MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master 's Thesis

„Psychometric evaluation of the Integration Index (IPL - 12): Analysis of a sample of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers with mental health problems"

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Angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science (MSc)

Wien, 2020 / Vienna, 2020

Acknowledgement

Firstly I want to thank all participants of the study for giving their time in participation in the project. Furthermore I want to thank Univ.-Prof. Dr. Brigitte Lueger-Schuster for supervising my master's thesis and letting me partake in the PIAAS project as well as Mag. Dr. Matthias Knefel for answering my many emails with specific information on the study.

My gratitude goes to my father, Peter Demuth, who has supported me throughout my degree, thank you for being there always, and to my partner, Nicholas Brooking, who has made my life richer in many ways. I want to thank my friends, who have made the last seven years at Uni an unforgettable experience, and Erik Kommol and Paul Bruckmann for their proofreading.

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problems

Integration is a complex concept, researched mainly in the social sciences (Ager & Strang, 2008). There is a lack of conceptual clarity of integration (Sigona, 2005), nonetheless some attempts are being made to measure the concept by assessing varying indicators of integration, for example employment, living situation or language skills (Cheung & Phillimore, 2017; Harder et al., 2018a; Valenta & Bunar, 2010). This study evaluated a tool for measuring the level of integration, as well as critically reflected on the concept of integration. The focus of research was on refugees and asylum seekers in Austria.

The current study

The current study is a side project within the research project 'a short psychological intervention for Afghan refugees in Austria' (Eine psychologische Kurzintervention für afghanische Geflüchtete in Österreich; PIAAS). The PIAAS project is an intervention study that evaluates the effects of the Problem Management+ (PM+) intervention developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The present study used the pre - intervention data, generated by the questionnaire on integration, the integration index (IPL - 12; (Harder et al., 2018a). The goal was to analyse the usability of the IPL - 12 for psychological research with refugees, through testing the questionnaires reliability as well as construct and criterion related validity. The tool is used for the first time in psychological research and has not yet been used with refugees and asylum seekers. The IPL - 12 has been validated in a previous study with people of different migrant backgrounds in the US, showing sensitivity to predictors of integration: Length of stay, education, language and immigration status (Harder et al., 2018a), which this study followed up with overlapping and new predictors: Length of stay, gender, visa status and mental health. The current study for the first time utilized a factor analysis, testing statistically the dimensionality of the tool. Furthermore,

integration is an important concept for psychological research with refugee and migrant populations, as it summarises the pressures and expectations by the receiving society on these communities. Using the concept of integration may help to understand the everyday reality of refugees living in a new country and serve as a framework for other psychological research focused on different aspects of refugee life.

Definitions

Forcibly Displaced Person

A forcibly displaced person (FDP) is any person who had to flee their home, due to violence or other threats to their livelihood. Most displaced people worldwide are internally displaced, not having left their country, while others are internationally displaced (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019). The term FDP includes anyone who has a history of flight including the categories of refugee and asylum seeker (Buber-Ennser et al., 2016) and will be used throughout this paper, whenever the specifics of the subcategories are not relevant.

Refugee

The Geneva Convention of 1951 of the United Nations defines the term refugee as follows: A refugee is any person who

> "owing to wellfounded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2010, p.14).

The Convention further specifies the social rights of refugees in employment, social welfare, education, housing (Ager & Strang, 2008), free access to courts, freedom of religion and proper documentation for identification (Robinson, 2017). The convention remains the basis for asylum of internationally displaced people (Caroni & Scheiber, 2019). Refugees

differ from other migrants in various ways, firstly they often leave unplanned without a chance of preparing for the new country and language (Gericke et al., 2018), they often have a traumatic background. The institutions around receiving refugees are highly contested, and they have the added stress of lengthy asylum procedures (Sigona, 2005). Ludwig (2016) discusses how the refugee label on the one hand helps access protection, on the other hand, when used informally, can be a method of othering and objectification.

> "They are no longer subjects, but rather objects 'in need of assistance, training and a host of other resettlement services, though never to speak and act of their own accord in the public.' For refugees, their refugee status often overshadows other identities." (Ludwig, 2016, p. 7).

The discourse around refugees has been racialized in the last decades, generally referring to people from the global south, not acknowledging them as individuals, but as 'masses' of people. Another concern is that nowadays many people flee for reasons the convention did not anticipate, like generalised violence, terrorism, climate change and food insecurities. This, on the one hand, makes the UN definition insufficient in humanitarian terms and on the other hand, further pressure is generated by receiving states to exclude as many people as possible from the definition (Bauer-Amin, 2017). One development in exclusion practices is that since 2016 refugee status in Austria is issued for only three years, after which it gets reevaluated, followed by either a change in status or permanent residency (Bundesministerium für Inneres, 2020). While most refugees have gone through the process of applying for asylum, fewer have had the chance of entering resettlement programs, which enables them to enter the receiving country already with a confirmed refugee status (Kartal & Kiropoulos, 2016; Morrice et al., 2019; Steel et al., 2011).

Asylum Seeker

An asylum seeker is every person who has applied for refugee status but is not yet confirmed. The examination of the asylum application is designed by each nation state, with the European Union coordinating some framework conditions of minimum standards

(Rosenberger, 2012), for example through the Dublin procedure, which prevents applying for asylum in multiple European states (Caroni & Scheiber, 2019). Every person entering a country has the right to apply for asylum. Whether asylum is granted has to be decided for every person individually. Until a decision is reached, asylum seekers have the right of protection (Robinson, 2017), yet the EU is implementing various mechanisms to exclude people from accessing the asylum system (Tazzioli, 2018). Between 2014 and 2019 about 19000 people trying to reach Europe died on the Mediterranean Sea, the ones who arrived often spent a long time in mass detention camps in Greece or Italy in inhumane conditions (ProAsyl, 2020).

Subsidiary Protection

Subsidiary protection has been adopted on the EU level in 2004 as an extra category for people who do not fully meet the criteria of a refugee, like fleeing from indiscriminate violence in armed conflict, but cannot be returned to their country of origin because it is unsafe. The status is received after an individual asylum process and needs to be distinguished from temporary protection, which in EU context is issued in mass influx events (Mc Adam, 2005). People with subsidiary protection get temporary residency, which has to be renewed after the first year and every two years after that (Bundesministerium für Inneres, 2020). This makes their fate dependent on the changing circumstances in their countries of origin (Steel et al., 2011) and the receiving country may change its judgement on the security of the country of origin and order a return. A further concern is that the subsidiary protection is used to justify further narrowing the interpretation of the refugee status (Mc Adam, 2005).

Origin and receiving society

In research, different terms are used to refer to old and new places of residence of FDPs. Frequently read in papers are the terms 'origin culture' or 'home country' and 'host' or 'receiving society'. In this paper the term of origin society as well as receiving society are used, and the alternative rejected from a normative standpoint, based on the understanding

of integration, as creating a new life and a new home. 'Receiving' implies a potential of equal participation, whereas 'host society' implies the FDPs being guests only. For the question of using origin or home county, 'origin society' is believed to be more fitting, implying a starting package of cultural understanding. Whereas 'home country' denies fluidity, defining FDPs forever as foreigners that have a home somewhere else.

Integration

Often cited in literature, Robinson suggested that "'integration' is a chaotic concept: A word used by many but understood differently by most" and further as "individualized, contested and contextual" (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 167). There is no generally agreed upon definition of integration (Ager & Strang, 2008; Harder et al., 2018a). It is often understood as a two - way process between receiving and migrant communities (Mokre, 2017). This implies that integration requires adaptation, not only from FDPs but also from the receiving country, to create an 'integrated community' (Ager & Strang, 2008). Others criticise the implication of two homogenous groups, FDPs and receiving society, in this definition, rather than acknowledging the heterogeneity of the actors and interests involved (Sigona, 2005). FDPs have the common factor of a history of flight but are a diverse group with different needs and motivations. The receiving society too is made up of different groups and individuals that are marked by differing attitudes towards and experiences with FDPs. Integration is also criticised for being glossed over assimilation, that, like assimilation, still requires for people to adapt according to the majority normative values and sets clear expectations of how an FDP is supposed to behave. While being highly ideological in nature integration, as a concept, is normalised, so that the ideology is not questioned anymore, which results in using 'integration' synonymously to 'successful settlement', which simply refers to establishing a permanent home (McPherson, 2010).

Integration research along the dimensions of the Integration Index (IPL - 12)

This study seeks to explore the factor structure of the IPL - 12, which has not been examined before. The six dimensions of the IPL – 12, which are each assessed with two

items, are psychological, navigational, economic, social, linguistic, and political integration. These will each be described and related to other research in the respective fields in the following. Most research either focuses on individual aspects of integration or discusses the concept based on qualitative data. Rarely has integration been examined quantitatively. The IPL – 12 has been constructed by collating different aspects of integration found in research. Up to date the structure of integration as conceptualised by the IPL -12 has not been analysed quantitatively. The lack of quantitative research on integration and the relationships between different aspects of integration, makes hypothesising on the exact structure of integration difficult. The IPL – 12 furthermore has been constructed with the goal of comparing integration between different migrant groups. In order to achieve comparability, the IPL – 12 has to produce valid results for the individual groups. This study, therefore, makes a valuable contribution in exploring the structure of the integration empirically and quantitatively, as well as analysing the the usability of the IPL – 12 for FDPs.

