves closely observing, scrutinizing, and recording the distinctive experiences of the subjects related to migration and their survival strategies in Türkiye. The research methodology employed in this study entails formulating research questions and procedures, collecting data within the natural setting of the participants, analyzing the data through an inductive process that progresses from specific observations to general themes, and finally interpreting the meaning of the data. The resulting report is characterized by a flexible structure. In general, this type of research usually serves to assist researchers in developing an extensive and nuanced understanding of a particular phenomenon.

4.5. Research Design

The research design is a comprehensive framework that guides the implementation of a research study. The backbone structure of a study is essential as it provides support and cohesiveness to the research. It serves as the framework for the collection, quantification, and interpretation of data. A typical research design encompasses the methodology for data collection, the selection of instruments, and the intended approach for data analysis. Hence, research design refers to the systematic and structured framework that shapes the plan of action for conducting research, outlining the specific techniques and protocols for gathering and evaluating the requisite data.

The main objective of the current case study was to comprehend the fundamental nature and significance of the migratory experiences and the strategies of Pakistani

irregular migrants they opted for their survival in Türkiye. According to (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), the primary objective of qualitative researchers is to investigate phenomena within their natural setting and attempt to comprehend them by interpreting the meanings that individuals attribute to them. It aimed to investigate the views of Pakistani irregular migrants regarding their multifarious experiences in Türkiye. The selected methodology was a qualitative investigation. The primary goal of a researcher utilizing the case study approach is to explicate or interpret a particular experience by portraying its essence and significance. The present research inquiry is based on about five months of challenging fieldwork conducted in several selective locations of Istanbul.

4.6. Locale of Study

Istanbul has been chosen as the main site for the current study and multiple visits of its various locations were performed for the purpose of gathering data. The selection of Istanbul as a research site was done because it was not just the most populous city of Türkiye, but it also has significant migrant communities and undocumented workforce. Since the city of Istanbul is one of its kind, it accommodates the highest number of undocumented migrants in Türkiye. Like many other nationalities, irregular migrants of Pakistani origin also choose Istanbul for various reasons.

In addition, the city serves as a gateway and transit location for migrants headed toward Europe. Due to the availability of job opportunities, irregular migrants of different nationalities (including Pakistan) choose Istanbul and work in the informal sector. During the fieldwork, it was hardest to reach the irregular migrants of Pakistani origin as these individuals are often marginalized, isolated, and exhibit a level of distrust towards outsiders, due to which reaching them has always been a difficult task for me. As a researcher, I adopted some alternate strategies to overcome these barriers. To establish initial connection with the participants, I consulted two acquaintances who had been residing in Istanbul for the last several years in connection with education and small-scale personal business respectively.

During my field visits, I was facilitated by these two persons, both hailed from the Punjab province of Pakistan and possessed knowledge about the presence of irregular migrants of Pakistani origin in Istanbul. Their invaluable assistance helped in reaching out to research participants with greater ease. As the quality of qualitative research is also linked to the quality of the relationship the researcher establishes with participants and good relationships can facilitate information sharing and improve the quality of the

research findings (Morgan & Guevara, 2008, p. 728-29). Keeping in view the convenience of the participants, Urdu¹⁵, Punjabi, Pothohari and Hindko languages were used for conversation during the fieldwork. These interviews were subsequently transcribed and translated into English for analysis. The insights gained through these efforts served to enhance the depth and quality of our field research.

4.6.1. Nature of Participants

At the beginning of my fieldwork, the sole principle for participants' recruitment was limited to Pakistani citizens residing in Türkiye without proper documentation or with their irregular migrant status regardless of their mode of entry (regular/irregular) to Türkiye. Although the main criteria for the participants' selection was their present status of stay (irregular/undocumented) in Türkiye. In addition to the basic criteria, some variations among the participants were found and following categories emerged; exhibited in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. *Socio-demographic details of participants.*

Sr. No.	Participants	Number
1.	Entered Türkiye legally (by air/land) but later become irregular due to expiry of visa or some other reasons.	03
2.	Irregular entry to Türkiye through a famous land route PAK-IR-TUR.	25

In line with these categories, I conducted interviews with 28 individuals. I also explained my research questions and the purpose of my study to the key informants, so they could assist me for conducting interviews of the subsequent participants. Majority of the participants were young male and came from the Punjab Province of Pakistan.

4.7. Research Procedures

The current qualitative inquiry investigation was carried following the necessary steps required for a scientific inquiry. The study went through the following phases:

- At the initial stage, the research proposal was developed and submitted to the jury for acceptance. After getting consent from the jury, the proposal, along with a tentative interview guide, was submitted to the institutional Scientific Research and Publication

¹⁵Urdu is the national language, but every province has its own language too. According to Hussnain et al. (2018), Pakistan is a linguistically diversified country where more than 70 languages are being spoken.

Ethics Committee (SRPEC) for the necessary approval. The role of said forum in reviewing proposals is essential for ensuring the credibility of the study. The concerned committee possesses the authority and is responsible for scrutinizing educational research proposals prior to their implementation to ensure whether the research design and plan meet the ethical standards of the institution or not. Subsequently, the SRPEC granted its approval via protocol No. 330571 on June 24, 2022.

- In addition to consulting hundreds of documents and literature related to the proposed study, the researcher watched dozens of videos on YouTube and Facebook in connection with the irregular migration from Pakistan to other countries, especially Türkiye, Greece, and Italy. With the help of the literature and relevant visual material, the researcher succeeded in preparing the initial draft of the research instrument for the participants, i.e., semi-structured interview.
- To ensure the trustworthiness and authenticity of the data, the interview questions were shared with the supervisor and some other migration experts. With the help of the supervisor, jury members, and field experts, the questions were finalized for the participants' interviews.
- Secondary sources were utilized to get an insight into the research phenomenon under investigation. Subsequently, the baseline of the study was developed with the help of existing literature, visuals available on YouTube and Facebook, personal observation, and field notes.

4.7.1. Research Stages

The data collection for the current study is carried out in the following three stages to get a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation:

4.7.1.1 Stage 1: Unstructured Interviews

During the first stage, five unstructured interviews were conducted. The primary goal of conducting unstructured interviews was to explore that topic broadly. This approach is very helpful as it allows the participants to express their experiences, feelings, and thoughts freely without pre-structured questions or formats. It also helps analyze the data to identify key themes, patterns, and potential areas for further exploration.

4.7.1.2 Stage 2: Development of the Semi-structured Interview Guide

Based on the information acquired from the unstructured interviews during stage 1, a semi-structured interview guide was developed. Specific questions related to the research study were incorporated in the interview guide. The interview guide was in line with the relevant aspects and themes that emerged during the previous phase and provided a clear structure and direction for the next stage.

4.7.1.3 Stage 3: Semi-structured Interviews

In the third stage, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 28 respondents. These interviews allowed the researcher to get deeper insight into the themes and areas identified in stage 1 and gather more structured and in-depth responses.

4.7.2. Gaining Access to the Field

In qualitative inquiry, getting entry to the field is “*a process of building relationships*” (Feldman et al., 2004) that allows the researcher and the participants regarding their interactions and positioning in relation to each other. It is a dynamic and multidirectional process that depends on the researcher’s ability to gain access and develop “multiple vision”. According to Riese (2019), it is “*the process by which a researcher and the sites and/or individuals he or she studies relate to each other, through which the research in question is enabled*”. Prior to conducting fieldwork, qualitative researchers are required to carefully select a site that is consistent with the research topic under investigation. It is essential for researchers to establish preliminary contacts with key informants situated within the site to facilitate cooperation and gain access to potential sources of information. This preliminary stage plays a critical role in setting the stage for the success of the study (Kemperaj & Chavan, 2013).

As a result, qualitative researchers can make more deliberate and well-informed decisions when they have a full understanding of “*how complicated the access process is*”. This awareness could help them taking right and conscious decisions e.g., which vantagepoint to include or exclude or help them come up with ways and means to keep the participants and themselves safe (Riese, 2019). The relational nature of qualitative research also facilitates the researcher and the subjects being examined work together in the field for the creation of new knowledge (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). The first criterion for success with empirically based qualitative research involving human participants is a smooth entry into the field (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2020).

Subsequently, after making a successful entry into the field and establishing connection with the key informants, the researchers can persuade ‘others’ for inquiry effectively and efficiently (Shenton & Hayter, 2004, p. 223).

By considering the above principles and guidelines, I made the necessary preparations to choose the field area and enlisted the assistance of two colleagues to facilitate my fieldwork well in advance of its formal commencement. This included the development of travel plans, deliberation over means of transportation, living arrangements during data collection, consideration of weather conditions and the selection of appropriate attire, photocopies of the interview-guide, a small diary for field notes, and requisite stationary items. Due to a sensitive nature of my research, I sought authorization from my supervisor to initiate the fieldwork.

During the fieldwork, extensive time was spent with the participants, which helped gain their trust in the researcher and familiarity with the research topic. At the initial stage of the field work, the participants were a bit hesitant as they were afraid of having a stranger among them and due to their irregular status. But the issue of strangeness was overcome slowly and gradually. Later, all the interviews were conducted in a peaceful and relaxed environment (Schapendonk, 2012a), which allowed the participants to share their stories and experiences of irregular migration without any fear.

4.7.3. Data Collection

Data collection is a crucial aspect of qualitative research since it requires careful consideration in identifying and selecting the study group (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013). The objective of data collecting in qualitative research is to extract a substantial amount of information from a limited sample size. The data collection process involves defining the study's boundaries, collecting data via unstructured or semi-structured observations, interviews, documents, and visual materials, and determining methods for recording the information (Creswell, 2014). All data collecting procedures, including field access, study population selection criteria, sampling technique, sample size, semi-structured interviews, and participant information, are detailed below.

4.7.4. Sampling

In Qualitative studies, the requisite information about a particular phenomenon can be obtained through ‘purposive sampling’ technique (Creswell, 2003) whereby participants are intentionally selected based on specific characteristics that align with the

research objectives. This deliberate approach enables researchers to engage individuals who possess relevant experiences, knowledge, or perspectives that can offer rich insights into the research topic under investigation. Such purposive sampling strategies are critical for ensuring that the sample is representative of the population of interest and can contribute meaningfully to the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.7.5. Sample Size

In contrast to the quantitative research, qualitative researchers do not pre-determine the sample size before commencing the fieldwork as they lack extensive knowledge about the targeted population (Ishak & Abu Bakar, 2014). Ensuring the attainment of a representative sample is not only a matter of scientific concern but also poses an ethical predicament in the context of qualitative migration research given that sloppy sampling methodologies increase the risk of enlisting readily accessible and available participants while disregarding those individuals who are more vulnerable and difficult to reach (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2020).

In the present study, a sampling frame was not available due to the hidden nature of the research participants. Therefore, non-probability sampling was employed, using the snowballing technique, which is considered effective in accessing '*hard-to-reach*' population and facilitating understanding of complex issues related to the research subjects (Marshall, 1996; Davies, 2007) such as irregular migrants. The selection of an appropriate sample size is a fundamental aspect of social research. However, unlike quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers usually deal with a smaller sample from the population (Ishak & Abu Bakar, 2014). The selection of the sample size was largely dictated by the relevance to the research topic instead of the generalizability and representativeness of the participants (Flick, 2006).

4.7.6. Snowball Technique

In the current study, research participants were recruited purposefully using a snowball sampling approach, in which participants were referred by their predecessors. Snowball or 'chain referral sampling' is a sampling technique widely used in qualitative sociological research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This method involves recruitment of study participants using social networks, where the initial participants refer others who share or have the knowledge of individuals possessing similar characteristics as of the research participants (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). This technique has been deemed

effective for the collection of data (Denscombe, 2017) in qualitative research. Using this strategy, subjects suitable for participation in the research was identified and recruited through recommendations collected after each interview (Morgan, 2008). Figure 4.2. depicts participants' snowball illustration.

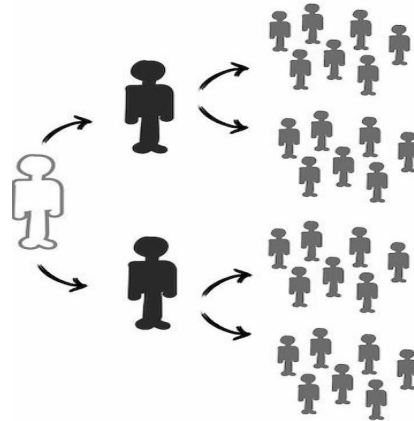


Figure 4.2. *Snowball illustration of the research participants.*

The initial sampling method was utilized to establish selection criteria for identifying suitable participants. However, to conduct a more comprehensive analysis and identify categories and themes, a theoretical sampling approach was subsequently employed (Charmaz, 2006). The guidance provided by the collected data made it easier to collect more data in the future and helped to clarify, confirm, and expand on different issues that came up during the first round of data collection (Birks & Mills, 2015). During my first trip to the Istanbul, I was introduced to two Pakistani nationals, both of whom were legal residents of Istanbul and possessed knowledge of and contacts with the irregular migrants of Pakistani origin. These Pakistani nationals were introduced to me by a mutual acquaintance of ours. Later, these people were my key informants, and they helped me to reach out my research participants via their own personal networks.

4.7.7. Data Collection Tool

This case study primarily based on observations at research site recorded through field notes and situation was captured through photographs. The participants were in such a position that they were reluctant to make videos due to hiding their identities. The extensive data in the form of field notes and photographs were analyzed and some key themes were emerged. There was need to explore embedded genres contributing behind synthesizing these themes through in depth semi-structured interviews.

During the field work, a paper-based questionnaire was used. Some opening questions were posed to the participants, asking them to respond: “What was the reason for your migration?” Please tell me about your journey to Türkiye. How did you spend your time while you were in Pakistan? I was wondering what kinds of jobs you have here in Türkiye. What is your monthly income? What kind of treatment do you get from it? Do you feel content with the way your life is going in Türkiye? Following the completion of these questions, a series of in-depth questions were asked from the participant in accordance with the flow of their speech. An approach of communication that was conversational was used throughout the whole of the study. As personal stories are creative constructs of history that are generated in specific conditions for the listener (Eastmond, 2007), the greatest effort was taken to establish a safe setting for the responders to have a fluid expression of their narratives.

The study utilized ‘semi-structured interviews’ for the collection of data as this tool allows the researcher to focus on important issues while giving informants the freedom to discuss and speak freely (Rose, 1994). It offers a combination of structured, closed-ended inquiries and open-ended qualitative questions by providing the interviewees with an opportunity to share their thoughts in a flexible manner (Koser & Kuschminder, 2015, p. 20). Using this tool, the interviewer just provides a gentle guidance rather than control, making it further useful in establishing mutual understanding and trust between the interviewer and interviewee without dominating each other (Rose, 1994). Semi-structured interviews are also effective when it is necessary to systematically collect in-depth information from the interviewees (Easwaramoorthy & Zarinpoush, 2006), particularly when the research is being conducted related to the experiences of a marginalized population (Poduval et al., 2015) such as ‘irregular migrants’. With the help of this tool, the researcher can gain information by requesting detailed explanations in line with the approaches suggested by (Rose, 1994; Charmaz, 2006) for emphasizing important issues.

Moreover, this tool is also considered as a preferred method within the domain of qualitative migration research (Søholt & Lynnebakke, 2015; Van Meeteren et al., 2015) over other methods, e.g., focus group discussions etc. One of the main ways that qualitative research is done through in-depth interviews (Daymon & Holloway, 2002) which usually are composed of semi-structured or unstructured questions, that allow the individuals to share about their thoughts and experiences related to a certain phenomenon

(Elliott & Timulak, 2005, p. 150). For example, while examining the numerous features related to minority migrant groups, it is essential to collect exhaustive data on their life experiences, perceptions, and physical surroundings. In-depth interviews are considered as a compassionate and person-centered method, allowing respondents to articulate and explain their life stories in their own language to develop their own narratives about their experiences (Vargas-Silva, 2013, p. 123).

As one of the objectives of the current study was to learn about various strategies used by irregular migrants of Pakistani origin in Istanbul for their survival and refuge being away from the origin. Such inquiries can only be answered by eliciting the perspectives of the research participants and cannot be fully revealed through the assessment of attitudes using only closed-ended questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The use of semi-structured interviews during fieldwork allowed me to adapt the interview guide based on the participants' impromptu responses. When interviewees offered unusual perspectives or suggestions, I included such instances in the interview guide for future interviews. To better fit the interview's natural flow and enable more productive data collection in subsequent interviews, this method also allowed me for the modification and refining of the interview questions.

4.7.8. Data Saturation Point

As the process of data collection and analysis resembles a “zigzag” pattern, with the researcher movement between the field and the office to collect and evaluate data, the selection of interview participants was guided by ‘*theoretical sampling*’, which contributes to the development of the theory. The number of field visits in this study was governed by the category saturation level and the theoretical complexity. Moreover, the continual comparative approach of data analysis was used throughout the process, where obtained data was compared to developing different categories (Creswell, 2012, p. 86). Similarly, the grounded theory methodology also advocates for iterative engagement with the processes of data collection and analysis. This approach serves to identify any deficiencies in the collected data and guides the researcher towards the acquisition of additional data. This iterative process of data collection and analysis enables focused analysis, thereby facilitating the research process (Charmaz, 2006). The recruitment of the interlocutors was continued till reaching the saturation point. The saturation point represents a criterion for determining the number of participants in qualitative research. With the realization that participants were reiterating the same stories and no new

information is coming out, the recruitment process was terminated in line with the recommendations of (Charmaz, 2006) and (Birks & Mills, 2015).

The current study was comprised of 28 semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted with research participants in the field. The selection of participants was solely based on their prevalent residence status in Türkiye. As such, there was no gender discrimination, and any of the genders that fulfilled the basic criteria for selection could participate in the study. However, only one female participant who was identified as an irregular migrant was included and interviewed. Out of 28 participants, only three had obtained visa to enter Türkiye but subsequently became “irregular” or “undocumented” due to their visa expiration. The remaining interlocutors had entered Türkiye by crossing international borders through irregular means.

4.7.9. Ethical Considerations

In academic research, ethical considerations hold fundamental condition to carry out various types of scientific investigations. There are some basic ethical principles that each researcher shall observe while conducting social research. For e.g., according to Kitchener & Kitchener (2009, p. 6), two fundamental ethical questions “*What is the ethically proper way to collect, process, and report research data? How should social scientists behave with respect to their research subjects?*” can provide basic guidelines in this regard. So, it is the prime duty of the researchers acknowledge their social responsibility to perform their research with both scientific rigor and professionalism, particularly when they are part of or interact with specific societies or communities. The behaviour of researchers should be exemplary and instil trust and confidence among those involved in the research process (ASA, 1999).

It has been noticed that qualitative fieldwork-based research is associated with a range of ethical concerns, such as issues surrounding access to the field, participants’ recruitment, role of gatekeepers and key informants, potential power asymmetries and their associated consequences, participants’ autonomy, informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity, research transparency and trust. These ethical considerations are of more concern when conducting research with migrants. Under such circumstances, a qualitative inquiry necessitates a special ethical awareness that cannot be adequately addressed by normal standard guidelines (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2020).

Particularly, researching irregular migrants involves several challenges as it is difficult to get reliable and complete information on their population, survival strategies, and social status. Often, the precise number of such migrants and their distribution among cities, regions, or nations is uncertain. Thus, doing research on undocumented migrants requires a rigorous and systematic approach for data collection and analysis (Düvell et al., 2010). During the fieldwork phase, strict adherence to ethical standards was always maintained. All the important steps taken to ensure the ethical directions throughout the research process are further elaborated in the following sub-section.

4.7.10. Informed Consent

Every individual has the right to exercise independent judgment and make choices without coercion or undue influence. This concept recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of human beings and acknowledges their capacity to make reasoned decisions in matters concerning their own lives. As a result, researchers often seek a written or verbal agreement with the research subjects describing the premise of their interaction, the ground rules, and the implications for both parties. Researchers must then describe as thoroughly as possible what the study and the researcher are going to engage with.

The principle of this ethical condition can be understood that it is a “provision of information to participants, about purpose of the research, its procedures, potential risks, benefits and alternatives, so that the individual understands this information and can make a voluntary decision whether to enrol and continue to participate” (Emanuel et al., 2000). Any research that involves human beings and their actions must be grounded in ethical principles that prioritize respect for moral autonomy and the right to self-determination (Faden & Beauchamp, 1986). It is also a fact that informed consent may not always be practical or meaningful in certain types of research, such as crowd behaviour or with trafficked, smuggled, or irregular migrants. In such cases, written consent could also create unnecessary risks for the research subjects. However, researchers may seek informed consent whenever possible to ensure trust and understanding among the participants (Düvell et al., 2008, p. 18).

4.7.11. Difficulties Faced during Fieldwork

Because of the hidden nature of study population and other sensitivities associated with the field and the subjects, researching irregular migrants poses multifarious challenges. Consequently, researchers may face difficulties in soliciting cooperation from

participants, which can have an impact on the type and quality of the data acquired. Migration research, unlike other disciplines of study, provides unique challenges owing to the hidden nature of the target population. At the initial stage of the study, the main hurdle was reaching out to the target population, which was later overcome with the help of Istanbul-based acquaintances. Due to meagre resources, I faced financial difficulties during my frequent travels from Eskişehir to Istanbul for the purpose of data collection. The living areas of most of the study participants were in the vicinity of different gangs, and personal safety was at risk in such conditions.

4.8. Research Methods

Observations and interviews were used to conduct the current research study. Initially, the secondary sources were identified and utilized to get a detailed illustration of the research problem in hand. This triangulation of data helped in establishing the research baseline and provided a strong foundation for the study before stepping into the natural settings for the purpose of data collection. Figure 4.3. depicts the gathering of data from different sources and an overview of the procedure to establish research study's baseline.

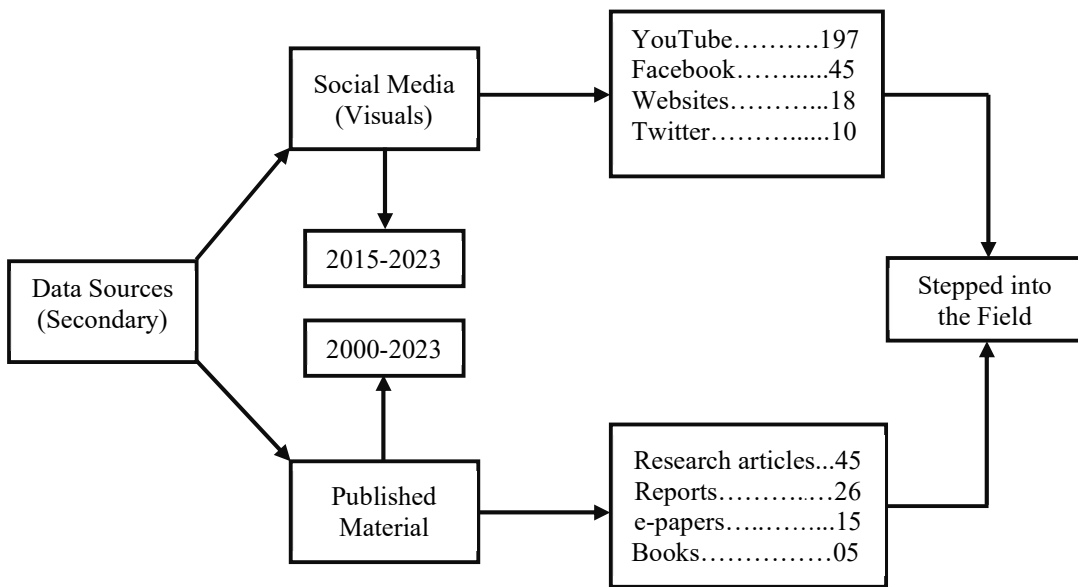


Figure 4.3. Method utilized for drawing baseline of the research study.

The researcher utilized secondary data to establish the baseline of the study, which served as a foundational reference point for their investigation. For this purpose, a variety of data sources were utilized, including social media platforms and published materials. The adoption of this technique was very beneficial as it allowed to gain a more

comprehensive understanding of his proposed study prior to embarking on the actual data collection process in the field. The data that was gathered from the specific research site underwent a rigorous scientific processing method. Through careful analysis, several significant themes were identified and emerged from the data. Later, in-depth interviews were conducted from the participants to evaluate the consistency of the emergent themes. Figure 4.4. depicts a through procedure of qualitative data generation.

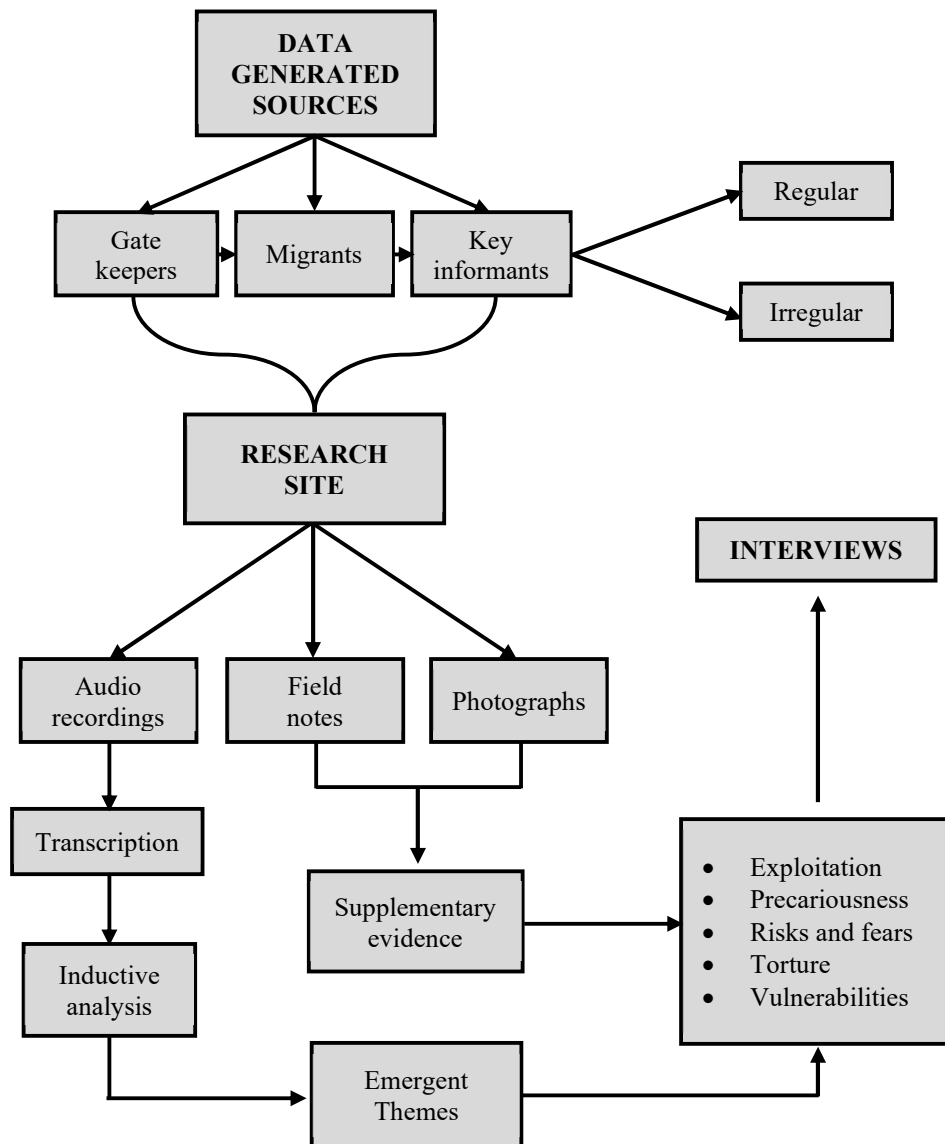


Figure 4.4. Author's self-created systematic schema for data generation.

After the process of collecting data, the names of the participants were carefully and methodically coded in a systematic manner. This coding procedure was implemented with the primary objective of safeguarding and preserving the anonymity of the individuals involved in the study. The codes were generated by extracting the initial letter

of each participant's name, along with the district in Pakistan where they reside. In addition to the participant's level of education, the researcher also considered their age at the time they left Pakistan. For example, one of the participants in the study was Bashir Jat, who hails from the city of Sialkot. The individual possesses a level of education equivalent to grade 5, indicating the extent of his academic knowledge and skills. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that he made the decision to embark on a journey from Pakistan at the age of 18. The code for this participant would be represented as BS(5-18). Table 4.2. exhibit detailed information about the participants of the study.

Table 4.2. *Participants information.*

Code	Travel year	Travel age	Current age	City	Province	Parents		Siblings		Marital status	Skills in PK	Monthly Income at origin (PKR)
						Mother	Father	B	S			
AG(3-14)	2020	14	17	G. Wala	Punjab	Alive	Died	1	1	Single	Tailoring	-
BG(9-21)	2017	21	27	G. Wala	Punjab	Alive	Died	3	3	Single	NIL	-
GS(4-14)	2016	14	21	Sialkot	Punjab	Alive	Alive	4	3	Married	NIL	-
WS(0-16)	2019	16	20	Sh. Pura	Punjab	Alive	Died	2	0	Single	Farming	-
ZI(5-26)	2020	26	29	ISB	ICT	Alive	Alive	3	1	Married	Ceiling work	25000
AS(6-15)	2018	15	20	Sialkot	Punjab	Alive	Alive	3	3	Single	Bag Stitching	18000
BS(5-18)	2015	18	26	Sialkot	Punjab	Alive	Alive	3	1	Single	Stitching Gloves	22000
SM(0-16)	2015	16	24	MB Din	Punjab	Alive	Alive	2	2	Single	NIL	-
HP(5-20)	2017	20	26	Peshawar	KPK	Died	Alive	5	2	Single	NIL	-
KS(9-25)	2017	25	31	Sialkot	Punjab	Alive	Alive	3	2	Married	Hairdressing	20000
NG(7-17)	2019	17	21	Gujrat	Punjab	Alive	Alive	3	1	Single	Fan Assembling	15000
JG(5-16)	2019	16	20	G. Wala	Punjab	Alive	Alive	4	1	Single	Stitching	18000
NM(4-15)	2016	15	22	MB Din	Punjab	Alive	Died	5	2	Single	NIL	-
SH(5-30)	2021	30	32	H. abad	Punjab	Died	Alive	2	3	Married	Driving	15000
MG(5-15)	2021	15	17	G. Wala	Punjab	Alive	Alive	1	1	Single	Farming	-
AL(4-25)	2019	25	29	Lahore	Punjab	Alive	Died	1	2	Married	NIL	18000
SG(0-14)	2019	14	18	Gujrat	Punjab	Died	Alive	3	2	Single	NIL	-
JG(4-24)	2021	24	26	Gujrat	Punjab	Alive	Alive	2	1	Married	NIL	-
NS(4-16)	2022	16	17	Sawabi	KPK	Alive	Died	2	3	Single	NIL	-
YH(6-16)	2016	16	23	H. abad	Punjab	Alive	Alive	1	2	Single	Shawarma making	15000

Table 4.2. (continued) Participants information.

Code	Year	TA	CA	City	Province	Parents		Siblings		MS	Skills in PK	Monthly Income at origin (PKR)
						Mother	Father	B	S			
RH(7-18)	2019	18	22	H. abad	Punjab	Alive	Died	4	1	Single	NIL	-
TS(5-15)	2021	15	17	Sialkot	Punjab	Alive	Alive	1	4	Single	Stitching	20000
QG(4-17)	2022	17	18	Gujrat	Punjab	Alive	Died	1	1	Single	NIL	-
RG(6-19)	2017	19	25	Gujrat	Punjab	Died	Alive	2	1	Single	NIL	-
IM(5-15)	2018	15	20	MB Din	Punjab	Alive	Alive	3	2	Single	NIL	-
BM(0-16)	2019	16	20	MB Din	Punjab	Alive	Alive	3	4	Single	NIL	-
NG(5-16)	2020	16	19	Gujrat	Punjab	Alive	Alive	2	2	Single	NIL	-
EG(0-19)	2021	19	21	G. Wala	Punjab	Died	Alive	1	3	Single	Farming	-

Note: The codes were assigned to the participants through a systematic procedure by mixing their names' alphabets, place of residence in Pakistan, level of education at the time of migration and their age when migrated. Below example explains the whole process for a code RH(7-18):

R = First alphabet of the participant's name
H = Area of residence in Pakistan (Hafizabad in this case)
7 = Level of education
18 = Age of participant at the time of migration

4.8.1. Data Transcription

The use of technology in transcribing recorded data is an emerging aspect of qualitative research nowadays. I, with the consent of the participants, utilized my own mobile phone as an audio recording device after obtaining their consent. To minimize disruption, the interlocutors' conversation was not deliberately transcribed during the interview process. This method facilitated the participants' ability to converse freely in their own language without hindering or slowing down their pace of talk. (Duranti, 1997; Sacks, 1995) as cited in (Davidson, 2009).

A rigorous four-step approach was used to ensure the appropriateness of transcription. Initially, recorded interviews were transcribed onto paper in written form. Subsequently, the handwritten data was cross-checked against the original audio files, and missing information was incorporated to ensure the precision of the data. The transcribed files were typed for further use. To guarantee consistency, the written data files were examined and compared with audio files manually, one by one. At the last step, the typed data was meticulously proofread to confirm its accuracy and to eliminate any inconsistencies found in the data. The Figure 4.5. elaborates the transcription process.

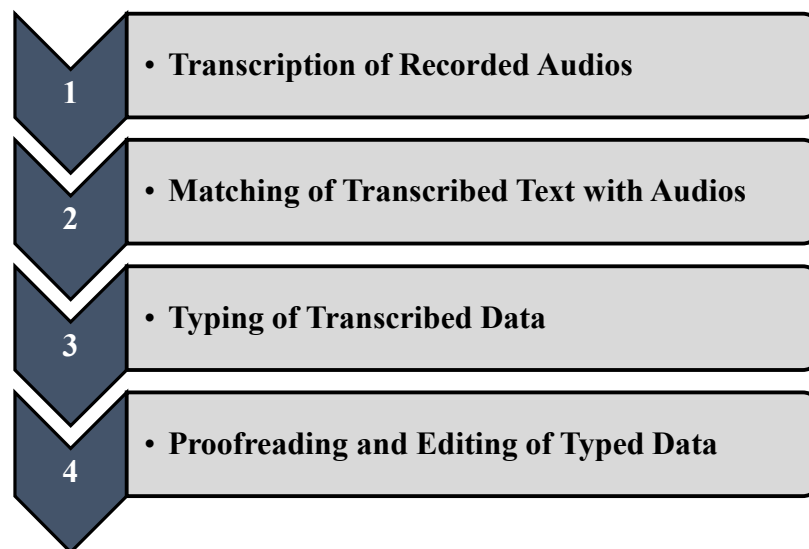


Figure 4.5. Data transcription method

Similarly, ethical considerations entail not only the safeguarding of participants against conceivable harm but also demand that researchers take responsibility for facilitating the involvement of marginalized cohorts that are prone to be overlooked and excluded from research endeavours (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2020). Due to ethical and security concerns, I refrained from interfering in the lives of irregular migrants. Instead,

I maintained a researcher position during data collection, allowing participants to choose whether to engage with me or not. By adopting a respectful approach, I was able to gain trust and observe various perspectives and considerations during extensive fieldwork. I deliberately refrained from taking field notes during conversations to avoid disrupting the participants. Instead, I relied on memory and transcribed notes in Urdu at the end of each day.

While transcribing, I corrected grammar mistakes to ensure accuracy. I constantly reflected on my observations and remained mindful of the power imbalance between myself as a researcher and the participants. Despite building rapport with the participants, I remained cognizant of my ontological power to influence data (Jauhiainen & Tedeschi, 2021, p. 52). My approach respected the participants' privacy and autonomy, allowing them to share their feelings, moods, and beliefs freely without fear of judgement or coercion.

Anonymity and confidentiality are fundamental principles in research ethics. Confidentiality refers to the act of preserving the anonymity of research participants and refraining from distributing data that may potentially lead to the identification of individuals unless they have given explicit permission to do so (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2020).

In qualitative migration research, ethical issues are not limited to field work but extend to the stages of analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of data and findings. As Goodall, (2000, p. 55) noted that "all representations are partial, partisan and problematic." This means that representations only partially reveal the truth, are always influenced by researchers' interpretative authority, and cannot guarantee how they will be perceived by different audiences.

As a result, there has been a growing focus on the "ethics of representation" in scholarly discussions (Pickering & Kara, 2017). I have tried my best to ensure the reflexivity and transparency in accordance with the necessary ethical guidelines related to data collection, its analysis, interpretation, and findings. Time and location of each interview were properly documented. Table 4.3. displays the detail of all the interviews conducted in the field.

Table 4.3. *Detail of semi-structured interviews*

Sr. No.	Codes of Participants	Date	Location in Istanbul	Start Time	End Time	Time Taken (minutes)
1	AG(3-14)	05-11-2022	Zeytinburnu	10:15	11:20	1:05
2	ZI(5-26)	19-11-2022	Cebeci	10:20	11:35	1:15
3	SH(5-30)	04-12-2022	Habibler	10:16	11:00	0:44
4	JG(4-24)	04-12-2022	Habibler	13:00	14:24	1:24
5	MG(5-15)	24-12-2022	Sultançiftliği	14:00	15:22	1:22
6	NS(4-16)	24-12-2022	Sultançiftliği	18:10	18:59	0:49
7	TS(5-15)	14-01-2023	Aksaray	10:45	11:50	1:05
8	QG(4-17)	14-01-2023	Aksaray	19:00	19:55	0:55
9	NG(5-16)	15-01-2023	Sultançiftliği	19:10	20:08	0:58
10	EG(0-19)	15-01-2023	Sultançiftliği	20:10	21:14	1:04
11	BG(9-21)	24-03-2023	Cebeci	17:10	18:00	0:50
12	GS(4-14)	24-03-2023	Cebeci	18:15	19:02	0:47
13	KS(9-25)	25-03-2023	Esenyurt	17:25	18:10	0:45
14	AL(4-25)	25-03-2023	Esenyurt	18:25	19:01	0:36
15	BS(5-18)	26-03-2023	Habibler	19:40	20:25	0:45
16	SM(0-16)	26-03-2023	Habibler	20:50	21:35	0:45
17	HP(5-20)	27-03-2023	Aksaray	16:00	16:40	0:40
18	NG(7-17)	27-03-2023	Aksaray	17:20	18:03	0:43
19	JG(5-16)	28-03-2023	Sultangazi	15:30	16:11	0:41
20	WS(0-16)	29-03-2023	Eminönü	14:25	15:15	0:50
21	NM(4-15)	29-03-2023	Eminönü	16:10	16:57	0:47
22	AS(6-15)	30-03-2023	Zeytinburnu	18:00	18:43	0:43
23	SG(0-14)	30-03-2023	Zeytinburnu	19:00	19:49	0:49
24	YH(6-16)	31-03-2023	Esenler	17:50	18:36	0:46
25	RH(7-18)	31-03-2023	Esenler	19:00	19:54	0:54
26	RG(6-19)	01-04-2023	Sultançiftliği	18:10	18:55	0:45
27	IM(5-15)	02-04-2023	Sultançiftliği	17:30	18:15	0:45
28	BM(0-16)	02-04-2023	Cebeci	18:30	19:18	0:48
Total time duration			=	1463 minutes (24 hours and 38 minutes)		
Average time			=	52.25 minutes		

Figure 4.6. exhibits the visual representation of various locations of the respondents in Istanbul. Majority of them were from Sultançiftliği area.



Figure 4.6. *Word cloud of respondents' locations, Istanbul.*

4.9. Data Analysis

The process of analyzing qualitative data is commonly characterized as an iterative and nonlinear approach. Therefore, keeping in view the different aspects of the collected data, the analysis is carried out using ‘narrative and thematic analysis techniques.’ It is a prevalent practice among researchers to refrain from enumerating a sequential analytical procedure. However, it is recommended that considering the process in relation to phases, which may overlap, can be highly advantageous. The systematic pursuit of these phases is feasible while acknowledging the inherent flexibility, in-depth understanding, transparency, applicability, and slight disorderliness of qualitative analysis. The rationale behind organizing data analysis into distinct phases lies in its ability to establish a clear and comprehensible methodology for both the qualitative researcher and the reader of the research report. Taking all these into account, Lester et al. (2020) presented a set of seven distinct stages depicted in Figure 4.7. are followed for the analysis of coping strategies of the participants in this study. However, their migratory experiences (Pakistan to Türkiye) are analyzed using narrative analysis technique as it centers around interpreting the main narratives found within the personal stories of the participants. Using this approach, the researcher acquires and organizes data to gain insight into the personal experiences of individuals. Instead of solely emphasizing the literal content of an interview, narrative analysis also enables the collection of data on the individual’s expression, language choices, and inner thoughts and motivations when discussing specific events or experiences. The above-mentioned stages are deemed highly appropriate for conducting thematic analysis of the participants’ data related to their ‘coping strategies’. This method seeks to generate comprehensive descriptive statements that capture the researcher’s overarching comprehension of the data and their research inquiries by ensuring transparency in the whole process of analysis.

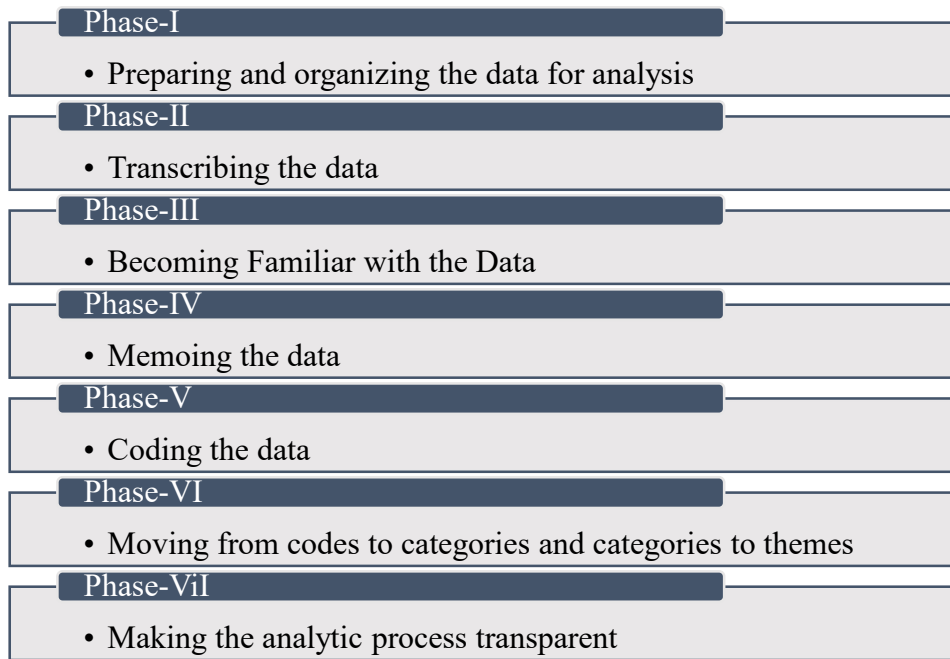


Figure 4.7. *Thematic analysis stages (Lester et al. 2020).*

The ultimate goal was to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study through a systematic and rigorous analysis of qualitative data.

4.10. Conclusion

This chapter delineates the materials and methodologies employed in the present study, conducted within selected locales of Istanbul. A qualitative research design was chosen as it facilitates an emic perspective. Participants were recruited using snowball sampling, a method conducive to reaching individuals with hidden identities or characteristics. Prior to fieldwork initiation, a foundation was laid through the examination of secondary data sources, e.g., social media platforms, published research material, reports and books. Data collection was carried out through engagements with key informants and gatekeepers. Informed consent was also obtained before engaging every participant in the interview. In addition to non-participant observation, a semi-structured interview guide was utilized as a tool for data collection. Despite encountering challenges during fieldwork, adherence to ethical standards prescribed by prominent academic and professional bodies was maintained. Subsequently, interviews were translated into English for the purpose of analysis. Transcription and coding processes were carried out in accordance with the analytical techniques utilized for the current study. Migrant experiences were analyzed using narrative analysis techniques, while thematic analysis techniques were applied to discern their coping strategies.

CHAPTER-V

5. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

5.1. Chapter's Summary

The present chapter demonstrates the findings of the study related to the research question and sub-questions. The data that was collected from the participants of the study using a semi-structured interview guide; later was presented in the form of descriptions and visuals. In the following step, the migration-related experiences of the participants and their thoughts about various coping strategies were carefully outlined. Based on a qualitative investigation, narrative and thematic analysis techniques were chosen. The overarching themes that emerged from the interviews' data were organized to examine the coping strategies of the study participants and represent a meaningful narrative by establishing a systematic link between the emergent themes and categories.

5.2. Demographic Information

The inclusion of demographic information is crucial to ascertaining the participants' characteristics and gaining a comprehensive understanding of the study's findings. The present study gathered descriptive data regarding the socio-demographic information of the participants in addition to various important aspects of their migration journey from Pakistan to Türkiye.

5.2.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

After conducting the exploratory phase of the fieldwork, 28 participants were interviewed. All of them entered Türkiye between 2015 and 2023. The year-wise distribution of their arrival shows that a majority of them (19) came during the years 2018 to 2023. However, nine of them belonged to the category that reached Türkiye between 2015 and 2017. According to the demographic distribution of the participants, a huge number were from Punjab province. Most of them hail from the rural and less developed areas of the districts of Gujranwala, Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin, Hafizabad, Sialkot, and Sahiwal. Among them, two were from Malakand Division (Swat and Swabi) of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Province, and only one was from Barakahu (one of the suburbs) adjacent to the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). Their educational

qualifications were extremely low, and most of them even did not complete the primary level of education.

“I did not receive a good education because me and my friends used to skip the classes at school and were mostly involved in activities such as street fighting, smoking and wandering etc.” [RH(7-18)].

The gender perspective in the current research study remained limited, as the main profile of the study participants reflects that all of them were male, and young. According to their age distribution, at the time of travel, 17 participants fell into the age category between 14 and 17, six were between 18 and 21, and the rest were over 22 years old.

“My parents are illiterate. They did not remember my exact year of birth that’s why I do not know my correct date of birth. Before coming to Türkiye, I guess my age was around 15 years. Still, I do not have any identity card. One of my friends told me that for CNIC¹⁶ the minimum age requirement is 18 years.” [MG(5-15)].

The maximum age of the participants reported at the time of travel was 26 years, and as far as marital status is concerned, a majority of them were single, while only six were married when they left Pakistan. Their family statistics show that the participants in the study belonged to a large family. For example, 14 out of 28 had 4-5 siblings, while six had 6-7. Most of them were unemployed in Pakistan; only 10 were earning between PKR 15000-25000 per month through different skilled or laboured jobs.

5.3. Participants’ Preferred Modes of Travel

Irregular migration from Pakistan to other countries usually takes place in various ways. The aspirants either adopt their whole journey irregularly or sometimes use a hybrid mode (regular and irregular) for their intended travel. In the current study, the participants were classified into three categories. (a) those who travelled all the way from Pakistan to Türkiye via Iran irregularly; (b) those who had travelled from Pakistan to Iran on a valid visa and then took their journey irregularly from Iran to Türkiye; (c) the third category of them was those who came to Türkiye after taking a requisite visa but did not leave the country within the stipulated timeframe, etc. The majority of the participants (23) had

¹⁶Computerized National Identity Card.

never applied for a visa for any country and straightaway adopted the path of irregular migration from Pakistan.

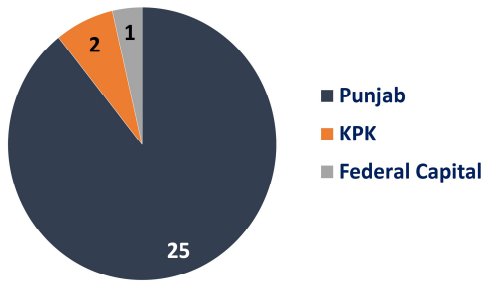
“In our area, people go abroad (Europe) normally through dunki (irregularly). Many of my friends and acquaintances are in Greece and Italy. All of them went through dunki. Neither I had any knowledge of visa process, nor I thought to apply for visa. Now I heard that there is also a legal way from which I was ignorant.” [AL(4-25)].

However, a small number of them (5) had travelled either halfway on a visa (from Pak-IR) or entered Türkiye on a valid visa. But later, they become irregular because they failed to renew their residence permits or because the Turkish Immigration Authorities rejected their applications for one or other reason. It was revealed during the field study that 25 of the participants opted for irregular means of their travel with the help of human smugglers and transnational agents, while only three took visas and later became irregular on expiration of their visas or touristic residence cards.

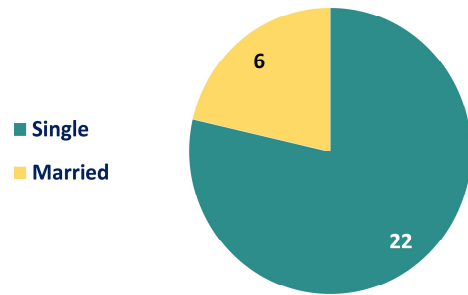
“In our family, many of my relatives are working in United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). I also spent two years in KSA on valid work visa of labourer job. In my second year, I fell ill and went back to Pakistan. After recovery from my illness and on recommendations of one of my friends, I applied for Turkish visa and got stamped. I never thought that I would live in Türkiye without valid visa but unfortunately, the renewal of my residence card was rejected, and I left with no option but to live irregularly.” [JG(4-24)].

Figure 5.1. shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, their preferred modes of travel from Pakistan to Türkiye and their irregular arrivals to Türkiye between 2015 to 2023.

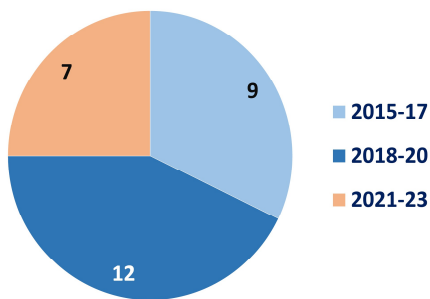
Residence Area in Pakistan



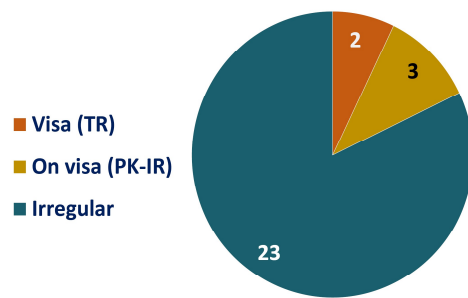
Marital Status



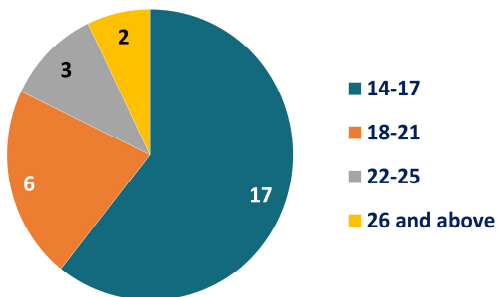
Number of Arrivals (Year-wise)



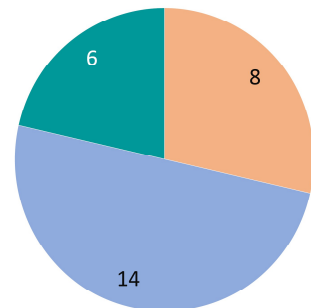
Ways of Travel



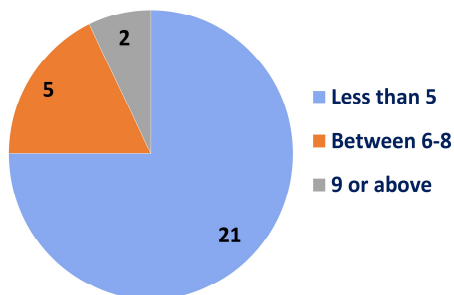
Age at the Time of Travel



Number of siblings



Level of Education



Earning at Origin

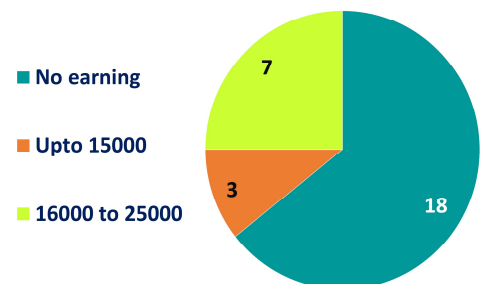


Figure 5.1. Participants' socio-demographic information.