Psychological dimension

The psychological dimension surveys the respondents' sense of belonging to and feelings of being an outsider in Austria.

Belonging was researched by Chen and Schweitzer (2019) through narrative interviews with 30 students with refugee background and their parents. They showed that belonging is a multifaceted concept, which was constructed through relational experiences and the need for coherence in experience. They used the term of 'collaborative meaning making' for that process. The interviews extracted five themes of belonging: Connection to a larger entity through deep experience of the present in interaction with others or a spiritual connection through nature or religion; the experience of immersion through feelings of comfort and happiness; experience of connection or disconnection to family and friends as well as through objects in a reference to the past; a sense of identity of the self in time and agency; and instrumental outcomes like experiencing support and having opportunities to grow and develop. They furthermore stressed that being forced to identify primarily as a

refugee, disregarding personal strengths and characteristics, undermined a sense of belonging. The concepts of integration and belonging are overlapping and interwoven; a sense of belonging may signify integration on a deeply personal level.

Other studies demonstrated the link between in - and outgroup processes and a sense of belonging to the receiving society (Bauer-Amin, 2017; Bhatia & Ram, 2009). A three year longitudinal study (Correa-Velez et al., 2010) with refugee youth in Australia showed that while wellbeing was overall high, the subjective social status in wider society as well as perceived discrimination had significant effects on wellbeing. They deduced that discrimination is among the worst barriers to integration and that belonging comes with feeling socially valued and the ability to participate meaningfully, which was taken up by Fathi (2015) in an interview study with Iranian female doctors in Britain. She pointed at the intersectionality of belonging with other concepts as class and ethnicity and outlined how belonging in the cases of the interviewed women is created through their profession, a sense of being of service to the society. Furthermore, the heterogeneity of migrant and refugee groups came to show in a hierarchy of belonging constructed by the interviewees, claiming refugees relying on social welfare as less deserving. Valenta (2008) pointed out that FDPs fluctuate between experiences of belonging and exclusion. The non - linearity of belonging was shown in a study on well - integrated migrants from South - Asia in the US who experienced suddenly being the 'other' and feared to be mistaken for terrorists after 9/11. The researchers argued that integration is never a completed state, but is temporal, as it can be shaken by external events outside of one's own control (Bhatia & Ram, 2009).

Other research took up the concept of identity, looking at integration as a challenge of rebuilding identity and agency. A theory by Machleidt describes integration as cultural adolescence, with the task of building identity, with a similar dynamic, heightened vulnerability and the need for safety to flourish (Graef-Calliess & Machleidt, 2019). Groen et al. (2018) sought to clarify the concept of cultural identity and pointed out the intensity of change in the cultural identity due to pre - and post - migration stress and acculturation.

Here 'acculturation' referred to the process of cultural identification in the receiving society, and was mostly understood to have two independent dimensions; heritage - culture retention and receiving - culture acquisition (Berry & Sabatier, 2011). 85 people from Afghanistan and Iraq with a traumatic background were interviewed and grounded theory was used as the approach for data analysis. Identity was defined as the norms and values that constitute the image that the person holds of themselves. Three domains of cultural identity were conceptualised; personal, ethnic, and social identity, all of which may be roots of stress and go through change in the receiving society. In the domain of personal identity, the different norms associated with age, gender, and marital status lead to feelings of being different and an overall loss of clarity in identity. Ethnic identity was reported to be accentuated around lines of conflict between ethnicities in the country of origin, which may carry over to the receiving society. For the social identity, family was of paramount importance in providing a support structure and purpose. For many, migration resulted in a reduction of social functioning, often coupled with problems of loneliness. In an Austrian study becoming a refugee was framed as a struggle of reclaiming agency, with individuals reporting their personality and previous life no longer counting, feeling powerless and having to start from scratch (Bauer-Amin, 2017) and another interview study followed a similar argument and stressed the important role education plays in bringing back agency and autonomy, as well as processing the refugee experience (McPherson, 2010).

The psychological integration, based around a sense of belonging and being welcomed stands out in the IPL -12 as being subjective and touching the emotional experience of FDPs, whereas all other subscales focus on behaviours and knowledge, more instrumental and pragmatic integration. Progress in the other aspects of integration, for example speaking the local language or having a social network, may support feelings of belonging.

Navigational

The navigational dimension measures whether respondents can manage to satisfy their basic needs. One item surveys the perceived ability to solve the challenge of finding a doctor when sick and the other item the perceived ability to find a job.

For navigating a new society, a broader cultural understanding of local procedures, customs and facilities is required by FDPs. Enhanced cultural competence from the receiving side is needed too and may be achieved through knowledge about the background of FDPs for mutual understanding and accommodation to FDPs (Ager & Strang, 2008). Building knowledge about all the different aspects of life in a new society like the education system, health care system, work, and social services is a challenging task especially with existing language barriers. Everyday life tasks, like shopping, can be perceived as challenging because the cultural knowledge penetrating every aspect of life is not yet sufficiently learnt to comfortably move in the social sphere (Hughes, 2019; Valenta, 2008). While social networks can help provide necessary information, the state is also responsible to make access and navigation easier (Ager & Strang, 2008). The example of the health care system is explored in more detail.

Health Care System. Good health is an important resource for engaging in society (Groen et al., 2018) and refugees have a right to equal access to health care. Nonetheless health is left on the sidelines of the integration discourse (Ager & Strang, 2008; Schick, 2019). Refugees typically have poorer physical and mental health than the general population (Kläui, 2019; Kohlenberger et al., 2019; Miller & Rasmussen, 2017; van Loenen et al., 2018), which leads to the question of access to health care services. To bring about accessibility of the health care system and a service that meets the special needs of refugees poses a challenge. Some studies explored the kinds of health problems with which refugees present in clinics and practices, showing high levels of mental health problems, back problems, unspecific somatic problems and pain (Kläui, 2019; Pfortmueller et al., 2016). General Practitioners are the first contact points with the health care system for FDPs and

have the chance of building a long term relationship to build trust and enable patients to speak about traumatic experiences in their past (Kläui, 2019). A UK study found that while most refugees were able to get an appointment with a general practitioner, many spoke of difficulties explaining their symptoms which frequently led to dismissal or inappropriate treatment (Phillimore, 2010). A frequently reported peculiarity is the significantly higher use of emergency departments of migrants compared to nonmigrants (Credé et al., 2018), which may be an indicator of inadequate access to primary health care. An Austrian research project with FDPs found generally high regard for the health care system in Austria, nonetheless they still identified language and long waiting lists among others as important barriers (Kohlenberger et al., 2019). Researchers call for tailored health strategies for refugees and other migrants, including training for cultural sensitivity and competence in dealing with a violent past, offering free interpreting services, and establishing specialized practices (Kläui, 2019; Puchner et al., 2018; van Loenen et al., 2018). Poor health may act as a barrier in other aspects on integration.

Economic dimension

The economic dimension measures income in one item as well as employment status and current education in a second item.

Employment. Employment is one of the most researched aspects of integration, and it is central to establishing an independent life. The receiving state typically provides most of its integration assistance in this area through language and vocational courses (Ganter, 2019; Valenta & Bunar, 2010). Language is understood as a prerequisite for finding employment. FDPs on average have higher educational backgrounds than other migrant groups, but often face problems of recognition of their qualifications, and tend to be overrepresented in low income jobs (Ager & Strang, 2008; Buber-Ennser et al., 2016; Gericke et al., 2018). Labour market experiences are influenced not only by ethnicity, but further, for example, by migration status and gender (Cheung & Phillimore, 2017). While refugees in Austria have the right to work, asylum seekers may only get a permit for seasonal

work or do community work for an allowance (AMS Österreich, 2020). Integration into the job market takes many years. Ganter (2019) sketched the process from learning language and basic skills, getting recognition for previous jobs, reorientation, internships and apprenticeships to finally a job. Long term planning of integration into the labour market that meets the competences of the individual is of great importance, as an earlier job entry tends to lead to lower income and less opportunity to continue learning the language (Morrice et al., 2019). Gericke et al. (2018) explored how and which social connections help in finding a job and stressed that vertical bridging relationships, for example to the social system or NGOs, tend to provide access to a wider variety of jobs, including adequate employment, whereas horizontal bonding relationships to family and friends, while also being helpful in accessing employment, typically lead to underemployment. The research shows that FDPs on the one hand need and make use of their social capital to access the labour market. On the other hand employment may also provide opportunities to build a social network, thus support social integration. For Austria, the rate of unemployment in 2018 was 6.7%, whereas for Afghan refugees it was at 29.6%. Overall, significantly fewer refugee women were employed (The Expert Council for Integration, 2019). So, while the governmental integration assistance focuses on the aspect of economic integration there remains a large gap between native and FDP population in employment and income levels.