5.4. Participants' Panoramic Illustrations about their Irregular Journey

The term “panoramic” is used metaphorically to illustrate the overall irregular migration process from Pakistan to Türkiye. It conveys the idea of taking a comprehensive and wide-ranging perspective, capturing the various stages, challenges, and dynamics involved in their migration journey. It offers a sweeping and extensive view of a landscape, using this term suggests an understanding of the migration process, including important aspects such as the migration decision, management of required money, the perilous journey, and their arrival in Türkiye. It emphasizes the need to consider the interconnectedness and complexity of irregular migration, allowing for a more holistic understanding of the experiences and motivations of the migrants when they were at their native places in Pakistan.

5.4.1. Major Migration Drivers at Origin and Destination

Every participant in the current study had a different story about his journey. The majority of them belonged to rural and less developed areas of the different districts of Punjab province; deprived of basic facilities. Their low level of education and skills also restrained them from living a better life and pushed them towards irregular migration from Pakistan to other regions like Middle Eastern states and European countries. Most of the participants shared that they migrated due to poor living conditions and a lack of employment opportunities in their hometowns. For example, one of the participants elaborated his story as:

“I am the eldest son of my parents. We are two brothers and three sisters. [...] *Mairay tay zimadariyaan bohat san per kam kaaj koi vi nahi si* [there were a lot of responsibilities on my shoulders, but I was unemployed]. [...] *Hath vich na koi huner si na hi koi changi taleem si* [I was unskilled and uneducated too]. I thought to take this step with the hope that, with my sacrifice, at least my family could live a better life. [...] *Kisi aik nun fer qurbani tay daini hi paindi hay* [someone has to sacrifice in the family]. My parents wanted me to educate but our financial conditions were always big hurdles.” [SH(5-30)].

However, five of the participants were of the view that the main purpose of their journey was to see the beauty of Europe and find work there, like many other young boys who had left Pakistan earlier and now are settled in different European countries, earning

handsome incomes. However, among those, four participants did not have any specific reason behind their migration decisions.

“My parents are alive; my father has his own shop in our Mohalla. Alhamdulillah, family financial conditions were not bad. The decision to come to Türkiye was solely my own because in Pakistan I feel myself poor and frustrated. I was impressed by the wealth and beauty of Europe. It was my desire to see Europe and live there a luxurious life. If I live a good life, I can also improve the well-being of my family and other relatives.” [HP(5-20)].

In addition to some push factors at origin, the participants were also attracted by the pull factors at the destination countries. Due to low knowledge about the real situation at far end, they mostly trusted in the stories of those who reached Europe earlier and exaggerated the lifestyle of European countries through their social media platforms.

“My friend told me that no doubt the path to reach Europe is dangerous but once you reach you will feel like a millionaire. European countries are rich and beautiful due to which people from all over the world visit Europe and the earning opportunities are also high. He told me that he easily makes 100 Euro for one day which is equal to 30000 of our PKR. Keeping in view such advantages of European life, I decided to leave Pakistan.” [WS(0-16)].

The hopes of reaching Europe are still alive. Majority of the participants were not considering Istanbul or Türkiye as their destination. Greece and Italy were among the major destination they want to reach.

5.4.2. Primary Sources of Information

Acquaintances abroad and friends at origin were among the major sources of information for the participants and played a key role in migration-related decisions. For example, 15 out of 28 participants made the decision to migrate under the influence of their friends and confrère either living abroad or in the same vicinity as their origin. Similarly, about four participants got migration related information and motivation from the social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and WhatsApp), their neighbours, and relatives.

“Many of my friends and cousins left Pakistan. Some are still in Türkiye and rest reached Greece. They used to send me their pictures and videos that also

motivated me for Europe. I with some of my friends decided to meet the agent in our locality for *dunki* travel and later reached Türkiye after facing many hardships. If I were aware of such bad situations, I never come.” [BM(0-16)].

5.4.3. Parents’ Permission for the Journey

It was also revealed by the participants of the study that usually the parents did not give their consent for irregular journeys. The majority of the participants (15) had faced resistance from their mothers, as they were not happy with their son’s decision to migrate. Moreover, the fathers of nine participants had also tried to refrain them from going abroad via *dunki* (irregular) journey. On the other hand, four participants, among those, neither faced any resistance from their family nor sought the consent of their parents before travel.

“My parents were not allowing me, but I insisted and convinced them. Later my father gave me permission and arranged money for my *dunki* (travel) related expenditures.” [BS(5-18)].

5.4.4. Participants’ Skills Profile before Departure

As the descriptive data related to the participants of the study show that mostly they belonged to poor families and their educational qualifications were extremely low. Subsequently, due to lack of basic education, they also remained unskilled. Their majority (15) were unskilled when they left Pakistan, however, rest (13) had some skills.

“I did not learn any skill before coming to Türkiye. I wish I had some skills; I could have earned better like those of my friends who had some like stitching, tailoring, barbering etc. they are earning comparatively better than me.” [SM(0-16)].

Those who possessed skills, they also didn’t attend any vocational or technical education school. They acquired those skills with traditional instructional methods (learning by doing) by joining different professions in the vicinity.

“I never went to any vocational or technical school. I started work at very early age as father was a tailor and during free time, I used to sit near him and observe his tailoring. When he realized that I am not interested in school, he advised me to learn tailoring. In six months, I was able to stitch the gents’ dresses (*qameez shalwar*). Today, my skills are helping me in my earnings.” [AG(3-14)].

Tailoring, hairdressing, fall ceiling work, stitching, fan assembling, livestock farming, driving and shawarma making were the common skills they gained at the origin. Figure 5.2. exhibits the primary sources of information, family resistance for irregular journey, migration drivers at origin and about the skills of participants that they have before departure from Pakistan.

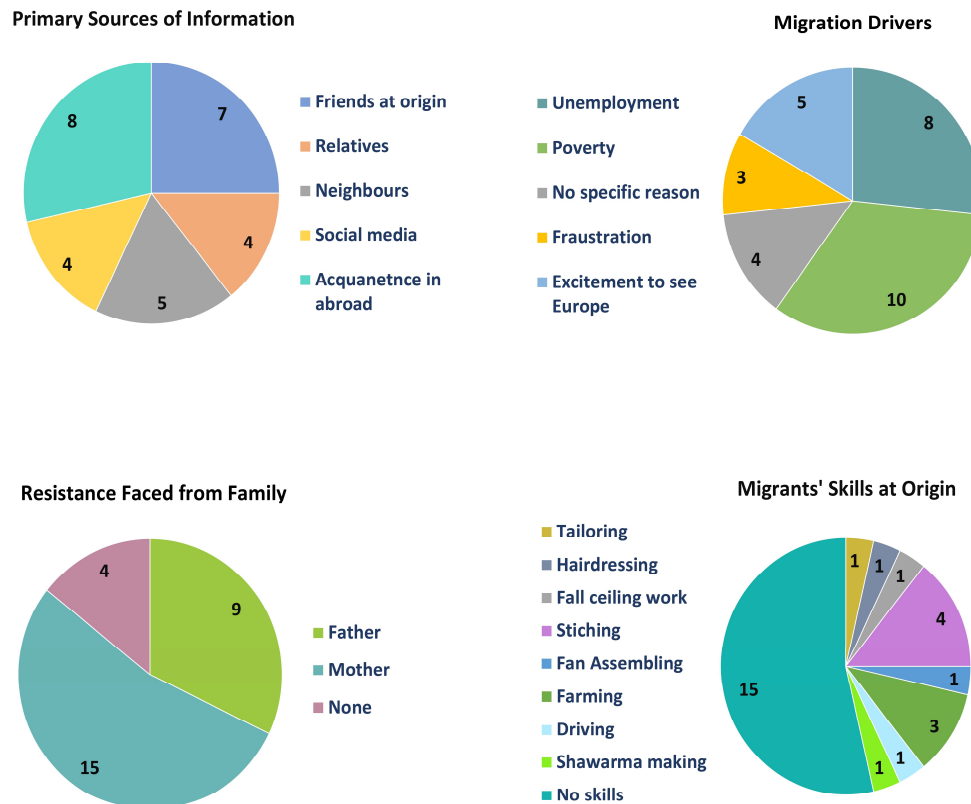


Figure 5.2. Migration drivers and other information

5.4.5. Human Smugglers' Role

It is impossible for a person to migrate irregularly from Pakistan without the involvement of human smugglers. The results yielded from the field data also shed light on the fact that a significant portion of the participants sought the assistance of local as well as transnational human smugglers to reach Türkiye. These human smugglers are commonly known as “*gent*” [agent] in the local language. They can be categorized into two main categories: i). local agents; and ii). transnational agents (main agents). The people who are associated with human smuggling at the local level belong to the second category. However, those who fall into the first category usually never show their identity to clients directly. Except local agents, nobody knows where they live or what they do.

The main agents usually work with a wider network of human smugglers. Their nationalities and origins also vary. They have their own businesses in other countries in addition to human smuggling. According to participants' views, their businesses include: a rent a car showrooms, restaurants, jewellery shops, and travel agencies. The local agents usually deal with the aspirants according to the guidelines they have from the main agents.

The data of the present study exhibits that neither main agents nor local agents contact the aspirants directly. Mostly, the aspirants approach them through their own friends or family members. In some cases, the irregular migrants who travelled earlier irregularly and presently live abroad also refer the local agent's name and contact details to their younger brothers, friends, acquaintances, and relatives. For example, one of the participants of the study from Mandi Bahauddin, narrated that:

“Me and my cousin visited the agent, who was living in our neighbourhood. My cousin told him that *Munday nu dunki lawareen jay* [this boy is to be sent abroad through *dunki*¹⁷]. Then the agent briefed us about the whole process and also told us that PKR 2,50,000 will be required in advance. At that time, the Pakistani rupee against the USD was bit stronger than today.” [SM(0-16)].

The above case reveals that these human smugglers were easily accessible to the participants in their native areas. In connection with the irregular journey, the participant had acted upon the guidelines of his agent. The other aspect is that the human smugglers accept amounts according to the prevalent USD rate. They receive money in PKR that equals the USD amount they fixed for their clients.

5.4.6. Arrangements of Money

Arrangements for the necessary money are one of the most challenging tasks for aspirants to irregular migration. The data from the current study shows that most of the participants, with limited resources, employed various strategies to secure the necessary funds. Either they borrowed (by themselves or with the help of family members) the required money from their friends and family or sold their assets such as vehicles, property, jewellery, livestock, etc. (Koser, 2008). The local agents (human smugglers) demand money in advance from the aspirants to irregular migration. There is no fixed

¹⁷Common term used in Pakistan for irregular border crossing.

rate; it varies from person to person. Normally, they take money in cash according to the prevalent rate of the US dollar.

“[...] *Aseen ghareeb lok haaan* [we are poor people]. Being a child, it was very difficult for me to arrange money for the desired journey. I discussed this with my stepfather [...], and he agreed to arrange the required money from some of our relatives [...]. *Maira agent bohat acha si* [my agent was very cooperative], and he allowed us to pay the amount in two instalments. It was about three hundred thousand rupees, which we paid to our local agent for my travel up to Türkiye.” [AG(3-14)].

The above case depicts that the local brokers act as sub-agents of the main human smugglers (normally live outside Pakistan). They belong to the local community and mostly know the people living in the same locality (Chen, 2012, p. 133). Their cooperation with the aspirants is obvious because they know the local people’s living conditions. On the other hand, their cooperative attitude also helps them build trust between the parties, which ultimately enhances their network of clientele.

One of the participants paid three hundred and fifty thousand rupees to his local agent. His agent was different from the previous one, so his rate was also different. In this case, the parents of the participant had arranged the requisite money from their savings. They did not sell any of their assets but utilized the savings they had.

“[...] *Allah da shuker hay kahar day halaat innay ik hay san* [thanks to Allah Almighty that my parents’ financial position was good]. My father was a retired policeman, and now my elder brother is also serving in the Punjab police. We have our own house and also keep a good number of livestock (buffaloes and cows). My agent was trustworthy, as he had already sent many people from our village. [...] *Mairay agent di koi shikayet nai si waisay* [there was no complaint about my agent normally]. We paid him the whole amount without any hesitation.” [BG(9-21)].

The above-mentioned case reveals that the living conditions of the participant were not so impoverished. His parents had willingly spent their savings to fulfill their son’s desire. The parents of the participant, as well as he himself, trusted their agent and gave him the money in advance. The other aspect of this case is that the parents of this

participant extended cooperation to their son's irregular migration by overlooking the risks and consequences.

Another participant from Sialkot, a city in the Punjab, had arranged the money by selling his immovable property (a chunk of land). After selling his property, he paid the agent's fee (3,80,000 PKR) and gave the remaining amount to his parents for their use. Although he spent some years in Iran, worked there irregularly and then deported back to Pakistan.

“[...] I owned a plot (land) in one of the towns of district Sialkot, which I purchased a few years ago when I was working as a hairdresser in Iran. After my deportation from Iran and due to lack of money, I decided to sell the property [...]. *Pallay paisay poosay innay nahi sen kay agent nu dahiye* [I did not possess enough money, which I had to give to the agent]. So, I decided to sell my plot for this purpose [...]. At that time, I was determined that *hik wari Europe ponch jaan, innay das plot araam nal bna laan ga* [once I reached Europe, I could easily make ten such plots]. [...] The plot I sold at that time was worth \$3 million, but I sold it for only \$1.5 million. I realized later that I committed a serious mistake.”
[KS(9-25)].

The above participant sold his property at a subsidized rate just to fulfill his desire to reach Europe. He also misconceived his unseen income in Europe and sold his existing property in a hurry. Later, he felt regret, but now it was too late. Figure 5.3. depicts a complete picture of the process through which participants of the study went through and still facing the consequences of their irregular journey.

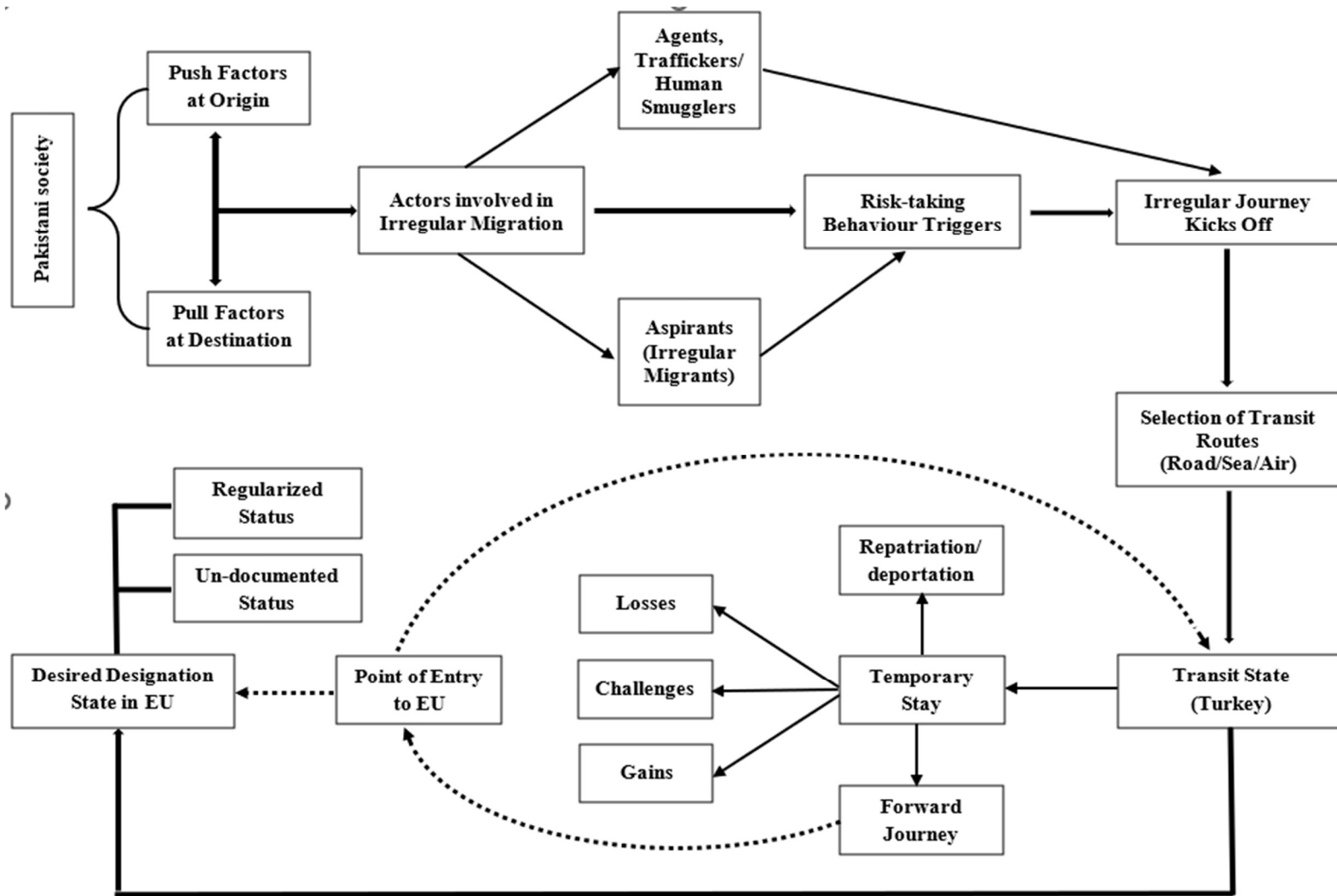


Figure 5.3. Author visualized irregular migration process from Pakistan to Türkiye.

5.4.7. Intra-Cities Travel to Reach the Exit Point

Since decades, the irregular border crossing from Pakistan to Iran has occurred through the Taftan region. Irregular migrants who start their journey from different cities in Pakistan reach Quetta (the capital city of Baluchistan), from where their agents collect them for their onward journey. Every participant had received a secret code from their local agent; when they reached Quetta, their concerned agents received them according to the codes assigned to them by their local agent. For example, one of the participants from Gujranwala informed the researcher that his code was “*toofan*” [storm]. Similarly, another participant who belonged to Swabi’s code was “*Jahaaz*” [Aeroplane]. These codes were assigned to the participants for their recognition and allocation to a particular agent. People with similar codes belong to the same agent. Twenty-five participants in the current study travelled this route in different years. They travelled like normal passengers by bus or train from their hometowns to Quetta, and they did not face any problems till reaching there.

“When we reached Quetta, I remember that at one place police stopped us and started interrogations from us. When they asked, where are you going? We said that we are working a construction company as labourer and are going to the CPEC¹⁸ site for work. Then they allowed us to go further.” [NG(7-17)].

5.4.8. Baluchistan-Taftan Broder Crossing

In a real sense, the miseries of irregular travel start from Quetta, when the aspirants physically go into the mastery of human smugglers. Quetta, in other words, is a junction point where aspirants coming from various parts of the country are first counted and then divided into several groups. One of the participants [AL(4-25)] shared that the agents run this business quite systematically due to their interconnectedness with local as well as transnational human-smuggling networks. They dispatch the groups [of aspirants] when they receive the go-ahead signal from their counterparts [in Iran] because it requires the availability of transport from Quetta to Taftan and secure accommodation place within Iran. This phase of the journey occurs through “*dala*” [pickup vehicle] normally used for petrol and oil smuggling in those areas. Majority of the participants involved in the current

¹⁸China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

study experienced similar circumstances while traveling this route. As an example, the narration by one of the participants is reproduced below:

“It was midnight when our agent asked us to be ready in five minutes. We were about twenty-five boys of different ages. When we came out of our [agent’s] residence, a small vehicle [dala] was ready to take us. [...] *us dalay vchich saanu sareyaan nun janwaraan di tera ladh kay utay terpaal maar diti* [we all were loaded into that vehicle like animals, and then they covered the vehicle with a thick sheet]. We were treated inhumanly, and the whole journey was very painful. [...] It took about ten hours and imagine that during those ten hours we remained piled in a vehicle that was supposed to be for five to six people. *Mairi halat maran aali ho gai si aur jisim so gya si* [I was about to die, and my whole body was numbed]. The vehicle was driven through a rough, bumpy track to avoid security check posts on the way.” [RH(7-18)].

5.4.9. Stay in Iran and Onward Journey to Türkiye

The next phase of the journey starts when the irregular migrants reach Iran. After reaching Iran, they have to stay for a few days there in “*khawbgah*¹⁹”. Irani agents took them to the designated places where migrants of other nationalities [particularly from Afghanistan] also joined them. While sharing their experiences, the participants told the researcher about the miserable conditions and some unpleasant incidents they had come across in Iran. Two of the participants were kidnapped for ransom and tortured by the Iranian human smugglers. According to nine participants, their Iranian agents received extra money for food and water. In addition to the money paid to their local agent, on average, every participant kept 25000–30000 Pak rupees with him for emergency survival, including to meet the food and water requirements during the journey. The agents in Iran treated us like slaves and asked for “*tumen*” [tūmân²⁰] against the food etc. they provide us during our stay in Iran. If we do not pay, they will not provide us with food, etc. They usually locked us in small rooms, from which we could not get out. We remained dependent on them and had to pay them for food and water. They used to give us “*somi*” [correct name: *psomi*²¹] to eat all the time, which was hard to eat for us. One of the risks in Iran was ‘kidnapping for ransom’. If someone goes into the hands of a

¹⁹The Persian name of a place of stay.

²⁰Persian name of Iranian currency

²¹A type of bread usually produces in Greek villages.

person [agent] other than that which was allotted to him while leaving Pakistan, he could have been kidnapped. Out of twenty-eight participants of the current study, two went through kidnapping experiences in Iran. According to them:

“When we reached Iran, we were picked up by an agent who was not supposed to be ours. [...] *Saanun safe*²² *lag gai si, tin haftay tak asean safe which guzary, kut vi khadi* [We went into the imprisonment of an agent for three weeks and were also tortured by him]. They snatched our money and other belongings. After two weeks, they released us. During the imprisonment, the agent repeatedly demanded ransom from us. He made our videos while torturing us and then asked us to send them to our family back in Pakistan. [...] *Asean panjah panjah hazar kahroun mangwa kay ohnu dita tay sahdi jaan bakhshi gai* [Each of our families sent fifty thousand rupees as ransom to him, and then he released us.]” [ZI(5-26)].

The perilous journey of the participants did not finish here. The Iranian agents then took them from the ‘*safe houses*²³’ for further travel towards Türkiye. At initial stage they utilized vehicle but later the whole distance covered by foot. It took weeks to reach Turkish border. During this phase of their travel, majority of the participants experienced food scarcity, health deterioration and psychological stress (Myhrvold & Småstuen, 2019). Some of them were tortured by the “*Dunker*²⁴” [under which supervision migrants travel by foot] because they faced difficulty in walking due to their wounded feet. Figure 5.4. is a visual representation of the routes and means of participants’ journey from Pakistan to Türkiye.

²²Unlawful prison run by human smugglers in many transit countries like Iran.

²³Special hidden places of stay where irregular migrants keep under lock in Iran and Türkiye.

²⁴A human smuggler normally rides through mule or donkey alongside the migrants’ walk through the remote and mountainous areas.

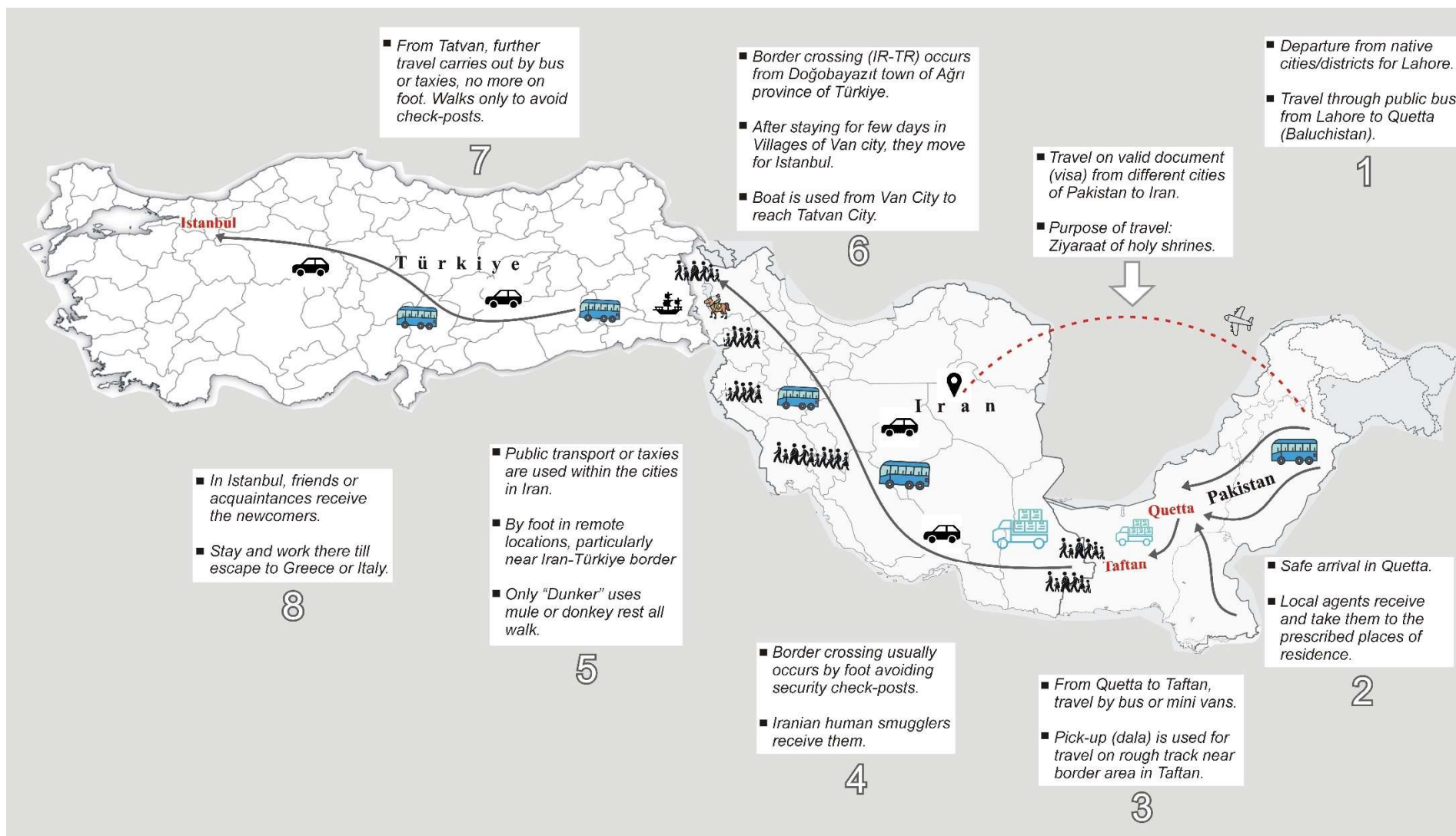


Figure 5.4. Pictorial depiction of the routes and transportation means used.

5.5. Unique Stories

Among the participants, the stories of two of them were quite unique in the sense that they entered Türkiye irregularly twice. One of them stayed in Türkiye for three years and was then deported back to Pakistan. After spending one year there, he took an irregular journey again and came to Türkiye. The other one, who came to Türkiye irregularly from Pakistan, went to Greece irregularly. He spent two and a half years there and was, after detention, sent back to Istanbul by the Greek border authorities. He was now in Istanbul and again planning to go to Greece.

I belong to Sialkot. [...]. For the first time, I came to Türkiye in 2015 irregularly. [...]. My decision was not due to poverty [...], in addition to politics, my father is in the property business. [...], I am the youngest in my family. [...], left home without informing anyone. [...], my agent was from Peshawar [...]. My friends talked to the agent [...], after reaching Quetta, I informed my father that I am going to Europe [...]. Journey from Quetta to Iran was very painful. [...], I used to watch videos on YouTube about Europe. [...], I was eager to go there. [...], thought to go back from Iran, but friends insisted on traveling further. [...], in one month, we reached Türkiye [...], Dunki was comparatively easy in 2015 [...], we crossed Maku mountain by foot in 18 hours [...]. Our payments were cleared in Van city [...], I was out of money [...], asked my family to send money but that money didn't reach me [...], one of my neighbours was an agent here, he received me [...], first six months were very tough [...], found work in the construction sector [...], many of my friends went to Greece [...], they are settled there [...], some married European girls [...], also encouraged me but I didn't go [...], now I am cursing myself [...], [...], they have their residence documents now [...]. My salary at that time was 1500 TL [...], I worked for three years [...], earned money [...], used to send home [...]. I fell ill [...], appendicitis removal surgery [...], paid 10000 TL to a private hospital [...], later Tuberculosis (TB) diagnosed [...], after getting out pass from Embassy, went back to Pakistan (deported) [...], completed my TB treatment there [...], after feeling better, once again started thinking of Türkiye [...], my family was not in favour [...], I convinced them that I know all the routes now [...], a friend was also with me [...], we took visa for Iran [...], some agents and Dunkers were also known to me now [...], easily crossed Iran-Türkiye border [...], very few liras were with me [...], ticket was 300 TL [...], sold my cell phone in 1000 TL [...], reached Istanbul [...], started life again [...], monthly earning is about 7000 TL [...], tried twice for Greece but failed [...], in recent attempt, I reached to the designated point but the person who was supposed to receive me did not come [...], waited three days there [...], I gave up when my cell battery dried up [...], willingly presented myself for arrest [...], took us to a camp [...], next day released us [...], came back to Istanbul via canal route [...], time is passing well because of friends here [...], the situation in Pakistan is not good, many well educated people are also fleeing from the country [BS(5-18)].

The second story is about one of the participants, who belonged to the Gujranwala district of the Punjab province. He travelled to Türkiye at the age of 21. He had a ‘game’ from Türkiye to Greece, and was then, arrested there after two and a half years. He was sent back to Türkiye by the Greek authorities. He faced kidnapping in Istanbul by the agents of Pakistani origin.

I reached Türkiye in 15 days from Pakistan. [...], I did not have any interest in education [...], my family was not happy with my activities [...], I decided to take a chance for Europe [...], I reached Türkiye in my first attempt [...], my Pakistani agent was Shahbaz, who was from Nowshera Virkaan [...], the name of my Iranian agent was Haji Usman [...], my targeted destination was Italy [...], I successfully reached Greece [...], spent a good time there [...], I was living in Athens [...], went to Thessaloniki from where I was supposed to join the “*Serbia-Italy Game*” for Italy but unfortunately. [...]. [...], I along with some other boys, were pushed back through the canal route by Greek police. [...], I do construction related work [...], my monthly income is around 8000TL [...]. Now I am working here and often attempt to reach Greece. [...], tried about eight times but could not succeed. [...], Agents in Greece have their sub-agents in Türkiye. We normally contact the agents via WhatsApp. [...] Due to strictness on borders, chances to cross borders are low these days [...] Some gangs are also involved in kidnapping. [...], I was kidnapped by a group of fake agents. [...], One of my acquaintances who was in a camp in Greece gave me the number of a person. [...], I contacted them, and the rate for the ‘game’ was finalized at 2300 euros. [...], I was not expecting any mishap with me [...], the location of the agent was a village in Pendik [...], I took a taxi [...], followed the location on the map, and reached there [...], Two boys came and received me [...], they took me to a home and tightened up my arms and legs with a rope [...], I did not show any resistance as they were about 15 people [...], My body was in pain, I begged mercy, but they did not. [...], They were asking for 2300 euros as ransom. [...] They asked me to make a video call on your brother’s WhatsApp and say that I reached Greece [...], Don’t be hesitant. [...], They were armed. [...], I made a call and told my brother that I had reached Greece, please release the payment to my agent. [...], Then my brother deposited 460000 PKR to the given account. [...], Haidari Shah (my agent) was reluctant to release money to these guys as he was in doubt [...]. When the kidnappers could not succeed in receiving their money, they tortured me. [...] My video was sent to my family. When my mother saw the video, he started weeping and requested them for me [...]. After beating and injuring me, they released me [...]. Then I took taxi from there and came back [...], now I am working here and waiting for my brother, who will come from Pakistan by air then we will go to Greece together. One of my cousins went to Greece, after facing two years of detention, he was released [...], now he is working there on a sheep farm [...], his owners helped him obtain papers (residence permit) [...]. I like Greece; [...], one day I will be there [...], I follow the Facebook page of Aslam Arayen who posts videos every Thursday related to the migrants’ issues in Greece [...]. In this way, I keep myself up-to-date about the situation in Greece [BG(9-21)].

5.6. Participants' Living Conditions in Istanbul

The participants have been living in Istanbul for the last few years. Being irregular, they painted a unique picture of resilience and survival in the face of daunting challenges. They also demonstrate remarkable adaptability and survival strategies by establishing informal networks and communities to provide mutual support and protection at their current location. These irregular migrants are not only surviving but also coping with different untoward situations since they have been living without any legal authorization and lack social security. Since their arrival in Istanbul, they have started earning by engaging themselves in different low-paid and labour-intensive jobs. Their future was uncertain, as they were facing a constant fear of arrest and deportation. Some of them were detained and apprehended by the police. This section analyses their experiences in the form of narration and their coping strategies by extracting important themes from the data.

Interview data were based on 28 semi-structured interviews conducted with participants in different localities of Istanbul (Aksaray, Cebeci, Eminönü, Esenyurt, Habibler, Sultançiftliği, Sultangazi, Zeytinburnu) during the months of November 2022 to April 2023. Their living areas were mostly situated near small factories where they were employed. The time and details of recorded interviews are mentioned in the previous chapter. The data was analyzed through a comprehensive process of narrative (for migration experiences of the participants) and thematic (for coping strategies of the participants) analysis. The analysis technique undertaken for the data involved several important steps to ensure a rigorous and systematic examination of the data. All the interviews were meticulously transcribed, allowing me to do a detailed review of the verbal accounts shared by the participants.

Keeping in view the important guidelines of Lester et al. (2020) and by adopting the data familiarization technique and immersing myself in the rich narratives, I gained a holistic understanding of the content. I analyzed the data line-by-line. Through open coding, key concepts and patterns were systematically identified within the data and then labelled. By refining the initial codes, relationships among different codes were explored, which led to the development of categories and overarching themes (Jiménez-Lasserrotte et al., 2023). It contains verbatim statements and transcribed recordings of interviews. Table 5.1. explains the strategy utilized for the coding and extraction of themes from the data.

Table 5.1. *Coding frame adopted for the development of themes and subthemes.*

Quotation	Initial Codes	Sub-Theme	Main Theme
“There are so many issues. More than 15 people live in this place. No separate place for personal belongings. It is very difficult to keep the place clean as it is a basement. I am habitual at sleeping alone. In the last few months, I have awakened many times at night due to noise in my surroundings. I do not feel well when I do not sleep well. One toilet is also insufficient.”	Lack of personal place, overcrowded, messy and dirty place, no direct sunlight and fresh air, frequent disturbance in the room, mental stress, scarcity of necessary items.	Lack of privacy, unhygienic environment, sleep disruption, suffocation and anxiety, unequal access to resources.	Living places

A systematic coding framework was adopted (Jiménez-Lasserrotte et al., 2023) and after learning the coding technique, the responses of the participants were accumulated in the relevant cells of the inductive table. The analysis of the participants’ data along with frequencies, categories and emergent themes are reflected in the Table 5.2. (a) and Table 5.2. (b).

Table 5.2.a. *Inductive analysis of the interviews’ data (participants’ experiences)*

Sr. No.	Themes	Categories	Respondents	Frequency
1	Living places	Lack of privacy	BG(9-21); GS(4-14); KS(9-25); AL(4-25); BS(5-18); HP(5-20); NG(7-17); JG(5-16); WS(0-16); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); BM(0-16) AG(3-14); ZI(5-26); SH(5-30); JG(4-24); MG(5-15); NS(4-16)	22
		Unhygienic accommodation	GS(4-14); KS(9-25); AL(4-25); BS(5-18); SM(0-16); HP(5-20); NG(7-17); JG(5-16); WS(0-16); BG(9-21); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); IM(5-15); BM(0-16); AG(3-14); ZI(5-26); SH(5-30); JG(4-24); MG(5-15); NS(4-16); TS(5-15); QG(4-17); NG(5-16); EG(0-19)	28
		Sleep disruption	AL(4-25); BS(5-18); SM(0-16); HP(5-20); JG(5-16); WS(0-16); NM(4-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); RH(7-18); JG(4-24); MG(5-15); NS(4-16); TS(5-15); QG(4-17); NG(5-16);	16

Table 5.2.a. (continued) *Inductive analysis of the interviews' data (participants' experiences)*

Sr. No.	Themes	Categories	Respondents	Frequency
		Suffocation and anxiety	KS(9-25); AL(4-25); BS(5-18); SM(0-16); HP(5-20); NG(7-17); JG(5-16); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); IM(5-15); ZI(5-26); SH(5-30)	15
		Unequal access to resources	HP(5-20); NG(7-17); JG(5-16); WS(0-16); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); QG(4-17); NG(5-16); EG(0-19)	11
2	Exploitation	By employers	WS(0-16); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); IM(5-15); BM(0-16); BG(9-21); GS(4-14); KS(9-25); AL(4-25); SM(0-16); HP(5-20); NG(7-17); TS(5-15); QG(4-17); NG(5-16); EG(0-19)	19
		By informal networks	GS(4-14); KS(9-25); AL(4-25); BS(5-18); HP(5-20); NG(7-17); JG(5-16); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); BM(0-16); AG(3-14); ZI(5-26); SH(5-30); JG(4-24); MG(5-15); NS(4-16); TS(5-15); QG(4-17); NG(5-16); EG(0-19)	24
3	Insecurities	Economic and financial insecurity	SM(0-16); HP(5-20); NG(7-17); JG(5-16); WS(0-16); BG(9-21); GS(4-14); KS(9-25); AL(4-25); BS(5-18); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); IM(5-15); BM(0-16); AG(3-14); ZI(5-26); SH(5-30); JG(4-24); MG(5-15); NS(4-16); TS(5-15); QG(4-17); NG(5-16); EG(0-19)	28
		Insecure health conditions	NG(7-17); JG(5-16); WS(0-16); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); RG(6-19); IM(5-15); BM(0-16); MG(5-15); NS(4-16); TS(5-15); QG(4-17)	12
		Socio-cultural vulnerabilities	BG(9-21); GS(4-14); AL(4-25); BS(5-18); SM(0-16); HP(5-20); JG(5-16); WS(0-16); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); IM(5-15); BM(0-16); AG(3-14); ZI(5-26); SH(5-30); JG(4-24)	20

Table 5.2.a. (continued) *Inductive analysis of the interviews' data (participants' experiences)*

Sr. No.	Themes	Categories	Respondents	Frequency
		Risks and fears	SM(0-16); HP(5-20); NG(7-17); JG(5-16); WS(0-16); BG(9-21); GS(4-14); KS(9-25); AL(4-25); BS(5-18); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); IM(5-15); BM(0-16); AG(3-14); ZI(5-26); SH(5-30); JG(4-24); MG(5-15); NS(4-16); TS(5-15); QG(4-17); NG(5-16); EG(0-19)	28
		Torture	BS(5-18); SM(0-16); HP(5-20); NG(7-17); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); AG(3-14); ZI(5-26); SH(5-30)	13

Table 5.2.b. *Coping strategies of the participants.*

Sr. No.	Themes	Categories	Respondents	Frequency
1	Work, Food and shelter	With employers' support	BG(9-21); GS(4-14); KS(9-25); SM(0-16); HP(5-20); NG(7-17); WS(0-16); AS(6-15); YH(6-16); RG(6-19); IM(5-15); BM(0-16); JG(4-24); MG(5-15); NS(4-16); TS(5-15);	16
		Irregular migrants of other nationality	AL(4-25); BS(5-18); JG(5-16); NM(4-15); SG(0-14); RH(7-18); QG(4-17); NG(5-16); EG(0-19)	09
		Migrants of same origin	BM(0-16); GS(4-14); KS(9-25); AL(4-25); BS(5-18); SM(0-16); HP(5-20); NG(7-17); WS(0-16); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); IM(5-15); TS(5-15); QG(4-17); NG(5-16)	18
2	Income generation	Informal employment	JG(5-16); WS(0-16); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); IM(5-15); BM(0-16); BG(9-21); GS(4-14); KS(9-25); AL(4-25); BS(5-18); SM(0-16); HP(5-20); NG(7-17); AG(3-14); ZI(5-26); SH(5-30); JG(4-24); MG(5-15); NS(4-16); TS(5-15); QG(4-17); NG(5-16); EG(0-19)	28

Table 5.2.b. (continued) Coping strategies of the participants.

Sr. No.	Themes	Categories	Respondents	Frequency
		Utilize existing skills	KS(9-25); AS(6-15); RG(6-19); BM(0-16); BG(9-21); BS(5-18); SM(0-16);	07
		Acquired new skills	JG(5-16); WS(0-16); SG(0-14); RH(7-18); GS(4-14); AL(4-25); HP(5-20); NG(7-17); YH(6-16); IM(5-15); NM(4-15); AG(3-14); ZI(5-26); SH(5-30); JG(4-24)	15
3	Healthcare	Traditional practices	KS(9-25); AL(4-25); BS(5-18); SM(0-16); HP(5-20); NG(7-17); WS(0-16); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); IM(5-15); BM(0-16); AG(3-14); ZI(5-26); SH(5-30); JG(4-24); MG(5-15)	19
		Self-medication	BG(9-21); KS(9-25); BS(5-18); HP(5-20); JG(5-16); WS(0-16); NM(4-15); SG(0-14); RH(7-18); IM(5-15); MG(5-15); NS(4-16); TS(5-15); QG(4-17); NG(5-16)	15
		Visit private clinics	GS(4-14); AL(4-25); SM(0-16); NG(7-17); AS(6-15); YH(6-16); RG(6-19); BM(0-16); MG(5-15); NS(4-16); TS(5-15); QG(4-17)	12
4	Psychological issues	Taking break from work	BS(5-18); HP(5-20); JG(5-16); WS(0-16); NM(4-15); SG(0-14); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); IM(5-15); BM(0-16); BG(9-21); GS(4-14); KS(9-25); AL(4-25); NS(4-16); TS(5-15); QG(4-17); NG(5-16); EG(0-19)	19
		Internet surfing	GS(4-14); AL(4-25); BS(5-18); SM(0-16); HP(5-20); JG(5-16); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); BM(0-16); TS(5-15); QG(4-17); NG(5-16); EG(0-19)	16
5	Detection avoidance	Avoid visiting public places	AG(3-14); ZI(5-26); SH(5-30); JG(4-24); MG(5-15); NS(4-16); TS(5-15); QG(4-17); NG(5-16); EG(0-19) JG(5-16); WS(0-16); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); RH(7-18); RG(6-19); IM(5-15); BM(0-16); BG(9-21); GS(4-14); KS(9-25); AL(4-25); BS(5-18); SM(0-16); HP(5-20); NG(7-17)	28

Table 5.2.b. (continued) *Coping strategies of the participants.*

Sr. No.	Themes	Categories	Respondents	Frequency
		Prefer work near living place	HP(5-20); NG(7-17); JG(5-16); WS(0-16); NM(4-15); AS(6-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); RG(6-19); RH(7-18); BG(9-21); GS(4-14); KS(9-25); AL(4-25); BS(5-18); SM(0-16); AG(3-14); ZI(5-26); SH(5-30); JG(4-24); MG(5-15)	21
		Avoiding authorities	WS(0-16); NM(4-15); SG(0-14); YH(6-16); RG(6-19); RH(7-18); BG(9-21); GS(4-14); AL(4-25); BS(5-18); HP(5-20); NG(7-17); AG(3-14); ZI(5-26); SH(5-30); JG(4-24); MG(5-15); NS(4-16)	18

The above tables show a brief description of participants' experiences and their coping strategies while surviving as 'irregular migrant' in Istanbul. A detailed analysis of the abovementioned themes with evidence from the field data is given below:

5.7. Participants' Experiences and Coping Strategies

During the interview process, a series of probing questions were asked to get a deeper insight into the lived experiences of the participants. Both the researcher and the participants actively engaged in these discussions, aiming to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and hardships faced by irregular migrants of Pakistani origin. It also enabled the researcher to explore their coping strategies at their current location (Istanbul). The strategies they adopted to navigate through their uncertain conditions shed light on their resilience and adaptability. Furthermore, a valuable insight into the participants' motivation to move on has also been explored. Understanding their aspirations, fears, and hopes for the future offered a humanizing perspective on the complexities of irregular migration. Through this detailed approach, several distinct categories emerged, each representing the multifaceted experiences of the participants.

5.8. Living Places

The living environment of the participants was not only congested but also exposed them to various problems, which they shared with the researcher in detail during the interviews. Table 5.3. displays subthemes and units of meaning associated with the participants' experiences about their living and accommodations in Istanbul. These

categories offer important points of discussion and analysis which are being described below:

Table 5.3. *Categories of living places and experiences of the participants*

Theme	Subthemes	Units of meaning
Living places	Lack of privacy	Share limited living space, little personal space, loss of belongings, an overcrowded room environment, no appropriate place for prayer and dressing in the rooms.
	Unhygienic accommodation	Poor or no ventilation of rooms; difficult to maintain proper sanitation and hygiene; participants live in close proximity; are prone to infections such as itching and flu. Lack of proper bedding; smelly carpets; unhygienic kitchenware; and toilet stuff, there is no separate place for cooking, no heating arrangements in place.
	Sleep disruption	The living place is not quiet and comfortable; snoring and constant noise by some of the roommates disrupt sleep patterns.
	Suffocation and anxiety	Feel stress and mental discomfort due to the cramped space. Claustrophobia and anxiety symptoms due to prolonged exposure to an overcrowded living environment.
	Unequal access to shared resources	Sometimes, disputes arise due to individuals' unequal access to shared resources such as toilets, iron, food, water, etc.; bed sharing is also common.

5.8.1. Lack of Privacy

The situation about living places of the participants described above are challenging and have significant impacts on their well-being. “I feel discomfort and stress as our residence is overcrowded and there is no privacy.” [AS(6-15)]. “Due to this shared living space, my personal belongings just disappear or get borrowed without permission.” [NG(7-17)]. “I always be in an awkward situation while changing my dress. There is no adequate space where I can change without feel exposed.” [SG(0-14)]. “I feel that I have no sense of ownership over my space, everything feels communal. It is hard for me to make a place feel like home.” [BS(5-18)]. With limited living space and little personal space, the rooms are overcrowded, leaving no appropriate place for prayer or dressing.

5.8.2. Unhygienic Accommodation

The overcrowded accommodations of the participants are unhealthy and poorly cleaned. Lack of proper ventilation and sanitation makes it difficult to maintain cleanliness and take fresh air, leading to various health issues such as catching of contagious diseases. “I got some infection and facing the issue of itching since long as our residence is a breeding ground for such problems.” [WS(0-16)]. “There is no proper bed space and sleeping stuff. Some of us use sofas for sleeping and some sleep on carpets which are very smelly.” [AL(4-25)]. The absence of separate cooking facilities adds to their discomfort because of the smoky and smelly environment of the room. “We are so familiar with food aroma because we cook in the same room where we live. I am so allergic about these smells and there are no other options but to continue with similar situation.” [RH(7-18)]. “We live in basement; winter season is supposed to be killer for us. We shiver as there is no heating system in place. The freezing cold add more misery to our lives.” [BS(5-18)]. Figure 5.5. exhibits the living environment of the participants in which one of the participants was making a haircut of his colleague at the place used for cooking, sleeping and dining etc.



Figure 5.5. Photograph taken by the researcher at one of the research sites.

5.8.3. Sleep Disruption

One requires a peaceful and comfortable space for sleeping. The sleep patterns vary from person to person. Some can sleep in noisy conditions but the other face difficulty to sleep in the similar environment. As the accommodations of the participants are crowded and uncomfortable, many of them have complained about disruption in their sleeping patterns. “I cannot sleep in a crowded place; some of my colleagues make noise at night and disturb my sleep because they used to cough and snore.” [WS(0-16)]. “I am a nonsmoker but some of my friends in the room smoke cigarettes and “*hokkah*²⁵” (nargileh) till late night. Their such activities badly disturb my sleep.” [SG(0-14)].

5.8.4. Suffocation and Anxiety

The limited space also causes stress and mental discomfort, often resulting in claustrophobic and anxiety symptoms due to ones’ prolonged exposure to overcrowded conditions. “I feel better when I remain outside from the room. The crowded environment increases anxiety in me.” [HP(5-20)]. “I feel difficulty to breathe in a congested space. Our room accommodates more people than its capacity. I often go outside the door to get rid of suffocation.” [KS(9-25)].

5.8.5. Unequal Access to Shared Resources

When many people shared the same accommodation, they may face the issue of inequality in utilization of shared resources. Such unequal access to shared resources often leads to disputes among them. Similarly, sometime conflicting timing can also embarrass the individuals. “In the morning every one of us was in hurry to go to work. I used to face problem because of que in front of toilet.” [NM(4-15)]. “Our cell phone chargers are also common. I experienced that whenever I want to charge my cell phone, the charger was supposed to be occupied by someone else.” [JG(5-16)]. Overall, the analysis show that these living conditions have been posing significant challenges, affecting both physical and mental well-being of the participants of the current study.

5.9. Exploitation

The irregular migrants face exploitation due to their status. The nature of exploiters and the intensity of exploitation could vary from place to place and country to

²⁵Tobacco pipe in which the smoke is drawn through water before reaching the lips.

country. Table 5.4. describes the categories related to participants' exploitation experiences.

Table 5.4. *Categories related to participants' exploitation being irregular migrant.*

Theme	Subthemes	Units of meaning
Exploitation	By employers	Long working hours, forced overtime, offer minimum wage, deduction from wage in case of leave, employers' control over working hours, continuous surveillance, demand multiple jobs and unfamiliar tasks, no health and medical insurance, treat like slaves.
	By informal social networks	Grab money on the name of documentation etc., ask bribe for jobs, take advantage of language barrier, charge high amount of money than normal for some emergency services, take advantage of migrants' status, engage them in criminal activities.

5.9.1. By Employers

Many of the participants of the study have been experienced exploitation from their employers as well as by their informal social networks. Due to their irregular status, their employers exploit them to engage in various exploitative practices such as extending working hours, by paying less wage and assigning multiple jobs irrespective of their skills and knowledge. "Our employers know that we are "*kaçak*²⁶" (irregular migrant), they deal with us in a very strict manner. They keep us busy like machines and demand multiple tasks at the same time." [IM(5-15)]. "They take advantage of our vulnerability with long working hours, low wages, and persistent surveillance." [RH(7-18)]. "I have some health issue; my kidneys do not function properly. I fell ill and could not go to work for two weeks. My employer deducted two-weeks wage from my monthly salary." [YH(6-16)]. "My employer offers minimum wage, deduct salary for leaves, and control my working hours." [NG(7-17)]. "I feel that we are modern-day slave as our employers treat us like commodities instead of human being. We have no access to healthcare etc." [GS(4-14)]. "We do not have any health or accidental coverage. our employers do not purchase health insurance for us. They save their money, but we remain vulnerable to many health problems." [BG(9-21)].

²⁶In Türkiye, the term *kaçak* or *düzensiz göçmen* is used for a person who entered Türkiye in violation of the country's immigration laws.

5.9.2. By Informal Social Networks

The informal social networks also exploit the irregular migrants. The participants of the current study faced such issues mostly from those who share same origin as of migrants. “Another problem for us is our own informal networks. They exploit us due to our irregular status. They, with the help of their gangs, take the advantage of our language barrier and demand bribes or charge high amount of money for any service they provide us.” [YH(6-16)]. “These so-called cultural mediators also pushed us in criminal activities, further exploiting our vulnerability.” [KS(9-25)].

“I know little Turkish and have some friends here. Usually, I take my commission from the boys and help them in finding the jobs. Sometimes I also charge extra money because I know that they cannot do anything against me.” [SH(5-30)].

It is also observed during the field study that some of the migrants who have regular residence status, also exploit the irregular migrants by engaging them in various low-paid jobs or by delaying their salaries for an extended period of time.