Education. Education is important for integration as it relates to finding employment and helps to develop agency in a new country (McPherson, 2010). Furthermore, schools are a significant meeting and mixing place with members of the receiving society (Ager & Strang, 2008). For many the loss of status in the new society is a major challenge and education provides a chance of regaining the experience of "being a meaningful person in society" (Groen et al., 2018, p. 79). On the other hand this chance may create pressure to perform well, as was shown in a study by McMichael et al. (2011) in which adolescent refugees talked about experiencing the educational expectations of their parents as unrealistically high. Phalet and Baysu (2020) explored the fact that in many European countries migrant children lag behind in academic achievement. In their study this academic

lag was mediated by the variables positive social- or discrimination experiences and feelings of belonging in the school context. For FDPs too old for compulsory schooling, entering the education system can be much harder (Atanasosaka & Proyer, 2018). FDPs often, despite having high motivation, find it hard to learn and concentrate, as they may be preoccupied with migration stressors (Morrice et al., 2019). This is particularly pronounced for asylum seekers, as their life is marked by 'existential waiting' and the uncertain future may hinder the ability to learn and create a meaningful present (Atanasosaka & Proyer, 2018).

Social dimension

The social dimension measures the number of contacts with Austrians. One item inquires about number of text messages exchanged with Austrians and the second item about how often dinner was eaten together with Austrians.

Relationships to receiving society. Integration is a normative construct and thus FDPs are faced with expectation on how they should behave in relation to receiving communities, which manifest in discourses on a macrolevel and personal experiences of FDPs on a micro level. On the macro level two discourses are prevalent. One of harmonious coexisting, typical for the approach of multiculturalism, which is defined by Phillimore (2010) as linguistic and cultural pluralism, the celebration of difference, and encouragement of tolerance and respect. In this it would be more accepted for FDPs to continue living in line with their heritage cultures. The other discourse is of social inclusion and exclusion with a clearer dominance of the majority culture, expecting of FDPs to adopt that culture, and judging whether it is done correctly. In Austria this discourse of inclusion and exclusion is more prominent, which may lead to higher acceptance of refugees, when they assimilate rather than integrate (Koc & Anderson, 2018). On the micro level, relationships with members of differing communities tend to be shaped by a dynamic of dependency (Strang & Quinn, 2019). Asylum seekers have limited freedom of movement and often live in centres in rural areas, both aspects make building contacts with natives difficult (Rosenberger, 2012; Strang & Quinn, 2019). Refugees also struggle with social isolation (Strang & Quinn, 2019).

Perceived friendliness by members of the receiving society can make a great contribution to a sense of security and belonging and continuity of relationships is very important to build a social network (Ager & Strang, 2008). Lack of trust due to social loss and trauma may be another barrier to building new relationships (Groen et al., 2018; Strang & Quinn, 2019). All these aspects are picked up by Häberlen (2016) in his reflections on the special circumstances of FDPs and volunteers meeting in Berlin in 2015, that were marked by pragmatic help by the volunteers, but more noticeably by an effort to meet as equals with respect and to overcome the exclusive discourse. He described the trust and friendships built in everyday experiences, as a learning experience to live with differences and find commonalities too. He furthermore underlined the political nature of these friendships, seeking out the individual, while the public discourse focused on perceptions of threat by masses of refugees. While Häberlen (2016) decisively took an optimistic point of view and gave positive examples of how the meeting of natives and FDPs may go, Valenta (2008) described a more ambivalent experience of friendships between refugees and natives. He pointed out how these friendships may be a symbol of acceptance, but also bear a risk of hierarchy and of being patronized. He furthermore pointed out the stress and insecurity FDPs may experience resulting from not being as familiar with the cultural codes of social interaction, leading to conscious efforts to fit in, while running the risk of making a fool of themselves. A further difficulty may be that FDPs feel alienated by the safe lives that natives live, while their own stories are marked by ruptures, making it harder to build connections (Groen et al., 2018). The attitudes of natives towards FDPs are another important variable when trying to build relationships. Many studies emphasize the hostile climate against FDPs in western countries (Häberlen, 2016; Liamputtong & Kurban, 2018; Valenta, 2008), a study in the US found right wing authoritarianism and intergroup anxiety to be significant predictors of negative attitudes, both variables are about perceptions of threat (Koc & Anderson, 2018). A German study found that these perceptions of threat are more pronounced for refugees than other migrant groups (Meidert & Rapp, 2019).

Relationships to own community. When building a life in a new society, relationships with family and co-ethnic, co-national or co-religious communities are very important for support, wellbeing and feeling at home. Family has a high value in Afghan culture and being separated from family, as is frequently the case for FDPs, poses a significant challenge (McMichael et al., 2011).

> "Many respondents describe having problems living without their family, not being able to contact family members, or not even knowing where they are, as missing parts of themselves. Many single young males from Afghanistan declared that living without their family is 'having no life at all'" (Groen et al., 2018, p. 82).

While families tend to integrate more easily, being with family is not without challenges either as members might adapt differently and dependencies change as parents may have to rely on their children for translation in everyday life (McMichael et al., 2011). Thus family can be both a protective and a risk factor for post-migration stress (Correa-Velez et al., 2010).

Furthermore, the ethnic community can be a safe space to continue cherished cultural traditions (Valenta, 2008), maintaining collective memory (Hughes, 2019) as well as a space where the newly arrived receive help with navigating the new system (Ager & Strang, 2008). This was illustrated by a study on a community of Myanmar refugees in Australia, who set the traditions around food at the centre of their community as a way to create a home away from home (Hughes, 2019). On the other hand, there is also a risk in living so close to other refugees. Ethnic communities may also be a place of suppressive social control (Valenta, 2008) which may be particularly limiting to women, being continuously coerced in traditional gender roles (Cheung & Phillimore, 2017). Refugees who belonged to a minority culture in their origin country, like the Shia Hazara from Afghanistan, may still fear violence in the receiving country and experience stress from having to live closely with refugees from the majority ethno-religious group, the Sunni Pashtuns, as alienation and hate from conflicts in the origin countries may be carried over to the new place (Groen et al., 2018).

Linguistic dimension

The linguistic dimension of the IPL - 12 measures the perceived ability to speak and read German, covering aspects of fluency and literacy in the language.

Speaking the main language is central for participation in Austrian society. Not having sufficient language proficiency was connected to frustration about not being able to communicate and lower self-worth (Liamputtong & Kurban, 2018). In an Austrian study, frustration was voiced about situations when English was denied as an alternative to German, even though all involved parties were able to speak it (Radinger, 2018). Not being able to speak fluently may create the worry of being judged as unable to have complex thought (Valenta, 2008), which may lead to not communicating at all as a coping mechanism (Kohlbacher, 2017). A British study explored predictors of language proficiency a minimum of four years after arrival and found pre-migration education, age and gender to be important variables. Language learning was particularly hard when people were illiterate, exacerbated by the fact that the learning tools were mainly based on written format. Older people had a harder time learning. Their motivation was also less focused on socially integrating and more on pragmatically navigating everyday life independently. Furthermore, women had worse language proficiency, which was attributed to previous lower education and childcare work that limited opportunities of learning (Morrice et al., 2019). The smartphone plays an important role in managing communication and individual language learning, with translation apps and dictionaries being widely used (Kaufmann, 2018). These quoted studies have in common that they take the need for learning the local language as central and indispensable for integration. A different angle is taken by Radinger (2018), who questions the identification of Austria as a monolingual country and discusses concepts like *translanguaging* and English as lingua franca (ELF) as ways of communicating. These concepts de-territorialise language, give flexibility in grammar rules, focus on pragmatic understanding, and thereby reduce the hierarchical nature of communication. They require active collaboration in meaning making in communication by all parties and equal efforts in establishing a basis for understanding. In opposition to that, simply stating German as the

spoken language, puts the FDPs in a position where they have to one-sidedly make an effort and learn, in order to participate in conversation, which in turn creates the possibility of using language as a tool of discrimination. Language is strongly connected to other aspects of integration and therefore also categorized as a facilitator or barrier of integration in the much cited framework model on integration by Ager and Strang (2008). While much focus is on learning and speaking the language of the receiving country, some studies have researched the experience of FDPs of speaking their mother tongue in public in the receiving country and pointed at the discomfort, faced discrimination and fear of aggression FDPs have reported (Casimiro et al., 2007; Groen et al., 2018).

Integration support by the state is frequently shown through language courses, which are mandatory in Austria, are deemed important to prepare for labour market integration and are combined with 'values and orientation courses' (Geistlinger, 2018). A study by Heinemann (2017) analysed these Austrian courses with a postcolonial and hegemony research perspective as a 'civilising mission in disguise'. The courses conveyed imagined norms of the dominant society, like gender equality and freedom of speech, based on the assumption that Muslim FDPs do not have these, thus strengthening the divide between 'us' and 'them'. The analysis showed the goal of the courses, to be one of forming the FDPs to be economic subjects, in targeting employability; mostly for low skill jobs, considering that B1 is the highest language level offered (Heinemann, 2017). Furthermore, the forming of submissive subjects, in teaching FDPs to be polite, diligent, grateful, and tolerant, created at times a paternalizing and humiliating atmosphere. The language proficiency attainable through such courses is limited (Valenta & Bunar, 2010), next to the lack of higher level courses, another reason for this may be that courses do not take into account different capacities to learn, as they are based on a language level to be completed in a certain time frame. People with lower learning capacities due to illiteracy or mental health problems may fall behind, while strong learners do not have the chance to push ahead (Casimiro et al., 2007; Morrice et al., 2019). An Australian study found that some women did not feel comfortable attending gender mixed classes (Casimiro et al., 2007). In Austria attendance to

the courses is monitored. In case of not attending welfare benefits may be reduced as a

financial sanctioning mechanism (Geistlinger, 2018).