5.10. Insecurities

The life of an irregular migrant is not free from uncertainties. The face financial, economic, and social worries. Table 5.5. portrays the experiences of the participants related to their insecurities.

Table 5.5. *Categories about participants’ insecurities.*

Theme	Subthemes	Units of meaning
Insecurities	Economic and financial insecurity	Limited work options, cannot seek better job opportunities, no access to financial services and benefits, job instability, remittances pressure, no access to education or skill development programmes.
	Insecure health conditions	Lack access to basic healthcare services, no vaccination at all, avoid medical care, vulnerable to contagious diseases, face physical and mental health issues, survive without health insurance, psychological stress and anxiety, prone to occupational hazards, face difficulties to get medication, risks their lives by self-medication (without doctor’s advice).

Table 5.5. (continued) *Categories about participants' insecurities.*

Theme	Subthemes	Units of meaning
	Socio-cultural vulnerabilities	Remain in social exclusion and isolation, face cultural barrier, do not seek legal protection, home sickness, family separation and loss of loved ones, avoid public place, do not interact with public authorities, feelings of freedom loss, face social marginalization and stigma, avoid rituals.
	Risks and fears	Living in shadows (detection and detention fear) risk of deportation, vulnerable to kidnapping (for ransom), risk to loss financial capital, looting by gangs, risk to loss life.
	Torture	By border forces, criminal gangs also torture for snatching and robbing purposes, human smugglers torture if one does not pay ransom or delay the demanded money.

5.10.1. Economic and Financial Insecurity

The participants of the studies shared the insecurities they had experienced. Due to their irregular status, they have limited work options and do not have access to better job opportunities. Similarly, they cannot get benefits from financial services to secure their financial capital. “We cannot hold a bank account where we could deposit our earned money, keeping it in cash form is always at risk of theft.” [HP(5-20)]. Their challenges multiply due to job instability and remittances pressure. “Our jobs are not stable. At the same time, we have to send money back to our families for their survival, but no one knows our problems except us.” [BG(9-21)].

5.10.2. Insecure Health Conditions

Their irregular status again bars them from seeking health services, ultimately increasing their health vulnerability, which badly affects their mental health too. “I got a fracture in my leg but could not go to the public hospital because of my status, I do not have any health coverage (insurance). With the support of my employer, I visited a private hospital and paid a huge amount for my treatment.” [RH(7-18)]. “None of us received any vaccination related to COVID-19. During the pandemic we spent most of the time at home because our workplace was closed.” [JG(5-16)].

5.10.3. Socio-cultural Vulnerabilities

Participants live in social isolation, face cultural barriers, and have no access to legal protection. “We live in loneliness to keep ourselves invisible. To avoid problems associated with our status, we do not interact with the people out of our circles. Only recently, I had a dispute with my employer on a wage-related issue, but I failed to access legal protection because I am a *kaçak*.” [YH(6-16)]. “I have experienced that local people do not like us. They recognize from our appearance that we are *kaçak*. They keep themselves at distance and do not talk with us. Their such behaviour push us to live in isolation.” [WS(0-16)].

Among other vulnerabilities, the participants were also exposed to some criminal groups of other nationalities. They always feel themselves unsafe because some of them already faced such conditions. One of the participants shared his experiences:

“Two times a group of Afghanis came to our residence; they had knives in their hands and fought with our boys. While going back, they snatched two thousand liras from my pocket.” [RG(6-19)].

5.10.4. Risks and Fears

They live in constant fear of police detection, which may later lead to detention and deportation. “Police detection and detention are two of our biggest fears. We remain extra conscious all the time when we go out. However, when we stay at our residence, we only trust in God that He will keep us safe from police apprehension. Our life is very uncertain and full of fears.” [IM(5-15)]. During the interview, one of the participants also shared his experience about some police raids.

“Police raided our residence two to three times. They did not arrest me; I think due to my younger age (below 18). For those who were more than 18 years of age, police arrested some of them during each riad and later transferred them to the detention camps.” [TS(5-15)].

Now the government has tightened its policy against irregular migrants. It seems that we will also be captured and deported soon.” [AS(6-15)]. The issue of financial capital loss is also common. In addition to ransom demands from the criminals and agents, when irregular migrants join the “*game*” (group ready to go) from Türkiye to Greece, most of the time the border forces apprehend them and take their belongings, including

money, before pushing them back to Türkiye. Failure to cross the border results in their financial loss as they continue their struggle until their success.

“I tried to cross the border five times but failed. I have lost about 2000 liras because I have purchased dry fruits, new shoes for the journey, and some new shirts. But the border forces snatched all my belongings, including some money, and even pulled the laces out from my shoes.” [SG(0-14)].

Among other multifarious risks, the risk of losing a life is also there, especially when they travel on rough and tough routes to reach the border. Sometimes they divert themselves into more difficult areas to avoid detection. Those who experienced the Turkish-Greece border-crossing also used boats to cross the river on their way.

“There is a canal near the Greece border. Once, we were crossing that canal, and eight people were on board; our boat was about to sink. We lost our hopes, but thanks to God, we survived at the end.” [NG(7-17)].

5.10.5. Torture

Similarly, kidnapping by criminal gangs and human smugglers also puts their lives and financial capital at risk, making their conditions even more precarious. “Three months ago, I was kidnapped and tortured by two Pakistani kidnapers (human smugglers) in Istanbul. They took me to Tuzla village and put me under lock and key. I was handcuffed and spent two nights there. They keep me in their custody till they receive the ransom. The amount my parents paid to them was PKR 450000.” [AS(6-15)]. Another participant who was tortured for ransom, shared his experiences:

“I had a mishap and was kidnapped in Kumkapi (an area in Istanbul). Those who put me in safe custody (kidnapped me) were all Pakistanis. I accompanied my friend, who was going to hand over six boys to an agent for the Greece game. The person in contact was actually a member of a kidnapping gang. They put those six boys in a locked room and offered us tea, etc. When the kidnapers learned that we are not dunkers or agents, they also put us under lock along with already kidnapped boys. They tortured me badly; I spent seven days there and paid 2000 euros as ransom, then they released me.” [JG(5-16)].

The human smugglers pay travel charges and the dunker’s share in advance from their own pockets. On successful arrival of irregular migrants in Greece, the guarantor in

Pakistan releases the promised money to the agents. When their ‘games’ fail consecutively, they lose their money already paid to dunker for travel and transportation arrangements. To recover their lost money, they kidnapped irregular migrants and demand ransoms from them.

“I was held hostage by a Pakistani gang in Istanbul. I was abducted with five other young boys in one of the suburbs of Istanbul. I faced abduction for three days. One day, when I went to the toilet with handcuffs, I put my cuffed hands out of the window. One of the Turkish old ladies was on her balcony in a nearby home; luckily, he saw my situation and called the police. The police came within fifteen minutes, arrested those abductors, and released us from their custody.”
[NS(4-16)].

5.11. Struggle for Work, Food and Shelter

The foremost need of the participants’ survival was food and shelter. They did efforts to cope the situation so that they could survive in transit. Some of the participants were already had their acquaintances there, however, the rest also resolved their issues with the help of their newly established informal social connections. Table 5.6. depicts the coping strategies of the participants for the resolution of work, food and accommodation related issues.

Table 5.6. *Categories: how participants acquire accommodation and food?*

Theme	Subthemes	Units of meaning
Work Food and shelter	With employer’s support	Facilitate accommodation at the workplace; secure place for the workforce; provide internet and electricity facility. Getting meals through a third party if live at the workplace.
	Irregular migrants of other nationality	Shared living spaces and food items; preferring old buildings, basements, or informal settlements for living purposes.
	Migrants of Same origin	Accommodate on sharing basis, collect money for cooking and other necessary items, help in finding work etc.

5.11.1. With Employer’s Support

Arrangements for food and accommodation are the biggest challenges for the survival of irregular migrants in any new place. However, the availability of informal

social networks at a given location can support and resolve such issues. Individuals associated with such circles could be from different categories. For example, local residents, factory owners, foreign students, foreigners with legal residence status, irregular migrants of the same or different nationality, etc. “My employer rented a basement for his own business purposes, but he allowed us to live there. He also got the internet subscription in his name for us. There is no natural gas connection; we use gas cylinders for cooking purposes. We collectively pay the monthly rent of the building and share the cost of electricity, gas, and food items.” [SM(0-16)]. Figure 5.6 portrays the sleeping arrangements provided to the participants by a factory owner at the workplace.

“We live at the workplace; we feel secure because our movement is quite limited. Sometimes we cook food here but prefer to order ready food from a nearby “*Desi*²⁷” restaurant to save time and money. The restaurant offers subsidized Pakistani food to us” [QG(4-17)].



Figure 5.6. *Sleeping arrangements at one of the research sites.*

²⁷The term is used for a restaurant or food point which is being run by a person whom origin is same as of the participants of this study.

5.11.2. Irregular Migrants of Other Nationality

Living with strangers is not common among irregular migrants in Istanbul, but when there is no other option left, people of different nationalities share accommodation. “I spent six months with Afghan nationals. They were kind enough to me and took good care of me. However, the condition of our residence was very pathetic, which used to cause discomfort for all of us.” [AL(4-25)]. Sometimes, the migrants of different nationalities help each other and live together.

“If you have some friends here, you can find work easily. I have many Afghan friends who always helped me in difficult times. The common thing between me and Afghan migrants was language. I belonged to KPK and Pushto was my mother tongue; in addition to Persian, most of them were familiar with Pushto due to which they considered me like Afghan and extended their cooperation on various occasions.” [HP(5-20)].

5.11.3. Migrants of Same Origin

People of the same origin cooperate with each other. Most of the participants of the current study received support from people of Pakistani origin (those who entered Türkiye legally or irregularly). “When I reached Istanbul for the first time, one of our acquaintances (from Pakistan) took me to the residence where some other people of different ages were also staying. They welcomed me, and since then, I am staying with them because I cannot survive elsewhere alone with my irregular status.” [NM(4-15)]. Istanbul is a city that has many factories and production units. So, the irregular migrants succeed to find job somehow for their survival.

“Some of the boys were living at my residence, one day police detained them and deported to Pakistan later. One of my friends called me and asked if I am interested to join the work as their replacement. I gave my consent and till now, I am working there.” [QG(4-17)].

5.12. Income Generation

Despite many difficulties and limitations, none of the participants was unemployed. They were generating their income (more or less) by engaging themselves in some skilled and unskilled jobs. Table 5.7. highlights their income generation strategies.

Table 5.7. Categories: income generation sources of the participants.

Theme	Subthemes	Units of meaning
Income generation	Informal employment	Labor-intensive jobs, low-skilled work especially in garments and shoe factories, seasonal work, construction-related work.
	Utilizing existing skills	Benefiting from existing skills such as stitching, barbering, and cleanliness, utilize online platform.
	Acquiring new skills	New skills learning (furniture polishing, shoemaking, ironing, and stitching work in garment factories, salt packing, cooking, and backing)

5.12.1. Informal Employment

There are several informal sectors that hire irregular migrants (participants of the study) for low-wage and comparatively less visible jobs. According to field data of the current study, the major opportunities available to the participants include stitching, welding, loading unloading, and construction related work. Although, the participants had various concerns related to their working environment, factory owner’s attitude and their salaries etc. but even then, they continued their jobs and generating income continuously for their survival etc. Figure 5.7. depicts the monthly income of the participants in Turkish liras.

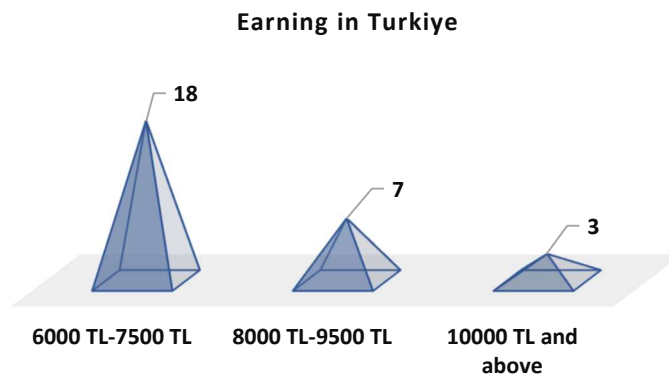


Figure 5.7. Participants’ monthly earning through their informal employment.

“I am working with a contractor associated with the construction sector. I work as a steel and tile fixer.” [BG(9-21)]. “I perform “*topla*²⁸” in a small garment factory where I gather unstitched material and stitched products separately.” [GS(4-14)]. “My job

²⁸Topla is a Turkish word that means to gather something or collect.

is related to loading and unloading of salt from the vehicle. After packing, I also deliver those packets on demand to different restaurants and nearby shops.” [NG(7-17)]. The participants also send a considerable portion of their earned money back to Pakistan either for their families’ well-being or for saving purposes.

“Whatever we earn, always prefer to send maximum portion of that money to our families. I remain in touch with my family in Pakistan. The money I earned my family also gets benefit from it. Now my family’s financial conditions are better.” [EG(0-19)].

5.12.2. Utilizing Existing Skills

The irregular migrants of Pakistani origin were either poorly skilled or completely unskilled. However, those who have some skills also benefit from them. “I have good skills in barbering. I worked as a hairdresser at different salons in Cebeci and Zeytinburnu. Now I am working in a shoe factory for the last year and also offer my barbering services to my friend during weekends.” [KS(9-25)]. “Although I have no formal school education, because of my “*Madrassa*²⁹” education, which I received from Pakistan, I am capable of teaching Quran online. I perform this job and receive some income from the students of different countries.” [BS(5-18)]. “I work as a chef at Desi restaurant owned by a Pakistani. I have good cooking skills as I worked at Saver Foods³⁰ in Lahore from where I acquired good skills.” [YH(6-16)].

5.12.3. Acquiring New Skills

Learning is a lifelong process. The current study participants have learned some new skills either through learning by doing or self-learning techniques. Those who work in garment factories perform specialized tasks. They received informal training for a few days and then started their work. “My job is ironing the stitched items. It took me less than one week to learn this task.” [NG(7-17)]. “Our factory stitches stuff for the LC Waikiki company. My job is to sew girls’ dresses. Our factory arranged hands-on training to train us. I have an interest in stitching and sewing, so I learned quickly.” [AL(4-25)]. The participants of the study informed the researcher that there are number of small garments’ factories which offer work opportunities to them. After spending some time, they learn the new skills and continue their work. “I did not have any skill in Pakistan,

²⁹Institution in Pakistan that offers religious education.

³⁰Food chain in Pakistan, especially operates in Lahore and Islamabad.

here I work as tailor in a stitching factory and my job is to cut the ladies trousers and shirts. I feel happy as I am a skilled person now.” [SG(0-14)].

Some of the participants of the study work and live at the same place. Figure 5.8. displays the working environment of the participants at one of the garments factories in the Cebeci area in Istanbul.

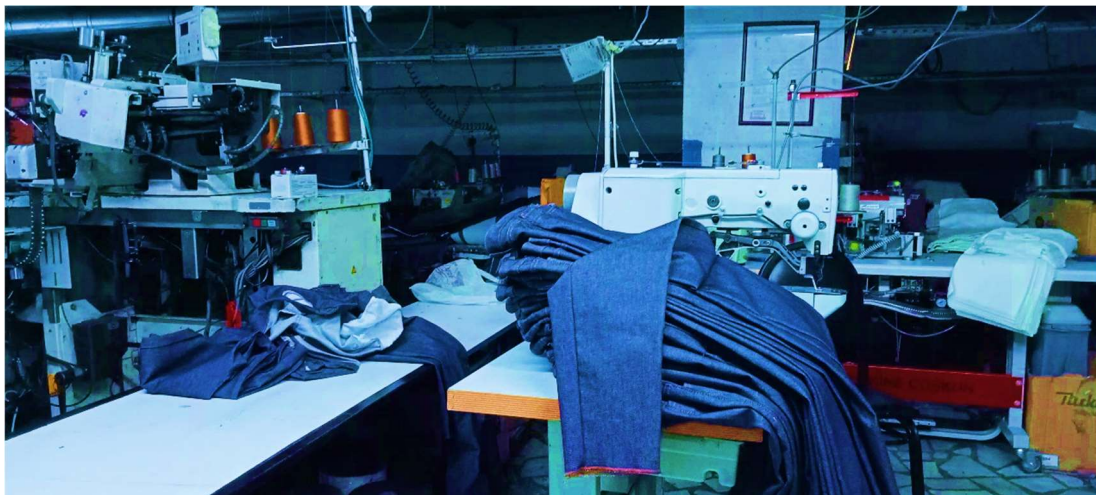


Figure 5.8. Production unit, photo captured by the author at one of the research sites.

5.13. Healthcare

Living without health safety always remains a huge challenge especially for those who do not have any health insurance. How participants cope with their health-related challenges, Table 5.8. exhibits their various strategies in this regard.

Table 5.8. Categories: Healthcare strategies of the participants.

Theme	Subthemes	Units of meaning
Healthcare	Traditional practices	Do not take prescriptions from any doctor; prefer herbal treatment; use mustard oil for itching; herbal tea for cough and flu; use gel for pain relief; take sunlight in case of feeling cold; usually take shower with warm water.
	Self-medication	Carry some medicines with them, such as Panadol, Ponston, and Disprin, take medicines with the help of their acquaintances.
	Visit private clinics	In case of a severe problem, they consult private doctors in the surrounding area with the support of their concerned employer.

5.13.1. Traditional Practices

The participants employ various coping strategies to address their health needs. Due to their prevalent status, they cannot take advantage of public health facilities. Mostly, they rely on home remedies they are familiar with or get advice from within their community. “I never visited doctor. I used to have coughing in the winter, for which I mixed honey in warm water and took its sips.” [RG(6-19)]. “Whenever I have an itching problem, I use mustered oil, which is easily available from the market.” [WS(0-16)]. “I have the issue of joint pain, especially in the winter season. One of my friends advised me to sit in the sunlight frequently. I am practicing it and feeling well.” [SG(0-14)]. “I have had some muscular problems which I manage by using a gel similar to iodex³¹ which we use in Pakistan in case of fracture or skin injury.” [NM(4-15)]. “I have stone in my kidneys, I did not take any medicine but drink more water.” [JG(5-16)].

5.13.2. Self-Medication

One of the strategies that some participants utilized to cope with their common health issues was taking medicines without a doctor’s prescription. “One of my friends is very caring and helpful. Whenever I feel bad or have a fever, I ask him for help. Normally, he keeps some medicines for common health issues with him and provides them to us when required.” [BG(9-19)]. “When I was in Pakistan, I used to take Panadol tablet for fever, the same practice I do here.” [RH(7-18)]. “As you know, we are *kaçak*. If we visit hospitals, we may face apprehension. So, we take some remedies by ourselves.” [SG(0-14)]. One of the strategies that some participants utilized to cope with their common health issues was taking medicines without a doctor’s prescription. “One of my friends is very caring and helpful. Whenever I feel bad or have a fever, I ask him for help. Normally, he keeps some medicines for common health issues with him and provides them to us when required.” [HP(5-20)]. “When I was in Pakistan, I used to take Panadol tablets for fever, the same practice I do here.” [JG(5-16)].

“Once I fell ill. My friend managed some injections and syringe for me. After administering those injections, I felt well. Whenever I did not feel well, I contacted him, and he resolved my issue.” [KS(9-25)].

³¹Gel, normally used to get relief from pain or to prevent skin from some infection.

Some of the participants of the study shared their experiences that they never preferred medicines but try to feel better after taking some rest from work. In their views, extensive sleep was always a good solution for recovery from illness. However, a few of them disagreed and according to them, quick recovery can only be possible by getting some medicines. That’s why, they prefer medication.

5.13.3. Visit Private Clinics

“As you know, we are *kaçak*. If we visit government hospitals, we may face apprehension. So, we avoid them and take some remedies by ourselves.” [GS(4-14)]. “I remember, when I had the issue of appendicitis, I was about to die due to severe pain in my lower abdomen. My factory owner was very kind; he took me to a private hospital that was being run by a Syrian doctor. The doctor performed that surgery on human grounds, and I got relief.” [YH(6-16)]. “I had a very bad chest infection last year, due to which my lungs were also affected. The doctor charged a high fee from me, but I recovered from the infection.” [AS(6-15)].

5.14. Psychological Issues

Living and working under unfamiliar circumstances may increase psychological and mental health issues. The participants of the study have been experiencing such conditions that posed threats to their mental or psychological health. Table 5.9. reflects the categories that are being adopted by the participants to reduce their stress.

Table 5.9. *Categories: Coping with psychological issues.*

Theme	Subthemes	Units of meaning
Psychological issues	Taking break from work	Take rest and extensive sleep; do not go to work until recovery; smoke excessively, gossips with roommates or talk to the families at origin through WhatsApp.
	Internet surfing	Spending time on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok; watch political news related to Pakistan on social media, watch videos related to Pakistani migrants in other European countries.

5.14.1. Taking break from Work

Due to their precariousness and associated fears, most of the participants have been facing stress and anxiety. To get rid of their psychological issues, they either take a

break from work or start smoking. “Stress is now a part of our lives. Every day when we leave for work, we think that today is the last day of our stay in Türkiye. For example, when I feel worried, I do not go to work and spend the whole day in the room sleeping.” [BM(0-16)]. “Due to uncertain conditions, the problem of anxiety has developed in me. Then I started smoking, and now I am almost addicted.” [NM(4-15)].

5.14.2. Internet Surfing

There are limited opportunities for relaxation for the participants. They spent the whole day at their workplace and returned to their residence in the late evening. Those who live at their workplaces face limited physical movement. The Internet is their only source of relaxation. “When I feel worried, I watch funny video clips on YouTube. I like Punjabi stage shows very much.” [RG(6-19)]. “I use Facebook and TikTok frequently, where I also post my own videos.” [BS(5-18)]. “I have very strong nerves, but sometimes I get stressed, and then I open my mobile and watch videos, etc.” [GS(4-14)]. Figure 5.9. shows the use of social media platforms by the participants.

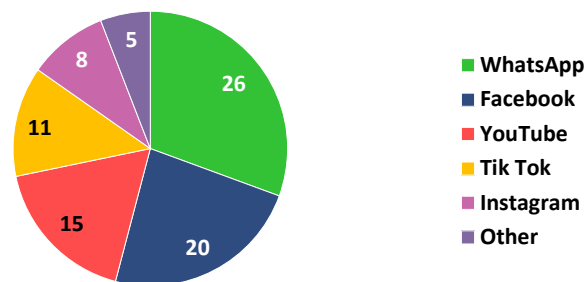


Figure 5.9. Participants' familiarity with various social media platforms.

The study data also revealed that majority of the participants have registered their whatsapp accounts on their Pakistani SIM cards. According to them, they can use Turkish SIM only if they have kimlik card. But their status is “irregular migrant”, and it is not possible for them to get the subscription of any Turkish cellular network.

“I have my WhatsAap on Pakistani SIM card because in Türkiye, we cannot get SIM without Turkish kimlik card. I mostly use WhatsAap to contact with my family and friends. One of my friends gave me a Turkish SIM which was registered on his name as his status was regular at that time. After six months that SIM card become nonfunctional automatically. Subsequently, I have registered my new WhatsAap on Pakistani SIM Card.” [NG(7-17)].

The participants only use internet either at their residence or at their workplace. Even, some of them did not have the internet connectivity at their residence. In this case, they visit nearby residence of their acquaintances (irregular migrants).

5.15. Detection Avoidance

Being irregular migrants, detection and detention by police and immigration authorities are among the biggest fears of the participants. Although majority of them have not experienced police arrest but they always remain conscious about their possible apprehension. To avoid such detections, they adopt some coping strategies which are being displayed in Table 5.10. They were aware that if police arrest them, most probably they have to face detention and later repatriation to Pakistan.

Table 5.10. *Categories: How participants avoid their detection?*

Theme	Subthemes	Units of meaning
Detection avoidance	Avoiding public places	Do not go to the public places like parks and restaurants, avoid crowded places in their vicinity, avoid public services, choose alternate routes for local travel.
	Prefer work near living place	Keep themselves less mobile and less visible; go to their workplaces by foot, prefer to work at a place where they could find some workers of their own origin.
	Avoiding authorities	Keep themselves low profile to avoid detection, remain vigilant and informed, change route from distance if see the police, rely on their social network.

5.15.1. Avoid Visiting Public Places

One of the strategies that participants adopt is to keep themselves away from public and touristy places. To keep themselves safe and undetectable, they do not visit parks, hospitals, or big shopping malls but rely on small shops for their needs. “I avoid famous places. One of my friends has lived here for the last four years. He was quite safe when he was at a distance from the main places in Istanbul. One day he went to Taksim Square³² with other friends and was arrested by the police. Later, he was sent back to Pakistan. [IM(5-15)]. “I want to see the beautiful places in all of Türkiye, but my irregular status prevents me from doing so.” [SG(-14)].

³²A famous touristy and business place in Istanbul.

5.15.2. Prefer to Work near Living Place

Most of the participants lived in areas surrounded by small factories. According to them, we survive here better as our workplaces are near to our living places. It could be dangerous for us if traveling involves reaching the workplace. Usually, our first preference is to find accommodations at our workplace. If we do not find it there, then we always try to live near our workplaces. “My workplace is ten minutes from my residence. I reach there quite safely as I do not use any public transport facilities.” [WS(0-16)]. “I work in a garment factory, which is situated in a living area near my accommodation. Due to its location, I have never seen any police on my way to the factory.” [RG(6-19)].

5.15.3. Avoiding Authorities

One of the key strategies that the participants employed was the avoidance of law enforcement authorities. They always keep a low profile. They keep themselves vigilant, and if they see police on their way, they suddenly change their routes. “One day I was coming from work, and I saw that three policemen were coming in my opposite direction. I did not waste time and took a left turn from there and ran away.” [NG(7-18)]. “I was going to my friend’s residence when I was stopped by a policeman. He inquired and asked me to show him my “*kimlik*”³³. I said that I am a Syrian and do not have any *kimlik*. He smiled and let me go.” [GS(4-14)]. “Our factory owner told us that police are not allowed to come inside the factories. At our request, he allowed us to live inside the factory. Although, there is no proper sleeping place, but we feel comfortable and secure there.” [HP(5-20)].

“I keep small portion of money all the time with me for any difficult situation. For e.g., if police arrest me and takes me to the camp, I could contact to my family using PK calling card. I could purchase that card with the money in my pocket.” [AG(3-14)].

5.16. Waiting, Escaping, Apprehension and Repatriation (WEAR)

The majority of the participants do not want to stay in Türkiye for a longer time because, when they left home, they were informed by their agents that their ultimate destination is Greece, from where they could also go to Italy and other European

³³Identity/residence card that Turkish Immigration Authority issues to the foreign nationals.

countries. Hence, the participants consider Istanbul a “*waiting*” or “*a transit state*” where they stay till, they find an opportunity to escape for their onward journey to Greece or Italy (Schapendonk, 2012a). The irregular border crossing between Türkiye and Greece is not only difficult, but there are various risks and dangers associated with it. Out of 28, ten participants have tried multiple times to cross the border, but only three have succeeded. Those who succeeded were arrested in Greece later and sent back to Türkiye via the canal route³⁴. One of them had spent almost two years in Greece and later captured from Thessaloniki³⁵. However, the other two were pushed back to Turkish land just after the third day of their arrival in Greece.

“From Istanbul to the Greek border, me and one of my friends went through the “*Taxi Game*”³⁶” We successfully crossed the border and reached Thessaloniki. After spending one night with a friend there, we left for Athens. However, we were very unlucky; at the bus station, the police arrested us, and after some necessary interrogation, they threw us back to Turkish land. As we had successfully entered Greece and were later arrested, our guarantor released money to the agent, and each of us had lost 2500 euros in this episode.” [QG(4-17)].

The human smugglers and agents operate their network in all those countries that are famous for irregular migration. Their network is quite systematic and widely spread. On researcher’s inquiry about the availability of the agents in Istanbul, one of the participants shared the following views:

“Agents belong to different nationality, e.g., Pakistani, Turkish, Syrian etc. They send us in groups for Greece. The number of persons in a group varies. It could be ten, twenty or forty.” [TS(5-15)].

Their attempts for border crossing were not stopped yet. For example, one of the participants of the study, who attempted ten times to cross the Türkiye-Greece border, shared his views:

³⁴A common route used by the irregular migrants to enter Greece.

³⁵A Greek port city on the Aegean Sea.

³⁶One of the safest, fastest and expensive but less dangerous game that irregular migrants take from Istanbul to Greek border.

“I just came back to Istanbul yesterday from the Greek border. It was my tenth attempt in the last three years. I am determined to reach Greece and will continue my efforts until I succeed. Next week, I will try again to reach Greece.” [NG(7-17)].

Among the participants, only three were hesitant and were not interested in taking a further journey to Greece irregularly. They were of the view that they will continue the way it’s going on till the arrest or deportation to Pakistan. However, some others were fully determined in this regard, and they also started daydreaming about their protentional new destination.

[...], hun asean agay hi jana hay, wapsi ala qaida phar dita jay [now we will only forward direction i.e., Greece because the chapter of backward journey does not exist in our book now]. Now all the time Greece is in my mind and thoughts. [...], dinay ithay sutay hohiye, uthiye tay unaan hovay [we sleep in Türkiye but when we awake, it should be Greece].

5.17. Uncovering the Financial Channel: Major Actors at Origin and in Transit

As majority of the participants reached Türkiye through irregular border crossing and some of them had also attempted to enter Greece via Türkiye-Greece border but either failed to cross it or pushed back to Istanbul by the Greek border forces. Those who could not succeed, still determined and according to them, they will continue their efforts till they got success and reach at their desired destination. How the participants manage their travel from Istanbul to Greece, Figure 5.10. depicts the holistic picture of the financial channel they use and highlights the actors and facilitators of irregular migration at origin as well as in transit.

In 2021, the Greek border force implemented strict measures, making it exceedingly challenging for individuals to enter Greece. Consequently, a significant influx of undocumented migrants congregated in Istanbul. Returning can be incredibly challenging when one’s dreams of going to Europe are shattered. To make ends meet while waiting for better opportunities (Schapendonk, 2012a), these irregular migrants work in the shadows, given their undocumented status (Ramay, 2024). According to participants narrations, due to strictness on the borders, the irregular arrivals from Pakistan to Türkiye have decreased during the last one and a half years. Similarly, the border crossing from Türkiye to Greece is also getting more difficult day by day. As the

agents are well informed about all such scenarios and to run their business, some time they take a risk and invest the money by themselves in the aspirants in Istanbul who are willing to go to Greece. If the ‘game’ successfully reaches Greece, the agents will successfully recover their invested money. Otherwise, they also lose their money. If they face such setbacks continuously, they start kidnapping the irregular migrants and try to recover their money through ransom. Usually, some sub-agents (also staying irregularly) and “*hundi-wala*” (who provides financial services) facilitate the departure of irregular migrants from Istanbul to Greece or Italy.

“I also sent five boys to Greece with the help of Pakistani agent (who lives here but basically, he is from Mandi Bahauddin), all were reached safely. Two of them are now in Italy, they travelled further from Greece. He promised to give me 200USD as commission for each case. So, I received 1000USD from him when the boys reached at their destination. The interested boys may contact me, no problem. Agent’s rate is 2300-2500 euros these days for Istanbul to Greece.” [ZI(5-26)].

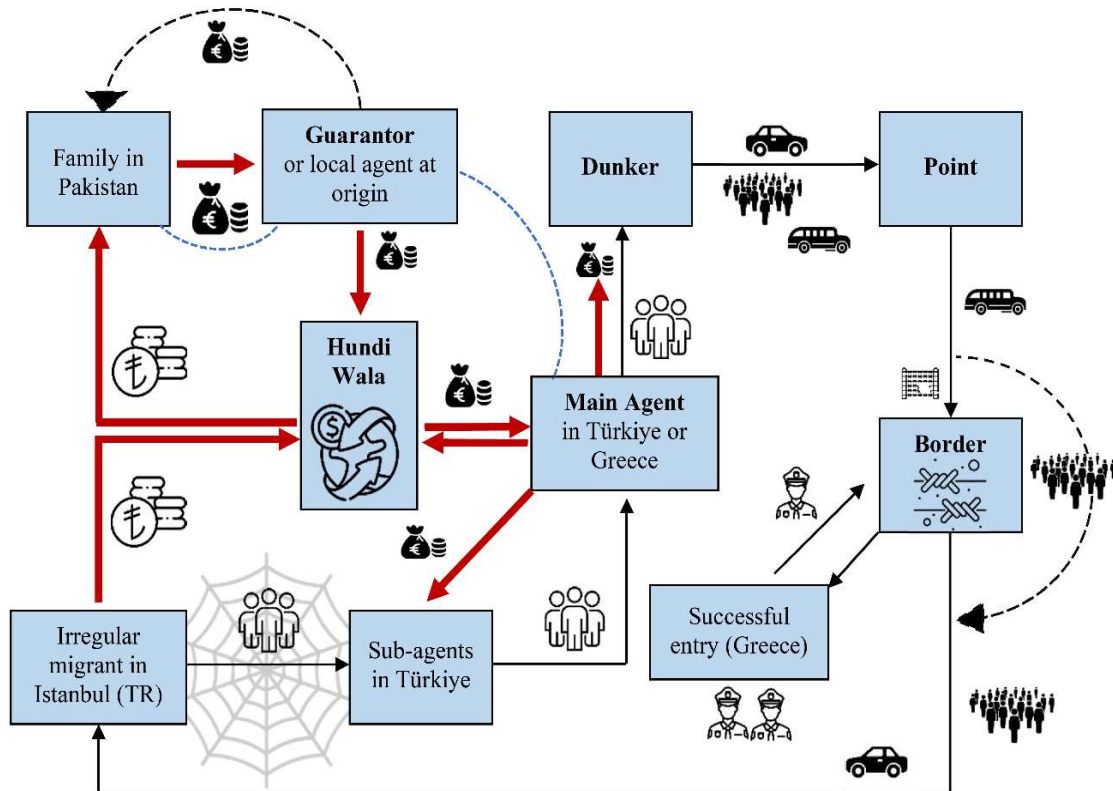


Figure 5.10. Author’s generated sketch: financial channels and various actors

5.18. Conclusion

A detailed analysis includes socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, their preferences for modes of travel, and their detailed thoughts on the irregular journey from Pakistan. Major migration drivers at origin, primary sources of information, and the role of parents in their migration decisions. Moreover, their skills profile at the time of departure from Pakistan and the role of human smugglers in facilitating their migration journey are examined, along with various means and ways of arrangements for the required money for the journey and the major challenges they faced during the journey from Pakistan to reach Türkiye. Subsequently, their experiences of living conditions, exploitation, and their major insecurities are discussed in detail. Furthermore, the chapter explores the coping strategies of the participants related to their income generation sources, health issues, psychological problems, detection avoidance and securing of work, food and shelter requirements. The study findings also include the narration of the participants about the financial channel and major actors that facilitate the irregular migration at origin and in transit.

CHAPTER-VI

6. DISCUSSION

6.1. Chapter's Summary

This study examines the survival strategies used by undocumented Pakistani migrants sheltered in Istanbul and their coping mechanisms for the various challenges they face due to their irregular status. Furthermore, it aims to get insights into their socio-economic profiling, influencing and motivating factors involved in irregular migration, their migratory experiences, and the strategies they use to enable financial remittances for their families in Pakistan and for necessary arrangements of their future journeys to Greece and other European Union nations. This section presents an analysis of the study's results for each of the research questions by linking them with the relevant studies.

6.2. Migration Patterns and Socio-economic Profiles

The results of the current study show that the majority of the participants originated from the Punjab province of Pakistan, specifically from less developed rural areas of various districts (Khan & Awan, 2020) such as Gujranwala, Gujrat, Hafizabad, Mandi Bahauddin, Sialkot, and Sahiwal. The educational background of the participants was very poor, and a significant number did not complete the primary level of education. The majority of the participants were unmarried young males, significantly in the age bracket between 14 and 17 years old at the time of migration. The study supports the findings of other studies from India conducted in the similar context (Garha, 2020; UNODC, 2009). The results further strengthen the argument of Maroufof (2017) that "masculinity plays a significant role in shaping the patterns of irregular migration in Pakistan" and also confirm that women of any background from Pakistan are reluctant to migrate irregularly (Ahmad, 2016, p. 103) as all the study participants were male.

It is explored that the profile of the participants was consistent with their disadvantageous background, which is marked by low educational attainment and limited or poor skills (UNODC, 2009). Most of the migrants did not possess any technical skills. Those who had some skills never received formal vocational or technical education and instead relied on traditional instructional approaches centered around experiential learning to develop their skill sets. The common skills some of them possessed were hairdressing, tailoring, stitching, livestock farming, and some electrification related work.

Mostly they were unemployed, only a few were earning some money through skilled or unskilled labor-intensive occupations at their origins. The author also identifies three distinct categories among the participants with respect to their modes of travel from Pakistan and arrival in Türkiye. The first category comprises those individuals who undertook the whole journey from Pakistan to Türkiye irregularly. The second category encompasses individuals who travelled on a valid visa from Pakistan to Iran but subsequently adopted an irregular mode of travel from Iran to Türkiye. The third category includes individuals (only a few) who arrived in Türkiye with a valid visa but later failed to leave the country within the stipulated timeframe. The results of current study are mostly consistent with the previous studies carried out in the context of irregular migrants' age, educational qualification and gender etc. (Garha, 2020; Khan & Awan, 2020; Maroufof, 2017; UNODC, 2009) but slightly differ from some studies as a very few number of migrants took legal ways for their travel from Pakistan to Türkiye (Triandafyllidou & Vogel, 2016) and become irregular later on expiry of their visas or residence permits (Anderson, 2017; Düvell & Jordan, 2006).

6.3. Factors Influencing the Decision-Making Process

The study highlights diverse factors that influenced participants' decisions to migrate irregularly, indicating the presence of complex dynamics involving individual, economic, societal, and aspirational elements. Major drivers like poverty, unemployment (Khan & Awan, 2020; Maroufof, 2017) at the origin and possible lucrative work opportunities abroad were reported as the primary reasons for their migration. However, there were also discernible individuals who did not have any specific reason (like poverty or unemployment) but had a great desire to see Europe because they were inspired by the achievements of their friends or acquaintances who had already travelled to some European countries irregularly from the same villages as the participants and now settled in European countries (Chen, 2012, p. 108) such as Greece, Italy, France, or Portugal, earning handsome income. The role of social networks was found significant in the current study, as the majority of the participants sought migration-related information from their societal circles within their local communities as well as acquaintances abroad. Moreover, information shared through various social media platforms also motivated them to make irregular journeys. Most of the participants made the migration decision either under the influence of their peer groups or relatives, but their parents were not on

board in the decision-making process at the initial stage. They informed their parents later and mostly faced parental resistance in this regard.

The study highlights that participants' decision to migrate is shaped by a multitude of factors that encompass a wide range of global processes. Saskia Sassen, for instance, presents the viewpoint that the phenomena of globalization and the rise in economic inequality on a global scale can be viewed as factors that contribute to the occurrence of migration. Another study probes into the concept of interstices, referring to the spaces that exist between the global South and the global North. These spaces are where individuals seek a better life or attempt to flee from unfavourable social, political, economic, and ecological circumstances. The results of the current study supports the argument that the friends and relatives support the mobilization and integration of migrants (Staring, 2001; Tilly, 1990; Massey et al., 1993; Price, 1963). It also takes into consideration the impact of factors that are more personal and closer to an individual's life, such as family obligations or community expectations, on the decision to migrate irregularly (Faist, 2018; Paret & Gleeson, 2016; Sassen, 2014) along with social media platforms and the social networks of the migrants (Obi et al., 2020; Lewis et al., 2015b).

6.4. Arrangements of Money and Social Networks' Role

The study provides an insight into the multifaceted financial circumstances and strategies employed by individuals who embark on the journey of irregular migrants, with a particular focus on those originating from Pakistan and seeking opportunities in foreign lands. The analysis of the participants' narratives shed light on the various approaches taken by them to navigate the complex financial landscape associated with migration. By examining these accounts, we gain a deeper understanding of the financial considerations and the decision-making processes of irregular migrants, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the migration phenomenon. The financial dimension emerges as a daunting hurdle for the individuals engaged in irregular migration. The participants of this study have demonstrated a wide range of strategies in their pursuit of securing the necessary amount of money. These strategies encompass a variety of approaches, from seeking financial assistance within their social networks to engaging in the selling out valuable assets such as vehicles, property, or livestock and jewelry (Chen, 2012, p. 108; Koser, 2008). By employing these various methods, participants have exhibited resourcefulness and adaptability in their efforts to meet their required finance. The presence of local agents who require advance payments of varying

amounts T. H. Shah, (2020), adds an additional layer of complexity to the already impoverished individuals. However, the absence of a fixed rate and the reliance on prevalent US dollar or Euro rates in these transactions, highlights their profit-making intentions.

The examination of various financial scenarios discussed in this study serves to underscore the existence of socio-economic disparities among the participants. The issue of arranging funds presents itself as a significant challenge for certain individuals, leading them to explore various avenues such as seeking familial support or selling their precious assets (Chen, 2012). In contrast, individuals who find themselves in more favourable financial positions exhibit a greater willingness to remit payments to agents without hesitation. However, sometimes they have debt contract (verbal) with the smugglers and pay back the committed amount after getting work at destination (Friebel & Guriev, 2006). This discrepancy in financial circumstances raises questions about the factors that influence individuals' decision-making processes when it comes to managing their financial obligations. The observation of parents showing a willingness to support their children's irregular migration desires, as evidenced in specific instances, introduces an additional dimension to the dissertation. By examining this phenomenon across different contexts, we can identify common patterns, unique variations, and contextual factors that shape the role of social networks and familial support structures in facilitating or hindering the migration process (Staring, 2001; Boyd, 1989). The present narrative successfully brings to the forefront the challenging circumstances faced by a family with restricted financial resources. The exploration of the challenges encountered by a household living in poverty provides valuable insights into the far-reaching consequences of financial difficulties on individuals and their day-to-day existence.

The findings of the study exhibit the role of human smugglers (Ambrosini, 2017b) in facilitating the phenomenon of irregular migration (Jurat, 2023) from Pakistan to Türkiye (T. H. Shah, 2020). Smuggling networks engage in various activities that enable individuals to enter or stay in a country illegally (Collyer, 2005; Papadopoulou, 2004; Singer & Massey, 1998; Van Liempt, 2007). These activities include assisting individuals in crossing borders through unguarded areas or outside of official border crossing points, both on land and at sea. They also provide illegal services, such as obtaining counterfeit passports or visas to facilitate entry or transit through a country. The individual provides

shelter to the individuals being transported during their journey (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012b, p. 10).

In such covert nature of cross-border movement has been a subject of significant attention, particularly due to the reliance on a network of individuals operating at both local and transnational levels. The dichotomy between local and main agents presents a multilayered network in which local actors assume the role of intermediaries and do not share the true identities of transnational agents. The issue of accessibility to human smugglers is a significant factor that has emerged in the context of irregular migration in case of Pakistan (Koser, 2008). The participants of the study shared that they often approach these smugglers through personal networks or by seeking references from individuals who have previously engaged in irregular migration (Kyle & Koslowski, 2001). The study highlights the importance of social connections and personal relationships in facilitating the engagements with human smugglers (Jurat, 2023). By relying on personal networks and references, individuals seeking irregular migration opportunities able to establish a level of trust and familiarity with the migrants' smugglers, which may increase their willingness to engage in such activities. This research uncovers the complex dynamics surrounding the accessibility to human smugglers and emphasizes the role of social networks in shaping individuals' pathways to irregular migration. It also strengthens the argument of Kaplan et al., (2016) that strong social networking increases the migration intention among the aspirants. This view also agrees with the aspiration-capability framework, which says that networks are important because they help the potential migrants to overcome the structural hurdles in connection with their migration pathways (Carling & Schewel, 2020; Carling & Talleraas, 2016).

In this case, the smuggling of migrants is facilitated via local as well as transnational human smugglers in a very methodical manner. Upon departure from the final exit point, the agents provide '*secret codes*' to each individual, enabling their identification and task to particular agents in charge of facilitating the cross-border journey of undocumented migrants. Transnational migrants' handlers possess a highly interconnected network and regularly get information about the selection or diversion of routes used for transporting migrants. The study further supports the argument that irregular migrants also encounter inhumane treatment during their journey, as they are abducted by human smugglers who then demand extra money as ransom (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021). Individuals who have shown resistance to their request have also

been subjected to physical and mental torture by the agents (Horwood et al., 2018). Such inhuman or humiliating treatment is a clear violation of the UN protocols that ensure the safety and security of smuggled and trafficked migrants (Gallagher, 2001, p. 998-99). Primarily, irregular migrants encounter such challenges in Iran when journeying from Pakistan to Türkiye. The present analysis is consistent with past research on irregular migration routes and corroborates the results of earlier studies, highlighting the significant obstacles encountered by irregular migrants along these routes (Khan & Awan, 2020; T. H. Shah, 2020).

6.5. Experiences about Living Environment

By exploring the participants' narratives, this study explores various aspects of their daily lives as well as the sociocultural factors that shape their experiences in Istanbul. The phenomenon of irregular migration has engendered a complex set of circumstances for those individuals who find themselves living without legal authorization and lacking social security (De Genova, 2002). The current study explores how these irregular migrants not only manage to survive but also develop coping mechanisms to navigate the various untoward situations they encounter. By examining the multifaceted nature of their experiences, we can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges they face and the strategies they employ to navigate their precarious existence (LeVoy & Geddie, 2009). The apprehension and potential expulsion that individuals confront in the face of uncertain prospects for their future is a matter of great concern. Moreover, by considering the unique cultural, social, and environmental factors present in Istanbul, the study was able to highlight how research participants adapt and cope in this setting. The discussion of the strategies employed by participants to navigate through uncertain conditions provides valuable insights into their resilience and adaptability. However, the exploration of individuals' aspirations, fears, and hopes for the future in the context of current study provides a valuable lens through which to comprehend the multilayered nature of irregular migration.

6.5.1. Shared Residences and Underlying Challenges

The study highlights the challenges associated with the living environment (Sundari, 2003) of the participants that profoundly impact on their overall well-being. The primary challenge that warrants our attention is the absence of privacy, which is a prevailing concern that becomes evident through various manifestations such as

expressions of unease, heightened stress levels, and increased vulnerability. This issue is particularly worsened by the widespread existence of overcrowded living conditions. It also raises important questions regarding the respect for individual privacy and the potential violation of personal space. In addition, it is important to consider the lack of quiet spaces available for individuals to engage in routine activities, such as changing attire etc. This aspect further intensifies the participants' feelings of vulnerability within the given context. The communal nature of living space leads individuals to deal with a 'lack of personal space', which in turn results in a concomitant weakening of their sense of ownership within the common residence. The statement posits that the current setting is not conducive to the creation of a personalized and home-like atmosphere. The participants' narratives revolve around the compounding challenges faced due to the constraint of limited living space. This constraint not only hinders privacy but also fails to allocate appropriate areas for essential activities such as prayer and dressing.

The study surrounding the allocation and utilization of shared amenities, specifically toilets, serves as a focal point for examining the complexities associated with the living environment of irregular migrants. The presence of conflicting schedules creates a situation where individuals are compelled to compete for limited resources, resulting in heightened levels of stress and frustration. Moreover, this competition for resource utilization can exacerbate existing inequalities, as those with greater access or influence may have an advantage over others in securing their desired time slots. Consequently, the unequal distribution of resources and the resulting tension can have negative effects on the overall well-being and harmony of the group. The presence of shared items, such as cell phone chargers, within a common setting can inadvertently give rise to sources of contention among individuals.

The issue of privacy is closely intertwined with the prevailing unhygienic conditions in the accommodations, thereby intensifying the challenges faced by the participants (Jurat, 2023). Overcrowded and inadequately maintained living spaces has been widely recognized as a significant factor contributing to various health issues. The current research explores the detrimental consequences of such conditions, ranging from the discomfort of persistent itching to the heightened risk of contracting contagious diseases. By examining the existing literature and empirical evidence, this study seeks to shed light on the multifaceted nature of these health concerns and their implications for undocumented migrants residing in substandard living environments (Jurat, 2023). The

absence of adequate sleeping provisions, wherein certain participants of the study are compelled to utilize improvised bedding on sofas or carpets, make worse the overall discomfort. Additionally, the consequent presence of unpleasant odors within the environment further contributes to the prevailing atmosphere of unease. The absence of separate cooking facilities serves to intensify the situation faced by these irregular migrants, thereby subjecting them to an environment characterized by the presence of smoke and unpleasant smell. The aggravation of the participants' struggles in basement lodgings during winter, due to the absence of heating systems, deepens their issues and compels them to bear freezing conditions.

The emergence of disrupted sleep patterns as a consequential manifestation of challenging living conditions is a topic of significant interest and concern. Sleep, as a fundamental physiological process, plays a crucial role in maintaining overall health and well-being. However, when individuals like 'undocumented migrants' are faced with challenging living conditions (Faustin, 2012), such as high levels of stress, limited access to resources, or unstable living environments, their sleep patterns can be greatly affected. One possible explanation for the disruption of sleep patterns in challenging living conditions is the heightened stress levels experienced by the participants (Sundari, 2003). Stress, whether it be due to financial difficulties, interpersonal conflicts, or other external factors, can have a detrimental impact on sleep quality and duration. The present study examines the impact of overcrowded and uncomfortable accommodations on disturbances experienced during the night. Specifically, here we focus on two key factors: disruptive noises produced by roommates and the inconvenience caused by late-night smoking activities. By exploring these factors, we aim to shed light on the adverse effects of such conditions on individuals' sleep quality and overall well-being. Consequently, individuals may experience fatigue, irritability, and reduced cognitive functioning because of these disturbances. Furthermore, late-night smoking activities pose an additional challenge in overcrowded and uncomfortable accommodations. It is not uncommon for individuals to engage in smoking within the confines of their living spaces, disregarding the potential inconvenience it may cause to others. These disruptions have significant implications for the quality of sleep experienced by the participants. In addition to compromising their ability to obtain restful sleep, these disruptions also give rise to feelings of restlessness and fatigue. Consequently, the participants' overall well-being is further compromised because of these adverse effects.

The study exhibits the participants' experience of residing in limited environments that appears to give rise to a concurrent manifestation of feelings characterized by suffocation and anxiety. These emotional states, when combined, further impair the already burdensome psychological toll experienced by the participants. This insight underscores the importance of considering the harmful effects of confined living spaces on mental health of 'irregular migrants.' By examining the relationship between overcrowding, stress, and the inclination of the participants to seek comfort outside of their residences, we can gain a deeper look of the psychological implications of living (Myhrvold & Småstuen, 2019) in densely populated environments. The individuals having trouble breathing within congested spaces and subsequently seeking relief by venturing outdoors has been reported by the participants. This perceived suffocation within enclosed environments prompts individuals to actively seek alternative surroundings to alleviate their respiratory distress. Such accounts serve to emphasize the significant psychological ramifications that arise from residing in limited living spaces, thereby eliciting apprehensions pertaining to mental health and overall psychological welfare.

6.5.2. Exploitative Nature of Employers and Intermediaries

The study sheds light on a complex and troubling fabric of exploitation, which permeates both the established systems of employment and the informal social networks that irregular migrants must navigate. These exploitative practices are facilitated by the precarious standing of irregular migrants, which enables employers to take advantage of their vulnerable position (LeVoy & Geddie, 2009). These practices encompass the implementation of prolonged working hours, compensation that falls below the established wage standards, and the allocation of responsibilities that do not align with the workers' respective skills and qualifications. The participants in this study provide detailed and evocative accounts of a work environment that is characterized by dehumanization. Within this context, employers are fully cognizant of the irregular immigration status of the migrant workers and exploit this vulnerability by subjecting them to exhausting and demanding working conditions that bear striking resemblance to mechanical labour.

The participants in this study vividly recount their experiences of enduring prolonged working hours, receiving meagre wages, and living under constant surveillance. These accounts shed light on the emergence of a contemporary form of

servitude that is prevalent in various industries. The narratives shared by the participants provide valuable insights into the harsh realities faced by individuals who find themselves trapped in exploitative working conditions. By examining this firsthand evidence, we gain an in-depth view of the complex dynamics at play within modern labour systems. The issue of health vulnerabilities being exploited is a matter of concern, as evidenced by instances where employers have taken advantage of such conditions. This exploitation takes various forms, including the deduction of wages during periods of illness and the failure to provide essential health coverage. In capitalist societies, the phrase “*time is money*” emphasizes the economic value of time. However, this concept becomes even more significant in the lives of such irregular migrant workers. They work for extended hours and receive meager wages in return (Ahmad, 2016, p. 175; Bloch & Sonia, 2016).