Political dimension

The political dimension of the questionnaire surveys whether respondents have

knowledge about and discuss political topics that are relevant for Austria.

Political integration spans a wider field, from political participation in various forms,

rights, and citizenship. The research on refugee political integration is very scarce, most

research is on political integration of migrants. To participate in a democratic society one

needs political capital, which comprises knowledge, skills, networks and action in the

political field (Magno, 2008). Refugees have fewer political rights than citizens, they are

excluded from active and passive voting rights on all levels. They are free to form

associations, but are not allowed to found parties or register a demonstration in Austria

(Sohler et al., 2009). Thus, participation of refugees can be expected to show different

patterns from native citizens. In Austria informal ways of political participation include

refugee solidarity organisations opposing anti - immigrant politics, which have increasing

participation by FDPs themselves. On a local level refugee community organisations organise

protests mainly around issues of asylum seeker accommodation and forced returns (Sohler

et al., 2009). NGOs by and for refugees have the potential of being a space for empowerment

and finding a voice, as a study with refugee women in the US showed (Magno, 2008). They

provide a chance of nurturing political capital, especially knowledge about the system and

skills like public speaking and leadership abilities. The organisation might also serve as a

stepping stone into formal politics as many respondents showed interest in running for office

once they received the rights to do so. In a similar vein a Swedish study with migrants

showed significant positive effects of affiliation with a political association on political

contact (for example with the media or politicians) and giving political statements (for

example demonstrating or petitioning), and argued that the associations provide training of

civic skills and serve as a pool for political recruitment (Myrberg, 2011). Yet another way of

participating is termed diaspora mobilisation, which describes a political action focused around the political events in the country of origin. Müller-Funk (2016) argued in her analysis of the mobilisation in Paris and Vienna accompanying the revolution in Egypt 2011 - 2013 that diaspora mobilisation typically shows support for different groups in the country of origin or addresses the receiving society to raise awareness and influence wider discourses about human rights or democracy. Refugees in Austria can apply for citizenship after six years of residence, for people with subsidiary protection that is possible only after 15 years of residence (Sohler et al., 2009). Citizenship is an important indicator of inclusion as it gives fully equal rights (Ager & Strang, 2008) and thus, it is at the same time an exclusive label. Community psychology research on citizenship articulates that stigmatisation of certain identities, such as being a FDP, acts as a barrier to participation. The constructionist approach analyses how rights of participation are negotiated in everyday life, following an understanding that citizenship creates an 'imagined community' that is exclusive and determines whose voices will be heard (Stevenson et al., 2015). One much researched right that comes with citizenship is the right to vote. In Austria, migrants with a right to vote, show just as much interest in politics as native Austrians do. While migrants make up a very heterogenous group, there is a tendency of voting centre/left (Filzmaier et al., 2015). A Belgian study comparing voting patterns of Turkish migrants in the receiving and origin country, showed that these differ. While Muslim identity had a significant effect on voting behaviour in Turkey it did not in Belgium. Political deprivation and feelings of political inefficacy are typical predictors of right - wing voting behaviour. While these variables predicted right - wing voting in Turkey it predicted left - wing voting in Belgium. The researchers argued that this can be explained by the position in the group, belonging to the majority in Turkey and to a minority in Belgium (Baysu & Swyngedouw, 2020).

Predictors of Integration

Different variables predict integration outcomes. For this study, four predictors have been extracted from literature to calculate the criterion related validity of the IPL - 12. The predictors length of stay, gender, visa status and mental health are outlined below.

Length of Stay

One of the most robust predictors of integration is length of stay (Harder et al., 2018a). As building a life in a new country after fleeing home is a major challenge, it takes time to adjust. Going through the asylum process can take a long time, setting integration efforts on hold. Experiencing oneself as belonging and not an outsider takes time (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Correa-Velez et al., 2010). The same is true for economic integration, with hurdles of recognition of previous work or reorientation (Ganter, 2019), learning a new language (Morrice et al., 2019) and building new social networks (Strang & Quinn, 2019; Valenta, 2008). Harder et al. (2018a) showed integration scores to be higher the longer a person had already lived in the new country in a previous validation study of the IPL - 12.

Gender

Forced displacement and integration affect the genders differently. In this study the country of origin is Afghanistan, a very patriarchal society, where gender plays a particularly defining role in shaping people's lives (Rasul, 2012). This analysis focuses on men and women only, not addressing the special difficulties and challenges that LGBTQI* FDPs face. Women are raised to be mothers and housewives, they have fewer rights, receive less education, often are forcibly married at a very young age (Groen et al., 2018), depend on men for protection and patronage and many have a history of being the victim of domestic violence and sexual assault with few places to turn to for protection. Especially in areas controlled by the Taliban extreme ruling of the Sharia rids women of all rights understanding them mainly as a temptation and distraction from a service to god (Rashid, 2010, p. 59). The role of men in Afghan society is as the head of the family, providing for the family. A big threat for young men is being kidnapped (Groen et al., 2018) or otherwise forced to give their services to militant groups (Hackl, 2017). Women are disadvantaged before the flight and some scholars argue that this continues in the asylum processes, where there is a bias to downplay gender as a reason for persecution (Peroni, 2018; Spijkerboer, 2018). After migration, gender remains important as it becomes a major task to readjust gender roles in

the new context. Women face many new challenges. They tend to have lower rates of employment than men (Shishehgar et al., 2017; The Expert Council for Integration, 2019) and girls face more barriers than boys achieving in education, because many have no schooling background (Groen et al., 2018). FDP women also tend to have lower levels of language proficiency than men (Cheung & Phillimore, 2017; Morrice et al., 2019). The patriarchal structure may continue in the receiving society. In an Australian interview study, women reported that their husbands continued to have control over the public activities of the women, some even increased their control, because of the perceived threat of living in a non - Muslim country. These structures led to FDP women living more isolated lives than FDP men (Casimiro et al., 2007). James (2010) underlined that women may get sanctioned, if they deviate from traditional gender roles. This threat is heightened with men feeling threatened in their masculinity, not being able to provide. On the other hand, women have the chance of building networks at the school of their children and thus reduce isolation. A chance that FDP men less often have (Ager & Strang, 2008; Cheung & Phillimore, 2017; Hunt, 2008). Muslim women wearing hijab may even face additional challenges, as some research in the US found that women wearing hijab received much more discrimination, threats and aggression by white natives, than Muslim men did. Furthermore, Muslim men were the victims of discrimination more so when they were in company of hijab wearing women. The women of the study reported reducing their activities and places they go in order to feel safer (Cainkar, 2019). But there are also potential opportunities and freedoms for women, for example living independently for the first time in their lives (Hunt, 2008; Shishehgar et al., 2017). As outlined above, gender has been shown to be an important variable influencing FDP integration. However, it has mostly been researched qualitatively with a focus on women and rarely in a quantitative and comparative research design, which makes this study a valuable addition.

Visa Status

Whether a person is an asylum seeker, already received refugee status or only subsidiary protection has significant effects on the opportunities to establish a new life. The

length of asylum procedures determines how long people are waiting with no security and little perspective (Steel et al., 2011). This state of waiting makes building a new life all but impossible, as asylum seekers have limited right to work (AMS Österreich, 2020), limited access to language learning courses (Geistlinger, 2018) and limited freedom of movement (Rosenberger, 2012). They have not yet had a chance to build connections and create places of belonging. Integration is a major task as a refugee, but this is exacerbated for people who only receive temporary protection, as they typically have fewer rights and less integration support. A study comparing permanent and temporary visa holders in Australia found lower levels of English, higher amounts of isolation and worse mental health for temporary visa holders (Steel et al., 2011). Considering the high amounts of mental health problems in refugee populations, Kartal and Kiropoulos (2016) pointed out that in order to recover from traumatic experiences, people need a secure surrounding, which also includes secure residency. Afghanistan has a history of protracted and pervasive violence. Because this civil war and unrest is a more general threat and people are often not individually targeted, Afghans often do not receive refugee status, but only subsidiary protection. In 2016, the EU tried to claim parts of Afghanistan as safe and planned to return 80 000 Afghans to their country of origin (Hackl, 2017). Thus, the visa status is a particularly interesting predictor for this sample.

Mental Health

There is typically higher prevalence of mental health disorders in the FDP population, especially of post - traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression, than in the receiving society and also than in populations who stayed behind and did not flee (Kartal & Kiropoulos, 2016; Miller & Rasmussen, 2017). FDPs are thus a particularly vulnerable group, while also facing major challenges of integrating with a new society. Exposure to war and traumatic events as well as post - migration stressors have shown to be important in explaining the mental health of FDPs. Research linking mental health explicitly to integration is scarce but many of the post - migration stressors discussed in psychological research are indicators of integration as well, such as (un)employment, poverty, (lack of)

safety or navigating resettlement (Miller & Rasmussen, 2017). Having good mental health can be understood as a resource, from which resilience to the difficulties of integration can be drawn. In turn, integration rewards one's mental health positively, producing a circular model (Schick, 2019). Following this logic Miller and Rasmussen (2017) suggested a multiservice approach to mental health needs of FDPs, addressing social and material needs next to classical psychotherapy, to increase effectiveness of treatments. Following is a collation of effects linking mental health and integration. Longer detention and asylum application processes led to worse mental health outcomes (Steel et al., 2011), while changing from temporary asylum seeker to permanent refugee status resulted in an observable jump towards better mental health (Nickerson et al., 2011). Mental health was associated with financial security and appropriate and stable housing (Correa-Velez et al., 2015; Miller & Rasmussen, 2017; Schick, 2019). The loss of identity was frequently described as a displacement challenge and stronger ethnic identity was a predictor for higher wellbeing (Correa-Velez et al., 2015). Mental health affected the ability to learn the new language, as emotional stress made it harder to concentrate (Atanasosaka & Proyer, 2018; Morrice et al., 2019). Family separation (Groen et al., 2018; McMichael et al., 2011) and social isolation (Strang & Quinn, 2019) are also significant risk factors. Mental health difficulties of refugees often last long - term (Bogic et al., 2015). Very little research exists evaluating the effect of interventions, addressing these daily displacement stressors, on mental health outcomes (Miller & Rasmussen, 2017). This study contributes to the so far scarce literature on the direct connection of mental health and integration.

The importance of context

Looking at integration as a two - way process points at two main groups of actors. This is on the one hand, the FDPs and on the other hand, the receiving society. The backgrounds of both need to be considered when talking about integration. In the current study FDPs with an Afghan background living in Austria were interviewed. For this reason, the next subchapters will outline some of the conditions in Afghanistan as well as Austria's

receiving culture and refugee policies. It is important to underline that these two are not homogenous groups but involve many different actors and logics.

Afghan Background

Afghanistan is a country with much diversity in ethnicities, religion, and cultures and a rich history, with Kabul as its capital city. It is a landlocked country with much of its territory covered by mountains. The official language is Dari, which is closely related to the Iranian Farsi (Steel et al., 2011). Additionally, there are a multitude of other languages spoken by different ethnic groups. The majority of Afghans belong to the ethnic group of Sunni Pashtun. Hazara and Qizilbash Shia Muslims are a significant minorities, comprising about 16% of the population (Rasul, 2012). Afghanistan has had a recent history of civil war. In 1978 there was a communist coup d'état, which was the starting point for a following civil war, in which about 5 million Afghans fled the country, about a third of the population, mostly to neighbouring Iran and Pakistan and a further 1 - 1.5 million Afghans were killed. In 1992 the communist government was defeated, leaving a power vacuum for competing mujahedin groups, with the Taliban rising to power in 1996, which led to another 1 million displaced people (Rashid, 2010). After the defeat of the Taliban in 2002 almost six million Afghans came back home hoping to rebuild their lives. Since 2009 the security situation has been deteriorating again, with Taliban and other groups, like the IS gaining a foothold. In 2017 the Taliban controlled about half of the territory and orchestrated frequent attacks on Kabul. The conditions for Afghans in Iran and Pakistan worsened as well, with camps closing down and deportations rising, which is why many decided to look for safety in Europe (Rasuly-Paleczek, 2017). Due to the long - lasting violence and conflict, there is a breakdown of institutions and infrastructure, social structures have grown weak, most Afghans have made traumatic experiences and whole generations have grown up in an atmosphere of fear and distrust. Many have reached a point of disillusionment and lost hope of conditions turning to the better any time soon (Hackl, 2017). Particularly vulnerable are Hazara and other ethnic minorities, who face a lot of violence and discrimination as well as women, who have very few rights, often depending on patronage of men and suffering from domestic as

well as political violence (Hackl, 2017). Voluntary and involuntary migration begin to blur in these conditions, the decisions to flee come from cumulative impact of years of war.

At the start of 2019 44.400 Afghans were living in Austria (The Expert Council for Integration, 2019), with Afghans being among the largest groups of FDPs seeking asylum in Austria. One can categorize four groups of Afghans coming to Europe, unaccompanied minors, who often have grown up in Iran, adults from the south, where the Taliban are strongest, Afghans who have worked for international NGOs who fear revenge, and young and educated Afghans, feeling alienated by the conservative forces in Afghanistan (Rasuly-Paleczek, 2017). Another study explored the characteristics of FDPs from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan coming to Austria in 2015. The Afghan FDPs were on average much younger than the other groups, with over 50% being under 30 years, and 37% under 16 years old. Afghans were educated above the average of their country of origin, but still 25% had no formal education and another 45% only had primary or lower secondary education, women overall had lower education than men. About 90% of men had previous work experience, whereas only 42% of women did, overall motivation was high to learn German and find a job. Surveying religiosity and general attitudes showed that the Afghans interviewed were mostly Muslim, with medium intensity and had more liberal attitudes than their compatriots (Buber-Ennser et al., 2016).

EU's and Austria's receiving culture

The EU set a framework of minimum reception standards of asylum seekers to harmonise reception and prevent a race to the bottom, as many countries implemented more restrictive measures to reduce their attractiveness to asylum seekers. Austria provides minimum welfare for asylum seekers, restricting personal freedoms and thus are not supportive of a dignified life for asylum seekers. Asylum seekers are forcibly dispersed all over the country, in mostly collective accommodation, that resemble total institutions, isolating them from the general society (Rosenberger, 2012). In 2016 the asylum procedure took on average about 12 months (Mitter, 2016). The access to the labour market is open for

refugees and people with subsidiary protection, whereas asylum seekers are restricted to seasonal work (AMS Österreich, 2020). In 2015 Austria has had an all - time high of asylum applications, which has returned to a long - term average by 2018 (The Expert Council for Integration, 2019). In 2017 Austria passed a law on integration, which made German language and Austrian values courses mandatory for refugees and people under subsidiary protection (The Expert Council for Integration, 2019). As many of the FDPs coming to Austria are Muslim it is important to mention, that on the one hand Austria recognises Islam as an equal religion, which is a legacy from the Austro - Hungarian Empire, and on the other hand has a problem of growing islamophobia and a strong right - wing populist movement (Dolezal et al., 2010).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The analysis is focused on evaluating the IPL - 12, to answer the question, whether it allows for measuring integration of FDPs in psychological research. The IPL - 12 has not been used or evaluated for psychological research with FDPs before. The following research questions and hypotheses will be tested to complement the research on integration.

Question 1(Q1): Is the IPL - 12 a reliable measure?

> Hypothesis 1.1 (H1.1): The IPL - 12 shows high reliability, with the exception of the economic subscale (Harder et al., 2018b).

Question 2 (Q2): What is the factor structure of the IPL - 12 and that of the dimensions individually?

> Hypothesis 2.1 (H2.1): The individual dimensions will show construct validity (Harder et al., 2018b), meaning the factor analysis will result in one factor per subscale.

> Hypothesis 2.2 (H2.2): All items will show significant positive correlations with each other.

The factor structure of the concept of integration, will be studied exploratively, as previous research does not support a precise hypothesis.

Question 3 (Q3): Is the IPL - 12 sensitive to predictors of integration?

Hypothesis 3.1 (H3.1): Respondents who have lived in the receiving society for longer will show higher integration scores, than people who have arrived more recently.

Hypothesis 3.2 (H3.2): Women will show lower integration scores than men.

Hypothesis 3.3 (H3.3): Respondents still awaiting their asylum decision will have lowest integration scores and respondents with a temporary visa status will show lower integration scores than people with permanent visa status.

Hypothesis 3.4 (H3.4): Respondents with worse mental health will show lower integration scores than respondents with better mental health.

Methods

Recruitment

Recruitment has been taking place through collaboration with outpatient treatment centres and NGOs informing treatment - seeking Afghan FDPs about the PIAAS project. Recruitment for the PIAAS project started in 2019 and is ongoing. For this analysis data were used that had been gathered before March 2020, before the outbreak of the corona virus put a stop to further testing. Participants received monetary compensation and refunding of travel costs (Knefel et al., 2019).

Design

This quantitative study uses cross - sectional data of the baseline condition of the PIAAS project. The baseline assessment took approximately 90 minutes, all instruments exist in German and Dari versions and were administered in a face – to – face fully structured interview by a trained psychologist and an interpreter. This assessment situation was used to address language difficulties and illiteracy, as well as to be sensitive in addressing traumatic experiences and mental health problems. The Institutional Review

Board (IRB) of the University of Vienna granted ethical approval (reference numbers 00356 and 00445), the study is furthermore registered with the Internet Portal of the German Clinical Trials Register (DRKS; registration number: DRK500016538). Previous to participation written consent was obtained from participants, after explaining details of the study (Knefel et al., 2019).