These actions by employers raise ethical questions and highlight the need for stronger protections for individuals facing health challenges (Jurat, 2023). The prevailing sentiment expressed by the participants in this study centers around their perception of being treated as commodities, rather than as human beings. It is also indicative of a deep-seated denial of fundamental rights, including the right to access healthcare (LeVoy & Geddie, 2009; UN, 2009). In addition, it is important to consider the implications of lacking health or accidental coverage for irregular migrants, as this places them in a vulnerable position, susceptible to a range of health issues (Jurat, 2023) without sufficient means of addressing them.

The current research study also postulates that the landscape of exploitation extends beyond the boundaries of formal employment structures, permeating into informal social networks. In these networks, individuals who share a common background as migrants are implicated in the perpetuation of exploitative practices. The phenomenon of language barriers and the precarious legal status of migrants has been observed to serve as potent instruments of manipulation within the complicated web of migrant networks. These networks, often operating in informal settings, exploit these vulnerabilities to extract illicit gains from individuals seeking their assistance. Consequently, irregular migrants find themselves subjected to coercive demands for bribes or exorbitant fees in exchange for the facilitation of various services. It is evident that in certain instances, these cultural mediators are found to be actively encouraging irregular migrants to engage in criminal activities, thereby further escalating their vulnerabilities. It is also found that individuals with regular residence status, who are

typically considered to be in a more secure position, are also involved in the exploitation of those who possess irregular status. Moreover, deliberate withholding of wages from the irregular migrants for prolonged durations is another form of exploitation (Bloch & Sonia, 2016).

6.5.3. Multifaceted Insecurities Further Deepen the Challenges

The study discovers that the participants are afraid of prevalent insecurities that are also inherent in the irregular migration phenomenon. These insecurities encompass various aspects, such as limited employment opportunities, financial vulnerabilities, and compromised access to essential services (Karadağ, 2021). By sharing their personal experiences, the participants in the study offer valuable insights into the challenges they face. These narratives serve to deepen our understanding of the multifaceted nature of these insecurities and their impact on the lives of undocumented migrants. Through their stories, we gain a more nuanced view of the complex realities that individuals face when undertaking irregular migration. The lack of legal recognition significantly amplifies the economic vulnerability experienced by this marginalized group, resulting in their inability to access crucial financial services. This is evident in their inability to establish bank accounts and the inherent dangers associated with relying solely on cash earnings.

The issue of economic vulnerabilities among the participants is coupled with their insecure health conditions, which are further worsened by their irregular status, resulting in a denial of access to essential healthcare services (Jurat, 2023). It is evident that this vulnerability also exerts a considerable impact on their mental health (Myhrvold & Småstuen, 2019). The irregular migrants do not prefer to visit public health facilities to avoid detection and apprehension by police. The exacerbation of fractures and injuries or any other health problem has compelled certain individuals to seek treatment at private healthcare facilities, incurring significant personal financial burdens. The current study concerns the negative impact of irregular status on individuals through their exclusion from crucial vaccination programmes amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Such exclusion exposes them to heightened vulnerability in relation to the health risks associated with the ongoing global crisis. In this study, social isolation, which is further intensified by cultural barriers and a dearth of legal protection, emerges as a distressing focal point in the narratives provided by the participants. The notion of maintaining invisibility, motivated by the apprehension of facing legal consequences, compels 'irregular migrants' to withdraw from social interactions and isolate themselves from society. The issue of

limited access to legal protection emerges as a prominent concern, as exemplified by the narrative shared by a participant regarding a wage-related dispute with an employer that remained unresolved owing to their irregular immigration status (Bloch & Sonia, 2016). The study underscores the complex challenges and obstacles that these individuals confront within the legal framework.

By acknowledging the existence of such barriers, it becomes evident that irregular migrants face considerable difficulties in their pursuit of legal proceedings and protection (Bernhardt et al., 2009). The study also uncovers that the challenges faced by participants are deepened by their exposure to criminal groups originating from different nationalities. This exposure serves to increase their already sensitive sense of insecurity. The accounts also highlight the presence of physical disputes and theft as concrete manifestations of the risks encountered by irregular migrants in their day-to-day existence. It significantly contributes to the development of a pervasive sense of fear and uncertainty within the marginalized population.

The study further digs down that the experiences of irregular migrants are characterized by the pervasive influence of police detection, which casts a shadow over their daily lives. In fact, the risk of detention and subsequent deportation looms large, further exacerbating the challenges faced by irregular migrants. The narratives provided by the participants in this research shed light on the profound anxiety that permeates their everyday existence, as they navigate through life with an ever-present sense of vigilance. This heightened state of alertness is evident in their accounts of going about their daily activities, where they are constantly on guard, acutely aware of potential threats lurking in their surroundings. This pervasive anxiety is further underscored by their reliance on faith as a means of seeking relief and security within the confines of their residence places. The participants' narratives reveal a deep-seated unease that colours their experiences outside of their residences. They describe a constant state of hyper-awareness, wherein they are constantly scanning their environment for any signs of danger. This sense of vigilance is a direct response to the perceived risks and uncertainties that they face daily. Whether it is the fear of physical harm, the threat of harassment, or the possibility of discrimination, these individuals find themselves constantly on edge, their anxiety serving as a constant companion. In contrast to the anxiety-ridden experiences outside, the participants' narratives also highlight the role of faith as a source of comfort and security. Within the refuge of their residences, they turn to their religious

beliefs and practices as a means of finding consolation and reassurance. Faith becomes a refuge, offering a sense of protection and safety in a world that often feels hostile and unpredictable.

Moreover, the elucidation of police raids, as expounded upon by a particular participant, offers valuable insights into the tenuous circumstances under which they reside. In the present study, the participant provides a comprehensive account of various occurrences of police raids, placing particular emphasis on the differential treatment based on age that is observed during the process of arrests. Notably, the participant highlights the discernible pattern wherein individuals below the age of 18 are spared from the experience of detention. The exacerbation of government policies aimed at curbing the presence of irregular migrants serves to intensify their anxieties, thereby prompting certain individuals to anticipate the imminent prospect of being apprehended and subsequently deported.

The recurring challenges of financial capital loss is a significant concern that encompasses a range of risks, such as the potential for ransom demands from both criminals and agents. This phenomenon highlights the vulnerability of financial assets and the potential for substantial economic consequences. The emergence of ransom demands from criminals and agents further worsens these risks, as it introduces an element of coercion and criminality into the equation. This study also explores the multifaceted nature of financial capital loss, its implications, and the potential strategies that can be employed to mitigate these risks. The phenomenon of individuals endeavouring to cross the border into Greece is accompanied by a series of financial challenges, as these participants encounter various obstacles imposed by border forces. These impediments include the apprehension of individuals by border forces, resulting in the confiscation of their belongings and subsequent depletion of their financial resources. The study surrounding the risks associated with border-crossing extends beyond mere financial losses, as articulated by certain individuals who recount harrowing and potentially life-threatening experiences encountered throughout their arduous journeys.

The discussion of the challenges faced by irregular migrants is incomplete without discussing the significant issue of torture. This menacing spectre casts a dark shadow over the experiences of study participants, as they are frequently subjected to acts of torture perpetrated by criminal gangs and human smugglers. The presence of such a grave threat further compounds the already challenging obstacles encountered by irregular migrants.

The presence of kidnapping and torture incidents carried out for the purpose of obtaining ransom serves as a stark reminder of the precariousness that individuals face in terms of both their personal safety and financial stability. The current study also supports the argument of Horwood et al., (2018) that undocumented migrants remain constantly at risk of being abducted, tortured for ransom, and subjected to modern-day slavery and death while they are in transit.

It is found that the participants have engaged in a poignant exchange, wherein they have shared their traumatic accounts of personal sufferings. These narratives have shed light on the distressing experiences endured by individuals who have been subjected to captivity, torture, and the coercive demand for substantial ransoms to secure their release. The participants' evidence has provided a vivid and unsettling glimpse into the depths of human suffering and the profound impact it has on the lives of those affected. The narratives presented in this study shed light on the profound levels of exploitation experienced by irregular migrants, who find themselves at the mercy of human smugglers (T. H. Shah, 2020; Castles et al., 2005b). These individuals, driven by the desire to recoup their advance payments, employ tactics such as kidnapping and extortion.

The present study uncovers the complexities surrounding the migration process, particularly focusing on the complex web of financial transactions that underlie this phenomenon. Of particular interest is the role played by human smugglers, who facilitate the movement of individuals across borders (Jurat, 2023; Ambrosini, 2017b) by advancing travel charges and collecting a portion of the migrants' funds, commonly referred to as the 'dunker's share.' By examining these intricacies, we can gain a deeper understanding of the economic dynamics within migration and the implications they have on various stakeholders involved. The phenomenon of irregular migration is characterized by a series of challenges and risks faced by migrants. One such challenge is the occurrence of consecutive failures in their attempts to migrate. These failures not only place irregular migrants in a precarious position but also have significant financial implications. In particular, the dunker, who is responsible for facilitating the migration process, incurs financial losses due to these failures. This financial burden becomes a driving force behind the alarming trend of kidnapping irregular migrants and subsequently demanding ransoms. Thus, the relationship between failed migration attempts, financial losses, and the kidnapping of migrants highlights the complex dynamics surrounding irregular migration.

6.6. Strategies for Survival in the Shadows

The primary concern for the survival of the participants in this study revolved around the acquisition of food and shelter. The individuals in question exhibited considerable efforts to effectively cope with the circumstances at hand, thereby ensuring their survival. In the context of the observed gathering, it was noted that a subset of the irregular migrants arrived with preexisting acquaintances (Van Meeteren, 2012, p. 27-28). This preexisting social network provided a sense of familiarity and comfort, facilitating their integration into new settings (Staring, 2001; Boyd, 1989). Conversely, the remaining participants who lacked such established connections were observed to actively engage in the establishment of informal social bonds. These newly formed relationships played a pivotal role in resolving any initial feelings of isolation or unfamiliarity, thereby enabling these individuals to effectively navigate the social dynamics of their group life.

The current study finds that the primary concerns faced by irregular migrants upon their arrival in unfamiliar territories revolve around securing sustenance and accommodation. These challenges pose significant obstacles to the survival and well-being of these 'irregular migrants.'. The presence of informal social networks in a particular location (Istanbul in this case) has the potential to help and resolution to various challenges (Karadağ, 2021). Individuals affiliated with these circles may originate from diverse categories, such as native residents, factory owners, foreign students, foreigners with legal residence status, and irregular migrants of the same or different nationalities, represent a diverse range of individuals who contribute to the social fabric of a given community. Moreover, their interactions with other groups, such as factory owners, foreign students, and foreigners with legal residence status, foster a sense of inclusivity and diversity within the community. Factory owners, on the other hand, represent a distinct group of individuals who contribute to the local economy through their entrepreneurial endeavours. Their presence often leads to the phenomenon of irregular migration in Istanbul has brought about various challenges and complexities, one of which is the issue of living arrangements.

The study acknowledges that living with strangers is not a common practice among irregular migrants in bustling metropolis like Istanbul. However, in situations where individuals find themselves devoid of any other viable alternatives, they are compelled to share accommodations with individuals from diverse nationalities. This

unique circumstance the phenomenon of migrants of diverse nationalities assisting one another and cohabitating is a subject of considerable interest and significance. This notion highlights the potential for intercultural collaboration and harmonious coexistence within migrant communities. The present study explores the dynamics and implications of such interactions, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of migrant experiences and the potential for social cohesion in diverse societies.

The present study finds that a significant majority of participants received assistance from individuals of Pakistani descent, including those who entered Türkiye through both legal and irregular means. The concentration of factories and production units in Istanbul has resulted in the creation of job opportunities and attracting a large workforce. Additionally, the presence of these manufacturing facilities has facilitated the production and distribution of goods, both domestically and internationally, thereby bolstering the city's economic growth. One key aspects of the complex issue of 'irregular migration' are the ability of undocumented migrants to secure employment opportunities, often against considerable odds, as a means of ensuring their survival (Van Meeteren, 2012, p. 16). The study confirms the notion the undocumented migrants in one way or other become 'labour migrants' as they succeed to engage themselves for their earnings in the labour market (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Kearney, 1998; Rouse, 1995; Alvares, 1994; Burawoy, 1976; Castells, 1975; Bustamante, 1972).

6.6.1. Securing Jobs in Informal Sectors

The present study examines the experiences of participants who encountered various obstacles yet demonstrated remarkable resilience by actively participating in income-generating endeavours. The research study surrounding the employment landscape, particularly with regards to the opportunities available within both skilled and unskilled sectors. Within this context, study participants have been observed to navigate various avenues within informal sectors, engaging in activities such as stitching, welding, loading/unloading, and construction work. These sectors, characterized by their lack of formal structure and regulation, offer them a means to secure employment and generate income (Castles et al., 2005b). The current study is aligned with the previous researches; exhibit the hiring of migrants without legal authorization where the workers are hired for a specific tasks or for a shorter period (Lewis et al., 2015b; Chen, 2012; Düvell & Jordan, 2006). By exploring the dynamics of these informal sectors, we can gain a deeper understanding of the diverse range of labour-extensive jobs that the 'irregular migrants'

pursue in their quest for economic stability and livelihood. The study also found that the participants were associated with comparatively awkward jobs (Karadağ, 2021) that are in line with Abella et al. (1995, p.5) findings; whom researchers termed them as three-D jobs (*dirty, physically demanding and dangerous*).

There is a complex relationship between various factors that influence the participants' decision to persist in their employment, despite the presence of concerns regarding their working conditions, factory owner attitudes, and salaries. By investigating the experiences and perspectives of these individuals, this research sheds light on the underlying motivations and mechanisms that drive their resilience and determination to maintain a steady income stream for their survival. One of the primary concerns expressed by the participants revolves around the challenging working conditions they encounter within the factory setting. These conditions encompass a range of factors, including physical discomfort, long working hours, and limited access to basic facilities (Karadağ, 2021). Despite these adversities, the participants exhibit a remarkable level of perseverance, suggesting the existence of underlying factors that contribute to their decision to remain in their jobs.

Another important aspect that emerges from the participants' narratives was the attitudes of the factory owners. It is evident that some participants have shown their reservations and concerns regarding the attitudes of their factory owners. These concerns may stem from perceived unfair treatment, lack of respect, or inadequate support from them. Nevertheless, the act of remitting a substantial portion of the earnings to support their family members residing in Pakistan has prevailed as a significant phenomenon among the participants. This practice has played a pivotal role in enhancing the overall welfare and prosperity of their families back home. The debate surrounding irregular migrants of Pakistani origin and their skill levels reveals that despite the diversity in their skill sets, even those with limited skills experienced positive outcomes through the acquisition of new skills via on-the-job training or self-learning methods. The current study is in line with the study that journeys are more than merely getting from point A to point B; they are transformational processes (Schapendonk, 2012b).

The findings of this study reveal that despite facing initial limitations and challenges, these 'irregular migrants' were able to overcome various obstacles in a short period of time. This observation highlights the importance of resilience and the ability to effectively navigate and overcome barriers in the process of skill acquisition in new

settings. This study contributes to the existing literature by shedding light on the transformative journey undertaken by individuals in their pursuit of becoming proficient in their work. The intertwining of work and living environments was a prominent characteristic observed among certain individuals, as they chose to reside in close proximity to their workplace. This deliberate choice underscored the meaning of the interconnection between their professional and personal spheres. The findings of this study highlight the participants' unwavering commitment to generating income and acquiring new skills, which in turn contributes significantly to their economic sustainability within the host country. By actively seeking opportunities to enhance their economic prospects, these individuals demonstrate a strong sense of agency and resourcefulness. Their ability to adapt to new skills not only enables them to secure a livelihood but also facilitates their absorption into the local labour market. Consequently, the participants' determination to generate income and acquire new skills emerges as a crucial factor for their survival in transit or destination countries. Despite numerous challenges, the average income they receive was better from the income in Pakistan, but here they are also burdened with the cost of being in an irregular status (Coniglio et al., 2009).

6.6.2. Coping with Health Issues

The issue of health safety maintenance among study participants is a matter of considerable concern, especially when considering the lack of health insurance coverage. The notion of coping strategies employed by participants, highlights their resourcefulness in effectively addressing various health-related challenges (Myhrvold & Småstuen, 2019). The utilization of coping mechanisms is a crucial aspect of individuals' ability to manage the difficulties associated with their health conditions. By examining the coping strategies employed by participants, the study gains valuable insights into the various approaches that individuals adopt to cope with the physical, emotional, and psychological demands imposed by their health-related circumstances.

The issue of inability to access public health facilities for the participants with their irregular status has gathered significant attention and concern. The inherent challenges and limitations faced by them have been widely acknowledged. The study critically scrutinizes the feasibility of accessing public health facilities for individuals with irregular status, shedding light on the complex dynamics and implications associated with this difficulty. Firstly, it is crucial to acknowledge that individuals with irregular

status often encounter numerous barriers when attempting to access public health facilities. These barriers can be attributed to a variety of factors, including formal restrictions and fear of deportation. However, language was one of the major barriers that also restrict them in seeking help for their health issues (Rechel et al., 2013; Schoevers et al., 2010) and lack of health insurance (Teunissen et al., 2014) adds further risks to their lives.

The findings of this study suggest that when faced with health issues (Jurat, 2023), participants often turn to a range of home remedies or seek guidance from their fellows. The study explored that the friends (who are mostly irregular) were very supportive to the participants when they went through the mental distress (Teunissen et al., 2014). This reliance on alternative methods of healthcare management can be seen as a response to various factors, such as limited access to formal healthcare services or a preference for traditional healing practices. By exploring these patterns of behaviour, the study provides a deeper understanding of the ways in which individuals navigate their health concerns and the role that community support plays in this regard.

The current research surrounding home remedies highlights the strategies individuals seek alternative methods for coping with their common illnesses. The study explores the efficacy of readily available items, such as honey for cough, mustard oil for itching, and exposure to sunlight for joint pain, in the context of self-care practices. In the context of this study, it is worth noting that a subset of participants has been observed to engage in the practice of self-prescribing medicines for common health issues. This particular strategy involves obtaining medications from sources such as caring friends or through practices that have been carried over from their previous experiences in Pakistan. The present study revolves around the notion that individuals, driven by the fear of apprehension, refrain from seeking medical assistance at government hospitals (Teunissen et al., 2014). Consequently, they are compelled to resort to self-administered remedies as a means of addressing their healthcare needs. This phenomenon raises important questions regarding the underlying factors such as administrative obstacles, lack of support from local citizens and social exclusion contributing to this fear (Rechel et al., 2013; Biswas et al., 2011).

The topic of healing methods suggests a wide range of perspectives from the participants, reflecting a variety of opinions and beliefs. One viewpoint that emerged highlighted the significance of ample sleep as a highly effective means of recovery.

Proponents of this perspective argued that allowing the body to rest and revive through extended periods of sleep can facilitate a more comprehensive recovery process. On the other hand, an alternative stance put forth by some participants advocated for the utilization of medicinal interventions to expedite the recovery process. According to this viewpoint, the administration of appropriate medications can lead to a swifter recuperation, minimizing the duration of illness or injury. These contrasting viewpoints of the study participants on recovery methods underscore the complexity of the topic and the absence of a universally agreed-upon approach.

The manifestation of apprehension towards visiting government hospitals is readily apparent within the study, as participants recount personal experiences wherein private healthcare services, often made accessible through employers, emerged as a crucial resource during periods of acute health crises. Such instances encompass medical interventions such as surgical procedures for appendicitis and therapeutic measures for the management of a severe chest infection. The narrative presented by the participants highlights the self-administered treatments, and the difficulties encountered by the ‘irregular migrants’ when attempting to access the healthcare system.

The statement that residing and engaging in activities within unfamiliar environments can lead to heightened psychological and mental health difficulties among individuals (Myhrvold & Småstuen, 2019). By exploring the potential relationship between unfamiliarity and psychological challenges, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in navigating unfamiliar environments and their potential consequences on mental health (Teunissen et al., 2014). The experiences of the study participants serve to underscore the diverse array of strategies that they employed to lessen and mitigate the effects of stress. These strategies, which were implemented in response to the challenging circumstances faced by the individuals, demonstrate ability of the participants in their quest to manage and cope with stress. The findings of the study contribute to the existing body of knowledge on stress management, providing a comprehensive overview of the various methods employed by undocumented migrants of Pakistani origin.

The present work centers on the examination of coping mechanisms employed by ‘irregular migrants’ to manage psychological distress. Specifically, two coping strategies are explored: taking breaks from work and resorting to smoking. By critically analyzing the implications and limitations of these coping strategies, the study highlights their role

in individuals' overall well-being and mental health. The phenomenon of participants residing within their workplaces has been observed to result in a notable constraint on their physical mobility. This restricted movement can have significant implications for their overall well-being and leisure activities. In light of these circumstances, it has been observed that the Internet assumes a pivotal role in serving as the primary source of relaxation for these individuals. Limited physical movement for participants living at their workplaces and the subsequent reliance on the Internet as a means of relaxation is exhibited by the participants of current study.

The analysis of the data in this study indicates that social media platforms, with a particular emphasis on WhatsApp, have emerged as a crucial tool for fostering and sustaining interpersonal relationships within the context of Pakistani irregular migrants. The findings underscore the profound impact of these platforms in facilitating communication and connection among individuals, particularly in the realm of familial and friendship networks. By leveraging the features and functionalities offered by WhatsApp, these irregular migrants can bridge geographical distances and maintain meaningful connections with their loved ones at the origin. This observation highlights the transformative potential of social media in reshaping the dynamics of interpersonal relationships in the context of irregular migration, especially in the contemporary digital age. The phenomenon of participants opting to register their WhatsApp accounts on Pakistani SIM cards has emerged as a notable trend. By registering their accounts on these SIM cards, participants are able to access certain advantages and benefits that may not be available to them otherwise. Consequently, the role of social media platforms in offering a convenient avenue for relaxation and connection becomes increasingly salient. This discussion will delve into the implications of limited relaxation opportunities and explore how social media fulfils the need for entertainment and connection in a time-constrained society.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that the participants of this study are limited in their internet usage to their respective residences or workplaces. This constraint introduces a potential barrier for some individuals who may encounter difficulties in accessing the internet frequently. The reliance on the residences of acquaintances for internet connectivity serves as a bad illustration of the inherent limitations faced by irregular migrants in their pursuit of accessing essential services (Ambrosini, 2017b). These individuals, who find themselves outside the confines of legal frameworks,

encounter numerous barriers that impede their ability to engage with crucial resources. In this particular context, the lack of reliable internet access further intensifies their already precarious situation, hindering their capacity to connect with vital services and information. Consequently, the reliance on the goodwill and hospitality of acquaintances becomes a necessary recourse, highlighting the systemic challenges faced by irregular migrants in their quest for essential services. The findings provide valuable insights into the intricate dynamics that exist between mental health, coping strategies, and the digital connectivity employed by irregular migrants to navigate the various difficulties associated with their living and working circumstances.

6.6.3. Escape from Law Enforcement Agencies

The participants in this study are confronted with a prevailing sense of apprehension regarding the possibility of being detected by law enforcement authorities and subsequently detained. This apprehension stems from the potential consequences of such detection, which include the risk of being deported (Ambrosini & Hajer, 2023) to Pakistan. The findings of the current study find that the police arrest is not a common experience for the majority of individuals. However, despite the infrequency of such encounters, the participants maintain a constant state of vigilance and awareness regarding the possibility of being apprehended by law enforcement agencies. This sense of alertness leads individuals to develop and employ various coping strategies to navigate and mitigate the potential risks associated with police arrest. In presence of multiple uncertainties and insecurities, they still survive (Van Meeteren, 2012). The findings of this study further reveal that participants exhibit a deliberate inclination towards avoiding public and touristy places, such as parks, hospitals, and large shopping malls, instead opting for smaller shops to fulfil their needs. Such deliberate avoidance of popular and bustling locales highlights the participants' unique approach to monitoring their surroundings and sheds light on the complex dynamics that shape their choices in particular environment.

This strategy, which involves residing near these factories, has been identified in the current study as a potential solution to mitigate the potential risk associated with detection of undocumented migrants by the police. By residing in such areas, individuals effectively reduce their exposure to various apprehension related risks. This study explores that individuals who reside near their place of employment are less likely to be prone to the risks of detection and apprehension. Participants engaging in such activities

often adopt a strategy of maintaining a low profile and altering their routes in the event of encountering police. This approach is believed to enhance their ability to evade detection and potential apprehension. By actively avoiding law enforcement, individuals involved in these activities aim to minimize the risk of legal consequences and maintain their freedom of movement to some extent.

The phenomenon of individuals assuming a Syrian identity when confronted by law enforcement authorities has been observed in certain contexts. This particular behaviour entails the adoption of a false persona, whereby individuals present themselves as Syrian nationals in order to potentially evade legal consequences or gain certain advantages. The motivations behind such actions may vary, ranging from a desire to exploit the perceived vulnerabilities associated with the Syrian refugees to a strategic attempt to manipulate the legal system.

It is worth considering the notion that residing within factory premises, where access by police authorities is restricted, may create a great sense of security among such individuals. The participants in this study demonstrate a remarkable level of ingenuity in their ability to navigate the challenges associated with the fear of detection and detention. One notable example of this cleverness is their practice of keeping a small amount of money for emergencies, such as using a calling card to contact their family in the event of an arrest. This strategic allocation of funds highlights their proactive approach to mitigating the potential consequences of their irregular status.