Sample

The sample consists of Afghan FDPs, who are currently living in Austria. All have scored above a threshold for severity of mental health issues, 12 or higher on the refugee health screener (RHS - 15), or 5 or higher on the distress scale of the RHS - 15 (Knefel et al., 2019) and are on a waiting list for professional treatment. Exclusion criteria are requiring other psychological treatments, cognitive impairment and current trauma - focused treatment (Knefel et al., 2019). Data of N = 59 respondents were available for this analysis. N = 4 were excluded from the analysis, because they answered none or very few of the questions of the IPL - 12. For the analysis, the remaining n = 55 (M_{age} = 32.98, SD = 13.16, 18 - 63 years) respondents were included. Of the respondents n = 19 were women, n = 36 were men. Descriptive statistics on marital status, children, living situation, education are reported next. N = 30 (54.5%) were married, n = 21 (38.2%) were single, n = 1 (1.8%) lived with a partner and the remaining n = 3 (5.5%) were divorced. N = 27 (49.1%) had children, n = 27(49.1%) did not have children, 1 person did not answer. About half (49.1%) lived in their own flats, 25.5% lived in a refugee shelter, 12.7% in a flat-share and 12.7% in other private accommodation. 30.9% had no education, 25.5% had received primary education, 36.3% received secondary education, 3.6% went to university and another 3.6% attended a vocational college.

Instruments

IPL - 12

The IPL - 12 is a self – report tool that measures integration with 12 items on six subscales, each with two items, psychological, navigational, economic, social, linguistic and political. The internal consistencies of the subscales, as reported in a previous study, vary

from Cronbach's alpha α = 0.32 for the economic scale, to α = 0.92 for the linguistic scale, there is no information on the reliability of the scale at large (Harder et al., 2018b). The items have varying format, each with a score ranging from 1 to 5. An example item of the psychological subscale is: "Wie stark fühlen Sie sich mit Österreich verbunden?" (How connected do you feel with Austria). Possible answers range from "Ich empfinde eine sehr enge Verbindung" (5 = I feel a very strong connection) to "Ich empfinde überaupt keine Verbindung" (1 = I feel no connection at all). The scale has a minimum score of 12 and a maximum score of 60, which can be rescaled to an integration score ranging from 0 to 1 (Harder et al., 2018a).

GHQ - 28

The General Health Questionnaire 28 (GHQ – 28) is used to assess mental health. It is a self-report tool, that has been used in various cultural backgrounds, with 28 items, measuring somatic symptoms, anxiety and insomnia, social dysfunction, and severe depression. Items like "Haben Sie sich richtig wohl und gesund gefühlt?" (Did you feel thoroughly well and healthy?) are answered on a Likert scale from 0 = "gar nicht" (not at all) to 3 = "sehr stark" (very much). The scale allows for a total score as well as subscale scores (Goldberg et al., 1997). The tool showed high internal consistency with Cronbach's Alpha at α = 0.97 and high validity in an evaluation study with an Iranian sample (Ebrahimi et al., 2007).

Length of stay, gender, and visa status

Length of stay, gender and visa status were assessed as part of the demographic data. For gender, the choices male (n = 36, 65.5%) and female (n = 19, 34.5%) were assessed. Length of stay was measured in years since the arrival in Austria. Participants at the point of assessment had stayed in Austria M = 5.8 (SD = 4.95; 0.4 - 30) years, a majority of 61.8% had been in Austria between three and four years. Visa status included the categories of refugee/received asylum (blue card; 29.1%), subsidiary protection (grey card; 20%), humanitarian visa (0%), suspension of deportation (0%), asylum seeker (green card; 7.3%), asylum seeker in appeal procedure (34.5%), citizen (5.5%) and other or unknown visa status

(3.6%). These categories were collated for the analysis into three categories of permanent residence (refugee, citizen, other; 38.2%), temporary visa after asylum process (subsidiary protection, humanitarian visa, suspension of deportation; 20%), pending asylum decision (asylum seekers; 41.8%). The category of other was added to the permanent category, because both cases had been in Austria for 11 and 19 years respectively, forming the upper range of the spectrum. Thus, the assumption was made that they had a permanent visa and would also stay in the future.

Statistical Evaluation Methods

The analysis was conducted with SPSS 21. Firstly, the data were analysed for missing values, in that process four cases were excluded, who failed to answer all or most of the questions of the IPL - 12.

Analysis of missing data

A missing data analysis was run. For the IPL - 12 two items showed missing values. Item 3 had two missing values; Item 5 had one missing value. Both were imputed with the median of the respective item. The GHQ - 28 showed three cases that had not answered between two and six items. These were excluded from the multiple regression analysis only, as this was the only part of the analysis relying on the GHQ - 28 data and kept for the remaining analyses.

Item recoding and scale formation

The values of the GHQ were originally entered incorrectly, having assigned values of one, two, four and five which were converted to a Likert scale (0 - 3), the polarity of items was changed (items: 1, 15, 17-21) and scores for the GHQ - 28 and its subscales were added up. For the IPL – 12 the recoding happened according to instructions of the authors of the scale (Harder et al., 2018b). The polarity of items was changed (items: 1, 2, 9, 10, 12). For the IPL - 12, Item 5 underwent a process of setting the answers on household income into relation to household size (e.g. equation 1).

$$\frac{average\ of\ the\ income\ bracket}{\sqrt{Houshold\ size}} \tag{1}$$

In a second step, values (1 - 5) were assigned in relation to average net household income (anhi) of Austria, as can be seen in table 1. The average net household income for Austria was retrieved from Statistik Austria (2020) and was 36,322 € in 2018.

Table 1

Calculation for household income scoring

Score	Calculation	Range
1	$[0; \frac{anhi}{3}]$	$[0; 12,107.33]$
2	$[\frac{anhi}{3}; \frac{anhi}{1.5}]$	$[12,107.34; 24,214.66]$
3	$[\frac{anhi}{1.5}; anhi]$	$[24,214.67; 36,322]$
4	$[anhi; anhi + (\frac{anhi}{3})]$	$[36,322.01; 48,429.33]$
5	$[>anhi + (\frac{anhi}{3})]$	$[> 48,429.33]$

Note. Anhi = average net household income of Austria in 2018.

The 11 categories of Item 6 (employment situation) got assigned values according to the manual of one, three or five. The values of the IPL - 12 and its subscales were added up. A further rescaling of the IPL - 12 scores to range from 0 - 1 was left out.

Analysis of reliability

The reliabilities of the IPL - 12 and the GHQ - 28 were assessed with Cronbach's α. For the two - item subscales of the IPL - 12 Spearman-Brown was used, as is recommended by Eisinga et al. (2013).

Exploratory factor analysis

The dimensionality of the questionnaire and its individual dimensions were assessed separately, each with an exploratory factor analysis (EFA), which is standard procedure to explore the factorial validity of questionnaires (Field, 2009). To determine the number of factors, different cut-off signifiers were deployed, the Eigenvalue, the Scree Plot and parallel analysis. In case of multiple factors Oblimin rotation would be used to determine the factor structure, because of the expected correlation of the dimensions. Because the assumptions of

metric and normally distributed data were violated an alternative EFA was calculated using the program FACTOR (2006, updated 2020), that bases the EFA on polychoric correlation matrices, rather than Pearson correlations, which takes the ordinal data structure into account. The factor analysis of two – item subscales is statistically very unlikely to result in anything other than one factor per subscale and thus is expected to not create much additional information, it is conducted nonetheless to increase comparability with the previous validation study of the IPL, which ran factor analyses only on a subscale level. Overall, the robustness of the analysis is limited by the relatively small size of the sample.

Multiple regression analysis

The criterion-related validity was assessed using multiple regression with length of stay, gender, visa status and mental health serving as predictors for the integration outcome. The dichotomous and polytomous predictors of gender (1 = female; 2 = male) and visa status (0 = permanent, 1 = temporary, 2 = pending) were dummy coded. The variance inflation factor (VIF) was used to assure that intercorrelations between the predictors were within acceptable range. The multiple regression analysis would have needed 104+k = 104 + 4 = 108 participants for the robust analysis of the influence of individual predictors (Field, 2009, p. 223), this was not met, due to the interruption of the assessments.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The achieved IPL - 12 score ranged from 17 to 47. The average score result was $M = 30.25$ ($SD = 7.41$) for the overall scale. For the items, the score ranged from 1 to 5, with the exception of item 5 (household income) ranging from 1 to 2 only, the average scores ranged from $M = 1.18$ ($SD = 0.39$) for the household income to $M = 3.64$ ($SD = 1.1$) for the felt connection to Austria. Descriptive statistics for the individual items are summarized in table 2. The variance of the data was very low for item five (Household income) $s = 0.15$. The GHQ - 28 scores for this sample ranged from 18 to 80, the average score was $M = 44.17$ ($SD = 11.15$). The subscale scores ranged from 1 to 21, for this sample the average scores were $M =$

10.31 (*SD* = 3.79) for the somatic subscale, *M* = 8.00 (*SD* = 3.69) for the anxiety and

insomnia subscale, *M* = 15.42 (*SD* = 3.6) for the social dysfunctionality subscale, *M* = 10.44

(*SD* = 5.00) for the severe depression subscale.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for IPL - 12

Item	*M*	*SD*	*Min.*	*Max.*
1. connection to Austria	3.64	1.10	1	5
2. feeling as an outsider	3.04	1.20	1	5
3. finding a doctor	3.55	1.37	1	5
4. finding a job	2.02	1.27	1	5
5. household income	1.18	0.39	1	2
6. employment situation	1.84	1.32	1	5
7. dinner with Austrians	2.47	1.35	1	5
8. phone contact with Austrians	2.33	1.33	1	5
9. reading ability	2.65	1.19	1	5
10. speaking ability	2.89	1.13	1	5
11. political discussion	2.09	1.28	1	5
12. political knowledge	2.56	1.14	1	5

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; Min. = minimum score; Max. = maximum score.