6.7. Body in Türkiye but Soul Wanders in Greece

For many migrants, Greece, the Netherlands, and the UK serve as transit locations. However, for many others, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Türkiye, and Ukraine are not only transit points, but actual destinations. By considering the reasons behind trips and the experiences of migrants throughout these journeys, we may avoid the simplistic assumption that all migrants travelling North are headed to the EU, thereby breaking away from the linear connotation of transit migration (Schapendonk, 2012b). The study reveals that a significant proportion of participants hold a fleeting inclination (Birtchnell & Büscher, 2011; Urry, 2007) to remain in Türkiye, perceiving Istanbul as a transitory phase in their journey towards their ultimate destination, predominantly Greece. As the initial departure of the participants from home was facilitated by agents who strategically positioned Greece as a gateway to Italy and other European countries (Papadopoulou, 2004). This choice of Greece as a transit point was likely influenced by its geographical

location and its historical significance as a crossroads between the East and the West (Schapendonk, 2012a). By positioning Greece as a gateway, these agents sought to capitalize on the country's proximity to Italy and its accessibility to other European destinations (T. H. Shah, 2020). This strategic decision highlights the importance of careful planning and the role of intermediaries in shaping migration routes.

The irregular border crossing between Türkiye and Greece presents a complex and multifaceted challenge, characterized by a myriad of risks and dangers (Schapendonk, 2012a). By probing into the complexities of this irregular border crossing, the study sheds light on the various factors that contribute to its inherent challenges and the potential consequences it entails. The study explored that a total of ten individuals within the sample attempted to cross borders on multiple occasions. However, the success rate of such attempts was found to be relatively low, with only three participants managing to successfully navigate multiple border crossings. These findings exhibit the challenges and complexities associated with border crossings. The individuals who achieved success in their endeavours ultimately encountered legal repercussions in Greece, leading to their repatriation to Türkiye by means of the canal route. They keep themselves in the situation of waiting and escaping by taking breaks sometime before embark on new journey (Bredeloup, 2012; Collyer, 2007).

The present study revolves around the multilayered web of human smugglers and agents, hailing from diverse nations, who meticulously coordinate their activities within states that are often associated with the phenomenon of irregular migration. The findings of this study reveal that participants in the Greece journey were sent in groups, which were organized by agents with diverse backgrounds. This observation indicative of the complex dynamics and organizational structure of the travel arrangements. The involvement of agents from various countries suggests a deliberate effort to incorporate a range of perspectives and expertise in the planning and execution of the journey. The persistence of attempts at border crossings, despite encountering setbacks such as arrests and financial losses, is a phenomenon that warrants careful examination and analysis. This enduring resolve exhibited by participants in their pursuit of crossing borders raises intriguing questions about the underlying motivations and factors driving their actions. By delving into the complexities of this persistent behaviour, we can gain a deeper understanding of the various dynamics within the realm of border crossings. In the context of our study on migration patterns and border crossings between Türkiye and Greece, it

is worth highlighting the remarkable determination exhibited by a participant. The particular individual whose identity remains anonymous, made a total of ten attempts to cross the border between the two countries, expressing an unwavering commitment to persist until achieving success. This noteworthy behaviour sheds light on the complex dynamics and challenges inherent in irregular migration, as well as the profound motivations that drive individuals to undertake such risky journeys (Karadağ, 2021, p. 8; Schapendonk, 2012a; Schapendonk, 2007; Collyer, 2007).

Moreover, the outcomes of the current study provide credence to the conclusions reached by Coniglio et al., (2009) on the fact that migrants who are undocumented or live with irregular status have a lower likelihood of returning to their native country. This is probably due to the likelihood of getting legal status in the countries of destination. It is also discovered that the participants have strong connections with the irregular migrants of Pakistani origin in other countries such as Greece, Italy, France, and Portugal etc. Figure 6.1. reflects the linkages profile of the participants. The research findings mostly relate to the use of social media by young individuals who are interconnected either in person or via social networks (Collyer, 2005; Singer & Massey, 1998). Hence social media and migrant networks serve as intermediaries in the process of making migration decisions (Obi et al., 2020; Lewis et al., 2015b). Moreover, the study found that social media makes it cheap and simple for the irregular migrants to talk to migration agents and other fellows either live in Türkiye or anywhere in the world.

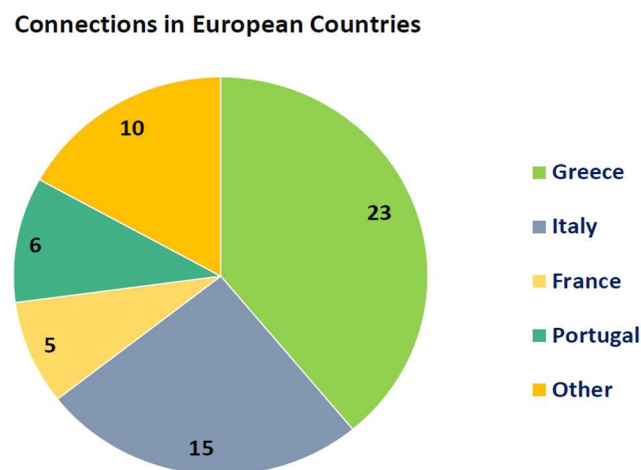


Figure 6.1. *Participants' connections in the countries other than Türkiye.*

The issue of irregular journeys to Greece elicits a range of perspectives among participants. While a minority of individuals express hesitancy towards embarking on

such journeys, the prevailing sentiment among the majority is one of resoluteness, as they envision Greece as a prospective new destination. The participant's statement encapsulates a sentiment that emphasizes a unidirectional trajectory, wherein Greece occupies a prominent position in their thoughts and aspirations, symbolizing a future that extends beyond the borders of Türkiye.

6.8. Agents and Financial Channels involved in Migrants' Smuggling

The phenomenon of irregular border crossing is a prevalent occurrence among the majority of participants who have arrived in Türkiye. A subset of these individuals has also made attempts to enter Greece through the Türkiye-Greece border (Oztig, 2020). However, it is important to acknowledge that these attempts have been met with varying degrees of success, as some participants have failed to successfully cross the border, while others have been forcibly returned to Istanbul by the Greek border forces (Karamanidou & Kasperek, 2022). The individuals who have not achieved success in their endeavours, nevertheless, exhibit firm determination and express their commitment to persistently exerting efforts until they attain success and reach their intended destination. Taking Türkiye as a 'transit country', they patiently await a more favourable time to pursue their aspirations of going to Europe (De Haas, 2013; Bredeloup, 2012; Düvell, 2006, 2012; Schapendonk, 2012; Collyer, 2007). Given the nature of irregular migration, it can be inferred that individuals who engage in this activity often have a propensity for criminal behaviour, as they knowingly cross multiple borders unlawfully. Now that they are no longer able to pursue legal means of survival, individuals often turn to illegal methods, particularly after having invested significant amounts of money in human smugglers to reach Europe (Jurat, 2023; Papadopoulou, 2004). Some individuals choose to establish their own independent networks, while others kidnap undocumented migrants. They exploit the fact that these victims lack legal status or records, making it unlikely for them to seek legal recourse or file a complaint in Türkiye.

The study discovers a comprehensive portrayal of the financial channel employed by the participants, shedding light on the various actors and facilitators involved in irregular migration both at the point of origin and during transit. The visual representation of the intricate web of financial transactions and arrangements that underpin the movement of individuals from Istanbul to Greece is presented in the previous chapter. It provides a holistic view of the mechanisms through which these journeys are financed and orchestrated.

At the heart of this financial channel are the participants themselves, who navigate the complexities of irregular migration in pursuit of their desired destination. They rely on a network of actors and facilitators who play crucial roles in enabling and supporting their journey (Ambrosini, 2017b). The study highlights the actors involved at the point of origin, where the decision to embark on the journey is made. These actors include recruiters, smugglers (Jurat, 2023) or other intermediaries who facilitate the initial stages of the migration process. Their involvement is often driven by financial incentives, as they profit from the movement of individuals across borders. In addition to the actors at the point of origin, there are various facilitators operating during the transit phase of the journey. These facilitators may include transport providers, such as bus or taxi drivers, who assist in physically transporting the migrants from Istanbul to Greece. They may also encompass individuals or groups who provide logistical support, such as safe houses or temporary accommodation, along the route.

The findings of this study indicate that there has been a noticeable decline in irregular arrivals from Pakistan to Türkiye over the course of the past few months. This decline could be attributed to the implementation of stricter border control measures. The participant' narrations through light on the effectiveness of these measures in curbing irregular migration from Pakistan. It is important to note that the decrease in irregular arrivals is a direct consequence of the heightened vigilance and enforcement at the borders. This observation underscores the significance of border control policies in managing migration flows and maintaining the integrity of national borders. The participants' accounts provide valuable insights into the impact of these measures on migration patterns between Pakistan and Türkiye.

The escalating challenges encountered during the border crossing from Türkiye to Greece have become a topic of increasing concern (Didem Danış, 2006). The gradual intensification of these difficulties has been observed over time. The current study also surrounding the actions of agents who possess knowledge regarding various scenarios and their subsequent decision to undertake financial risks by personally investing in aspiring individuals in Istanbul who express a desire to migrate to Greece. These agents, driven by their understanding of the prevailing circumstances, opt to invest their own money in order to facilitate the migration process. If the 'game' successfully reaches Greece, the agents involved in the endeavour recuperate the funds they have previously invested. In considering the potential consequences of a particular course of action, it is

essential to discuss the financial implications that may arise. In this context, it is important to note that individuals incur financial losses because of their decisions.

This observation underscores the significance of carefully evaluating the potential risks and financial losses associated with various scenarios. In the context of persistent setbacks, it has been observed that certain human smugglers resort to the act of kidnapping irregular migrants as a means to recoup their financial losses through the payment of ransom. The study also exhibits facilitation of irregular migration from Istanbul to Greece or Italy often involves the assistance of sub-agents and individuals known as “hundi-wala,” who provide financial services, e.g., exchange and transfer of money etc. These actors play a significant role in enabling the departure of irregular migrants, despite their own irregular status (Ambrosini, 2017b; Koser, 2008).

The study confirms sub-agents’ involvement in facilitating the travel of five individuals to Greece, with the assistance of a Pakistani agent residing in their current location, albeit originally hailing from Mandi Bahauddin. The successful departure from Istanbul and safe arrival of these aspirants enabled the sub-agent to receive his commission of 1000USD from the main agent. Moreover, the current rate for agents facilitating travel from Istanbul to Greece has been observed to range between 2300 and 2500 euros. This rate signifies the amount of money that individuals are required to pay in order to avail themselves of the services provided by these agents (Papadopoulou, 2004). The specified range suggests that there may be slight variations in the rates offered by different agents, potentially due to factors such as the specific services included in the package or the reputation and credibility of the agent.

Looking at it from an economic standpoint, migrant smuggling can be seen as a business, although an illegal one. Consideration is given to the financial aspects of the smuggling business and the methods employed by smuggling networks to move money, along with the economic benefits that migrants and their families anticipate or achieve through irregular migration and the assistance of smugglers (Koser, 2008) (Van Liempt, 2007). It is worth noting that certain scholars have put forth the argument that the globalization of transport and communication technologies, coupled with the growing migration restrictions in economically developed nations, has resulted in the sharp professionalization of the smuggling industry (Kyle & Koslowski, 2001; Salt & Stein, 1997).

Chin (2001, p. 198), has identified several key roles that involved in human smuggling operations; such as ‘big snakeheads’ who are the investors in the business, the ‘little snakeheads’ who act as recruiters, the ‘transporters’ who organize and carry out long-distance trips, including helping migrants cross borders, the ‘guides’ who move smuggled migrants between transit points or meet them at ports and airports, the ‘enforcers’ who protect and oversee smuggled migrants at safe houses and during their journey, and the corrupt officials in the countries of origin, transit, and destination (Ambrosini, 2017b). Additionally, there are various local actors at transit points who provide food and accommodation for the irregular migrants in transit. Individuals with higher positions in the hierarchy may engage in many forms of organized criminal activities. The current study also identified such roles but with different terminology used by the participants of the study such as ‘*guarantor, hundi wala, dunker*’ etc.

6.9. Conclusion

The migration patterns and socio-economic profiles explained in this chapter revealed a predominant demographic of young males aged between 14 to 17 years, characterized by unmarried status and limited educational attainment, typically hailing from impoverished backgrounds. Most of them entered Türkiye through irregular border crossings, driven by a complex interplay of push and pull factors motivating migration. Central to their migration experience was the pivotal role of human smugglers and the complex social networks they operate within (Ambrosini, 2017b; Collyer, 2005; Singer & Massey, 1998; Van Liempt, 2007). These agents frequently facilitated financial arrangements for migration that involve liquidating assets to secure passage. The dangers of their journey to Türkiye include food shortages, hazardous conditions, and the possibility of kidnapping and ransom. Upon arrival, their living conditions were characterized by overcrowded and unhygienic settings, compounded by their irregular migrant status, which exposed them to exploitation, torture, and apprehension by authorities. Access to healthcare was constrained due to the absence of insurance coverage, further exacerbating their precarious situation (Jurat, 2023). Notwithstanding these adversities, many managed to eke out a livelihood as irregular migrants, remitting earnings to their families through informal channels such as ‘*hundi hawala*’. A deep-rooted network of human smugglers (Van Liempt, 2007) facilitates the transfer of funds from Türkiye to Pakistan and other destinations, although border crossings into Greece are fraught with risks and have yielded unsuccessful attempts for most of them. Their stay

in Türkiye is perceived as transient, characterized by a sense of anticipation for opportunities to pursue onward voyage to Europe.

CHAPTER-VII

7. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The current study offers a valuable insight into the multifaceted motivations, complex challenges, and socio-economic determinants that underpin the phenomenon of irregular migration. By digging into the subjective experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in such migration, the study sheds light on the complicated web of factors that contribute to the whole process of migration. By examining the relationship between personal aspirations, economic considerations, and social circumstances, the current study contributes to the broader discourse on migration and offers a deeper comprehension of the complexities inherent in irregular migration. It is also found that the decision of an individual to migrate cannot be solely attributed to economic hardships. The narratives of the journey, spanning from Pakistan to Türkiye, is characterized by a complex nature of intermediaries, acquaintances, and co-migrants. By examining the family's role in the context of irregular migration, we gained a deeper look of the mutual connections between migration, finance, and kinship, and how these elements shape and are shaped by irregular migration dynamics.

The study highlights the pivotal role of agents (Ambrosini, 2017b), the impact of border strictness, the prevalence of criminal activities, and the involvement of family in shaping the trajectory of migration experiences. The involvement of Pakistani and Iranian agents proved to be of utmost significance in expediting the preliminary phases of the journey, thereby sheds light on the organized web of cross-border operatives. The exploration of this challenging journey, as depicted through the lens of the participants heightened anticipation influenced by social media, serves to highlight the attraction and aspiration associated with European destinations. The individuals' arrival in Türkiye was accompanied by a series of challenges, particularly in their pursuit of employment (Castles et al., 2005b) in small factories.

This dissertation has explored the complex and multilayered experiences of irregular migrants of Pakistani origin in Türkiye. By probing into their challenges, coping mechanisms, and aspirations, a comprehensive understanding of their realities has been achieved. The participants in the study faced a multitude of challenges due to their irregular status. These challenges encompass a wide range of issues, including exploitative work conditions, health vulnerabilities (LeVoy & Geddie, 2009), and the

constant fear of being detected and deported. It is evident that employers, fully aware of the vulnerable position of irregular migrants, often exploit them by imposing extended working hours, providing inadequate wages, and assigning tasks that are unrelated to their skills. This exploitative behaviour not only undermines the well-being and dignity of irregular migrants but also perpetuates a cycle of inequality and injustice in the workplace.

The participants' engagement in various factories in Türkiye, offers valuable insight into the economic aspects associated with irregular migration. The narratives shared by the participants provide a powerful and poignant portrayal of the harsh reality of modern-day exploitation. These stories shed light on a system that treats individuals as mere commodities, disregarding their inherent humanity and denying them basic rights and essential social entitlements. Such category of "*illegal alien*" is highly advantageous and profitable as it effectively helps to create and maintain a 'legally vulnerable workforce' that is relatively easy to control and exploit (De Genova, 2002). These Pakistani irregular migrants, like undocumented migrants from other nations, live a precarious life in the dark corners of Istanbul. Despite challenging living and working conditions, they earn money not only to survive but also remit some portion of that to their families back home (Karadağ, 2021).

It is found that the informal social networks of irregular migrants play a significant role in perpetuating their exploitation, extending beyond the confines of the workplace. These networks, often formed out of necessity and shared experiences, inadvertently create an environment where exploitation thrives. The lack of legal protection and limited access to resources further exacerbate the vulnerability of irregular migrants within these networks. Therefore, addressing the issue of exploitation among irregular migrants requires not only addressing workplace conditions but also dismantling the informal social networks that perpetuate their exploitation. Moreover, the language barriers can create opportunities for individuals within communities to exploit others by demanding bribes or exorbitant fees for services. In contrary to (Ambrosini, 2017b), the intermediaries, who are supposed to offer assistance and guidance to migrants, unfortunately contribute to their vulnerability by pushing them towards engaging in criminal activities. This distressing reality only serves to worsen the already challenging circumstances faced by migrants, leaving them even more exposed and marginalized.

Another pressing concern for irregular migrants due to their limited access to health services and insurance. This lack of support further exacerbates their vulnerability and highlights the urgent need for comprehensive solutions to address their healthcare needs. The participants of the study shared their narratives on the harsh reality of enduring health issues without access to proper medical attention. They vividly describe the challenges they faced and the desperate measures they resorted to, such as relying on home remedies and self-medication. The fear of apprehension can have a significant impact on irregular migrants' access to professional healthcare. This fear often leads them to navigate their health challenges independently, which can be detrimental to their overall well-being. These irregular migrants face a huge psychological stress when living and working in unfamiliar circumstances (Myhrvold & Småstuen, 2019). The challenges they encounter, such as language barriers, cultural differences, and limited access to basic services (Jurat, 2023), all contribute to this heightened stress.

The pervasive fear of being detected by the police has a profound impact on individuals, prompting them to adopt various coping mechanisms. These strategies often involve avoiding public spaces and consciously maintaining a low profile to minimize the risk of attracting unwanted attention. The constant vigilance and cautiousness that they must exercise in their daily lives can be mentally and emotionally draining, as they navigate a world where their every move feels scrutinized. This heightened state of awareness not only restricts their freedom and limits their ability to fully participate in society but also perpetuates a sense of unease and anxiety.

The study highlights the migrants' persistent aspirations and the challenges encountered during irregular migration, specifically in their repeated attempts to reach Greece. Despite their efforts, these endeavours ultimately proved unsuccessful in many cases. Their efforts to reach Greece underline their firm commitment despite hard journey and the numerous obstacles encountered along the way. The inclusion of the account detailing the experience of waiting for an extended period at the designated point, ultimately leading to the decision to surrender to authorities, and the subsequent release and return to Istanbul, serves to enrich the overall narrative by shedding light on the resilience and adaptability exhibited by irregular migrants in their relentless pursuit of overcoming various obstacles.

The study concluded that the irregular migrants of Pakistani origin in Türkiye express a temporary intention to stay, their ultimate goal was to continue their migration

journey to countries like Greece or Italy (Içduygu, 2003, p. 38). Türkiye serves as a steppingstone (Didem Daniş, 2006) for these individuals, providing them with a temporary refuge before they move on to their desired destinations. Being Central Asian absorption point, the state Türkiye filters migration into Western Europe from South Asia, Africa and West Asia (Ahmad, 2016, p. 123). This highlights the complex nature of migration and the various factors that influence individuals' decisions and aspirations. The irregular border crossings to Greece serve as evidence to the firm determination and longing for a better life among those who partake in them. Despite the inherent risks and dangers involved, these undocumented migrants continue to pursue their aspirations, driven by the hope of finding safety, security, and opportunities that may flee them in their home countries. Migration trajectories do not adhere to the conventional pattern of "departure," "transit," and "arrival" since time moves with people (Cwerner, 2001). Since some of the most desired destinations are inaccessible, the order of transit statuses is not always determined by subsequent movements. The persistence displayed by these participants underscores the magnitude of their dreams and the challenges they are willing to face in their quest for a brighter future. Their determination to overcome setbacks and continue their attempts is a testament to the profound challenges and aspirations that shape their migratory journeys. It is through their strong perseverance that they can navigate the obstacles that come their way and keep moving forward. Despite facing numerous hardships and setbacks, they refuse to give up on their dreams and aspirations. Their unwavering determination is a powerful force that propels them forward, allowing them to overcome the hurdles that stand in their path. Their migratory journeys are not just physical movements from one place to another, but rather transformative experiences that shape their identities and define their futures. Through their determination, they can transcend the challenges.

The narratives of the participants reflect their remarkable adaptability in navigating the ever-evolving landscape of border dynamics to reach Greece and utilization of modern communication platforms such as WhatsApp to establish contact with agents. Such resourcefulness and resilience exhibited by migrants, demonstrate a remarkable ability to adapt their strategies and tactics in response to the shifting challenges and obstacles they encounter in their quest for safe-haven and improved livelihoods. By employing digital means of communication, migrants can transcend physical barriers and establish connections with intermediaries who can potentially

facilitate their journey towards Greece. This adaptability not only showcases the migrants' ability to harness technological advancements but also underscores their determination to overcome the barriers. In essence, the ability of migrants to adapt and utilize innovative methods of communication serves as an evidence to their firm resolve and their dogged pursuit of a better future.

Moreover, the Pakistani irregular migrant under study were facing an unfair situation where they make momentous sacrifices in terms of time. The deferral of benefits they accept is incredibly significant, with their focus on long-term goals causing them to sacrifice large portions of their lives in pursuit of uncertain futures. In a peculiar twist of time, these individuals found themselves trapped in a foreign land, unable to visualize a future filled with purpose and the joys of starting a family. This dilemma creates a perplexing paradox: they are unable to return to their past lives in Pakistan, which gradually feel as distant as their unattainable prospects for the future (Ahmad, 2016, p. 175).

As the study draws to a close, it becomes evident that the migratory experiences and determinants of irregular migration among Pakistani nationals in Istanbul are multifaceted and complex. The identification of specific regions such as Gujrat, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, and Hafizabad as significant hubs for irregular migration to Europe sheds light on the localized nature of migration patterns and the networks that facilitate such movements. Despite the promise of enhanced personal income opportunities abroad, irregular migrants face a myriad of uncertainties, including the constant threat of apprehension and deportation, underscoring the precarious nature of their circumstances. This delicate balance between potential gains and risks underscores the difficult decisions migrants must make as they navigate the complexities of irregular migration.

Furthermore, the study underscores the formidable challenges inherent in addressing the root causes of irregular migration within Pakistan. Tackling entrenched issues such as poverty, unemployment, and governance deficiencies requires sustained efforts and comprehensive strategies that extend beyond immigration policies alone. While strict immigration policies and media awareness campaigns can contribute to curbing irregular migration and addressing vulnerabilities, a holistic approach that addresses underlying socio-economic disparities is essential.

Recommendations arising from the study emphasize the need for concerted diplomatic collaboration with transit and destination countries to ensure the protection and safe return of its irregular migrants. Additionally, efforts to enhance domestic economic opportunities and facilitate the reintegration of returning migrants through education and vocational support programmes are imperative. Comprehensive awareness initiatives aimed at educating potential migrants about the risks associated with irregular migration and promoting safer migration options should also be prioritized. An organized campaign related to consequences of irregular migration may also be launched both in mainstream as well as through social media platforms. Hope the findings of this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on migration and highlight the need for more inclusive policies and support systems for curbing irregular migration. It is hoped that this research will serve as a catalyst for further exploration and action in addressing the issues concerning irregular migration and smuggling of migrants in Pakistan.

For future work, longitudinal studies tracking migrants' experiences over time can provide insights into evolving challenges and coping strategies, while comparative analyses across regions can elucidate variations in policy responses and outcomes. Community-based interventions tailored to migrants' needs warrant investigation as research transnational collaboration between origin and destination countries. By addressing these areas, researchers can inform evidence-based policies and interventions that promote the rights, well-being, and social inclusion of irregular migrants globally.

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APPENDICES

Appendix-I: Interview Guide

(Basic Questions)

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself?
2. What did you do for work before you left your country (occupation)?
3. Why did you choose to leave Pakistan?
4. How do people usually leave in your area to go to other countries?
5. Has somebody influenced your decision to leave (family or friend etc.)?
6. Did you share with anyone about your departure from Pakistan?
7. Tell me about the whole route of your travel (countries and cities you went through)?
8. How you organized your journey? Had anyone helped you in this regard?
9. How long have you been living in Türkiye?
10. Do you use social media (like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and WhatsApp)?
11. Do you earn in Türkiye (monthly income)?
12. Do you have any friends or family in Türkiye or in any other country?
13. Have your expectations been met so far?

(Probing Questions)

14. How did you get ready for your journey before leaving your home country?
15. How did you plan your travel? Did you ever think about getting a visa and traveling normally? Did you have a passport?
16. How much money did you pay before leaving, and how did you get it?
17. How long did it take to reach Istanbul? Can you describe what it was like?
18. How did you communicate with the people organizing your journey? Did they give you food and a place to stay?
19. Did you face any problem during your journey?
20. How did you feel in Türkiye? Would you like to share your experiences?
21. What are your plans for the near future (stay, onward journey, repatriation or other)?
22. Why did you choose European countries for migration?
23. Have you ever tried to leave Türkiye in any irregular way?
24. Do you know anything about irregular migrants leaving Türkiye for Europe?
25. When you do not work, how do you spend your free time?
26. What concerns you about going back to Pakistan?
27. Have you ever been deported from Türkiye or any other country?
28. Have you thought or applied for any kind of protection in Türkiye?

Thanks for your time!

APPENDIX-II: Ethics Committee Approval

Evrak Kayıt Tarihi: 15.06.2022

Protokol No: 330571

Tarih: 24.06.2022



ANADOLU ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL VE BEŞERÎ BİLİMLER BİLİMSEL ARAŞTIRMA VE YAYIN ETİĞİ KURULU
KARAR BELGESİ

ÇALIŞMANIN TÜRÜ:	BAP Projesi-Doktora Tez Çalışması
KONU:	Sosyal Bilimler
BAŞLIK:	Refah İçin Hayatı Riske Atmak: Türkiye'deki Pakistanlı Düzensiz Göçmenler ve Baş Etme Stratejileri
PROJE/TEZ YÜRÜTÜCÜSÜ:	Prof. Dr. Fuat GÜLLÜPİNAR
TEZ YAZARI:	Waheed Ahmad QURESHI
ALT KOMİSYON GÖRÜŞÜ:	-
KARAR:	Olumlu