Reliability analysis

Cronbach's α for the IPL – 12 was = .75. Assessing the two item subscales the

Spearman Brown formula was used. The reliability of the psychological subscale = -.04, of

the navigational subscale = .54, of the economic subscale = -.01, of the social subscale = .81,

of the linguistic subscale = .84 and of the political subscale = .77. The negative reliabilities

resulted from close to zero correlation between the two items and signal that the two items

do not measure the same construct. Reliability is typically considered to be acceptable

above .7, so the subscales of social, linguistic and political integration can be considered

reliable. Considering that the reliability is influenced by the number of items, in the direction that more items result in higher reliability, for short scales a lower reliability score, as for the navigational subscale, may still be considered reliable with some caution (Field, 2009, p. 675).

Exploratory factor analysis

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA), using principal axis factoring was conducted on the 12 items. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, *KMO* = .72 which was above the acceptable limit of 0.5 (Field, 2009). An initial analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues for each factor in the data. Five factors had eigenvalues over the Kaiser's criterion (eigenvalue > 1), all 12 factors had eigenvalues higher than randomly generated data in a parallel analysis and the Scree plot suggested only one factor had to be extracted. While it is generally agreed that parallel analysis is the best criterion for deciding how many factors to retain, it does not make sense to apply in this case, as it would lead to no condensation in the data. Furthermore, it is less powerful with small samples like this one. The Kaiser's criterion is often criticised for leading to an over extraction of factors but is typically accurate when the number of variables is less than 30 and the communalities after extraction are all greater than 0.7 (Field, 2009, p. 638). As only two of the 12 communalities were larger than 0.7 in this analysis and the eigenvalues of the factors two to five were only marginally higher than one (ranging from 1.35 to 1.09) the Kaiser's criterion was dismissed. The scree plot showed an inflexion on the second factor and thus justified retaining only one factor. The factor analysis was rerun forcing the extraction of one factor with an eigenvalue of 3.94, explaining 32.86% of the variance. Table 3 shows the factor loadings. The significance of the loadings cannot be tested for an exploratory factor analysis. Typically loadings over 0.3 are considered significant, but this is dependent on the sample size, and should not be applied in a small sample as this. Field (2009, p. 645) suggested that for a loading to be considered significant the variable needs to explain a minimum of 16% of the variance of the factor. This is the case if the squared loading is > 0.4. Taking this measure to the current analysis only the items 7 (dinner with Austrians), 8

(phone contacts with Austrians), 9 (reading ability), 10 (speaking ability) and 12 (political

understanding) had factor loadings that could be considered significant. The reliability of the

scale is acceptable with Cronbach's α = .75 (Field, 2009, p. 681), the analysis further found

that the reliability of the scale would be improved by removing those same items that were

not considered to be loading significantly on the factor. The order of removal is item 2

(feeling as an outsider), 1 (connection to Austria), 5 (house hold income), 3 (find a doctor), 4

(find a job), 6 (employment situation) and 11 (political discussion), resulting in a reliability of

Cronbach's α = .85 for the remaining five item scale.

Table 3

Factor loadings for EFA based on Pearson correlation

Item	Loading
1. connection to Austria	.133
2. feeling as an outsider	-.069
3. finding a doctor	.277
4. finding a job	.268
5. household income	.022
6. employment situation	.471
7. dinner with Austrians	.660*
8. phone contact with Austrians	.696*
9. reading ability	.844*
10. speaking ability	.844*
11. political discussion	.487
12. political knowledge	.688*

Notes. Extraction method: principal axis factoring; five iterations; one factor extracted; * (loading)²
> .4, 16% of the variance; considered significant

While it is common practice to use EFA for evaluating questionnaires, this is often

difficult as EFA based on Pearson correlations requires metric data, which is not the case for

questionnaires with Likert scoring, especially with five or fewer options to answer. The

ordinal data create more homogeneity in the data, which leads to lower Pearson correlations, which in turn leads to underestimating the correlation and consequently underestimating the factor loadings (Holgado–Tello et al., 2010). This is a problem that presents itself for this analysis too. An alternative to the common analysis as presented above is an EFA based on a matrix of polychoric correlations, rather than Pearson correlations, which are better suited for ordinal data (Holgado–Tello et al., 2010). An EFA with polychoric correlations was run with the program FACTOR (Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2006, updated 2020) using the method of extraction of unweighted least squares (RULS). A matrix of polychoric and Pearson correlations can be seen in table 4. The polychoric correlation matrix showed overall similar but slightly higher correlation estimates than the Pearson correlations.

Table 4

Polychoric and Pearson correlations of IPL - 12 items

	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7	I8	I9	I10	I11	I12
I1	1	-.02	.12	-.02	-.02	-.09	.09	.12	.10	.12	.14	.12
I2	.145	1	-.13	.06	-.21	-.02	-.16	-.01	-.12	-.09	.08	.03
I3	.29	.06	1	.37	-.09	.07	.23	.24	.27	.24	-.04	.18
I4	.11	.20	.54	1	-.01	.19	.06	.26	.24	.14	.14	.12
I5	.20	-.05	.04	.13	1	-.01	-.10	-.05	.02	.09	.04	.10
I6	.02	.16	.24	.43	.24	1	.38	.41	.42	.29	.24	.27
I7	.22	-.01	.40	.26	.11	.55	1	.69	.49	.52	.23	.32
I8	.24	.15	.39	.44	.16	.58	.77	1	.53	.45	.26	.39
I9	.23	.07	.38	.45	.24	.62	.60	.65	1	.73	.35	.60
I10	.24	.06	.38	.34	.31	.47	.63	.57	.80	1	.38	.60
I11	.29	.23	.14	.30	.26	.44	.40	.43	.51	.53	1	.63
I12	.26	.18	.34	.29	.32	.45	.44	.52	.72	.71	.74	1

Note. Pearson correlations are above the diagonal and polychoric correlations below the diagonal.

The Kaiser – Meyer - Olkin measure again verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, *KMO* = .74, which again was above the acceptable threshold of 0.5 (Field, 2009). A parallel analysis was run comparing the IPL - 12 data with randomly generated data. Only the first factor explained more variation than the generated data, thus the decision to extract only one factor is supported. The extracted factor had an eigenvalue of 5.20 explaining 43.3% of the variance in the data. Table 5 shows the factor loadings, which were all higher than in the previous analysis using Pearson correlation as a basis for calculation.

Table 5

Factor loadings for EFA with polychoric correlations

Item	Loading
1: connection to Austria	.308
2: feeling as an outsider	.164
3: finding a doctor	.474
4: finding a job	.507*
5: household income	.298
6: employment situation	.663*
7: dinner with Austrians	.719*
8: phone contact with Austrians	.782*
9: reading ability	.873*
10: speaking ability	.822*
11: political discussion	.648*
12: political knowledge	.782*

Note. Extraction method: Robust Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (RDWLS), one factor extracted;
* *(loading)² > .4, 16% of the variance; considered significant

Again, applying the criterion of squared loading > .4 for an item to be considered significant to the factor, three extra items (item 4, find a job; item 6, employment situation; item 11, political discussion) met that criterion. Resulting in eight items loading significantly on the factor, item 4 (find a job) = .51, item 6 (employment situation) = .66, item 7 (dinner

with Austrians) = .72, item 8 (phone contact with Austrians) = .78, item 9 (reading ability) =

0.87, item 10 (speaking ability) = .82, item 11 (political discussion) = .65 and item 12

(political knowledge) = .78.

Exploratory factor analysis of the subscales

      An EFA was calculated for the individual subscales. For all the subscales the Kaiser –

Meyer - Olkin measure indicated that the data was right on the border of adequacy for the

analysis, *KMO* = .50. For the psychological subscale one factor was extracted, with an

eigenvalue of 1.02 explaining 50.10% of the variance, only marginally more than the second

factor with 49.90%. Item one loaded with -.13 on the factor and item two with .13. Both

loadings were not significant. For the navigational subscale one factor was extracted with an

eigenvalue of 1.37 explaining 68.32% of the variance. Both items had factor loadings of .61.

The squared factor loadings were at .37 below the cut - off of .4 and therefore not significant.

One factor was extracted for the economic subscale with an eigenvalue of 1.01 explaining

50.66% of the variance, again the extracted factor explained only marginally more variance

than the second factor (49.34%). The factor loadings were not significant at .11 and -.11. One

factor was extracted for the social subscale with an eigenvalue of 1.69 explaining 84.31% of

the variance. Both items had factor loadings of .83, the squared loadings showed significance

with .69 > .4. For the linguistic subscale one factor was extracted with an eigenvalue of 1.73

explaining 86.35% of the variance. Both items had factor loadings of .85, the squared

loadings showed significance with .72 > .4. In the last analysis for the political subscale again

one factor was extracted, with and eigenvalue of 1.63 explaining 81.34 % of the variance.

Both items loaded with .79 on the factor. The squared loadings were .62 > .4 and therefore

significant.

Multiple Regression

The multiple regression analysis was calculated with the variables length of stay, gender, visa

status and mental health predicting the outcome variable integration. The analysis was run

with *n* = 52, because as described above an additional three cases were excluded, because

they had between two and six missing values in the GHQ - 28. The GHQ - 28 then showed internal consistency of α = .81. Testing analysis requirements showed significant outliers. While the standardised residuals were within the acceptable range (*Std. Residual Min.* = -2.19, *Std. Residual Max.* = 1.88), the leverage = .395 was above the cut - off point for significant outliers $((k + 1) \div N) \times 3 = ((4 + 1) \div 52) \times 3 = .28$, the Mahalanobis distance = 20.155 too was above the threshold of 11 for N ≥ 30, while cook's distance = .13 was acceptable below the threshold value of 1. Case numbers 12, 15 and 52 were excluded from further analysis after identifying them as outliers in the variables mental health and length of stay. The analysis was rerun with *n* = 49, the standardised residuals were still within in the acceptable range (*Std. Residual Min.* = -2.31, *Std. Residual Max.* = 2.03), the leverage = .23 was now below the cut - off point = .28, the Mahalanobis distance had shrunk to 11.05 and cook's distance = .25 was still acceptable. The data met the assumption on collinearity, multicollinearity was not problematic (gender, VIF = 1.2; length of stay, VIF = 1.1; visa status, VIF = 1.0; mental health, VIF = 1.3). The histogram of standardised residuals indicated approximately normally distributed errors. The scatterplot of standardised residuals showed that assumptions of homogeneity of variance and linearity were met. The analysis was run with a forced entry approach. The regression equation was significant $F(4, 44)$ = 2.91, *p* = .032, with an R^2 of .21, $R^2_{adjusted}$ = .14. The predicted integration is equal to 26.60 + 7.18 (gender) − 0.72 (length of stay) − 1.78 (visa status) - 0.07 (mental health), where gender is coded as 1 = female, 2 = male, length of stay is measured in years, visa status was coded in 0 = permanent, 1 = temporary, 2 = pending and mental health was measured with the GHQ score. The only significant predictor of the integration outcome was gender, *b* = 7.18, t(44) = 3.00, *p* = .004. Whereas all other predictors were far of significance, with length of stay *b* = -.72, t(44) = -1.34, *p* = .189; visa status *b* = -1.78, *t*(44) = -1.37, *p* = .179 and mental health *b* = -.07, t(44) = -0.68, *p* = .500. The analysis was rerun again as a simple regression including only the significant predictor, gender. Gender still significantly predicted integration scores *b* = 6.34, t(47) = 2.90, *p* = .006 and also a significant amount of the variance in the outcome integration R^2 = .15, $R^2_{adjusted}$ = .13, $F(1, 47)$ = 8.44, *p* = .006.

The integration scores of male participants (M = 32.27, SD = 7.95) were significantly higher

$t(47)$ = -2.90, p = .006 than integration scores of female participants (M = 25.94, SD = 5.10).

As the results of the multiple regression were not as expected two alleys of follow up

exploratory analysis were pursued. One was exploring whether the other predictors

remained insignificant on a subscale level. The second one was to explore the underlying

drivers for the predictor gender. For this, six multiple regression analyses were run, again

with a forced entry approach, with the subscale scores as the outcome variable.

Table 6

Results of the regression analyses

Predictors	B	SE	df	β	Sig.
Multiple Regression					
intercept	26.59	6.49	4		.000
gender	7.18	2.39	4	.44	.004*
length of stay	-.72	.54	4	-.19	.189
visa status	-1.78	1.30	4	-.21	.179
mental health	-.07	.11		-.09	.500
Simple Regression					
intercept	19.60	3.79	1		.000
gender	6.34	2.18	1	.39	.006*

Note. $R^2_{adjusted}$ for Multiple Regression = .14; $R^2_{adjusted}$ for simple Regression = .13; B = regression coefficient; SE = standard error; df = degrees of freedom; β = standardised regression coefficient; sig. = significance of predictor; * p < .01

The analysis n =49 was first run for the outcome variable psychological integration.

The residual statistics were acceptable, cook's distance < 1, leverage = .23 was below the cut -

off value = $\left((4 + 1) \div 49\right) \times 3 = $ .31 and Mahalanobis distance was still at 11.05, which will

remain the same for the following five analyses. The VIF remained the same as in the

previous multiple regression analysis. For the psychological subscale the regression equation

was not significant $F(4, 44)$ = 0.63, p =.646, with R^2 = .05. None of the individual predictors

showed significance. The next analysis was run for the outcome variable of navigational integration. The regression equation again was not significant $F(4, 44) = 0.25$, $p = .907$, with $R^2 = .02$. None of the individual predictors were significant. Running the analysis for the outcome variable economic integration the regression equation was significant $F(4, 44) = 3.11$, $p = .024$ with $R^2 = .22$ and $R^2_{adjusted} = .15$. The regression equation was 4.13 + 0.87 (gender) - 0.12 (length of stay) − 0.61 (visa status) − 0.03 (mental health). Two predictors were significant gender with $b = 0.87$, $t(44) = 2.16$, $p = .036$ and visa status with $b = -0.61$, t(44) = -2.78, $p = .008$. indicating men (= 2) having higher economic integration scores than women (= 1) and permanent visa holders (= 0) having higher integration scores than people in the temporary (= 1) or pending (= 2) category. The multiple regression on the outcome variable social integration was significant $F(4, 44) = 5.34$, $p = .001$, with $R^2 = .33$ and $R^2_{adjusted} = .27$. The regression equation was 3.94 + 2.44 (gender) - .41 (length of stay) - .35 (visa status) - .02 (mental health). The two significant predictors were gender $b = 2.44$, $t(44) = 3.4$, $p = .001$ and length of stay $b = -0.41$, t(44) = -2.54, $p = .015$. This indicated men having higher social integration scores than women and curiously that a shorter length of stay predicted a higher social integration outcome. The multiple regression equation for the linguistic integration outcome was significant $F(4, 44) = 2.99$, $p = .029$ with $R^2 = .21$ and $R^2_{adjusted} = .14$. The equation was 2.33 + 2.16 (gender) - .11 (length of stay) - .43 (visa status) + .01 (mental health) with gender being the only significant predictor $b = 2.16$, t(44) = 3.15, $p = .003$. The last analysis was for the outcome variable political integration, which was overall not significant $F(4, 44) = 1.6$, $p = .191$ with $R^2 = .13$ and $R^2_{adjusted} = .05$. A summary of the exploratory regression analyses can be found in table 7.

Table 7

Results of the exploratory regression analyses on subscale outcomes

Predictors	*B*	*SE*	*df*	*β*	Sig.
Psychological R^2 = .05					
intercept	5.53	1.49	4		.00
gender	-.11	.55	4	-.03	.85
length of stay	.18	.12	4	.23	.15
visa status	.04	.30	4	.03	.88
mental health	.01	.02	4	.06	.68
Navigational R^2 = .02					
intercept	5.82	1.98	4		.01
gender	.34	.73	4	.08	.64
length of stay	-.06	.17	4	-.06	.72
visa status	.12	.40	4	.05	.77
mental health	-.02	.03	4	-.08	.58
Economic R^2 = .22*					
intercept	4.13	1.09	4		.00
gender	.87	.40	4	.32	.04*
length of stay	-.12	.09	4	-.19	.20
visa status	-.61	.22	4	-.42	.01**
mental health	-.03	.02	4	-.26	.07
Social R^2 = .33**					
intercept	3.94	1.95	4		.05
gender	2.44	.72	4	.46	.00**
length of stay	-.41	.16	4	-.34	.02*
visa status	-.35	.40	4	-.12	.38
mental health	-.02	.03	4	-.07	.57

Linguistic R^2 = .21*					
intercept	2.33	1.86	4		.22
gender	2.16	.68	4	.46	.00**
length of stay	-.11	.16	4	-.10	.50
visa status	-.43	.37	4	-.17	.26
mental health	.01	.03	4	.06	.67
Political R^2 = .13					
intercept	4.84	1.98	4		.02
gender	1.48	.73	4	.31	.05
length of stay	-.21	-.17	4	-.19	.22
visa status	-.56	.40	4	-.22	.17
mental health	-.03	.03	4	-.11	.44

Note. R^2= explained variation of the outcome variable; B = regression coefficient; SE = standard error; df = degrees of freedom; β = standardised regression coefficient; sig. = significance of predictor; * p < .05, ** p < .01

For the further exploration of the predictor gender t – tests were run comparing integration scores of men and women on the subscale level. Only the social $t(47)$ = -4.52, p < .001 and the linguistic subscales $t(47)$ = -3.25, p =.002 showed significant differences between the genders. Women more often had no education at all (54.5%) compared to men (24.3%), but men too had mainly low levels of education as can be seen in graph 1. Nonetheless a Fisher's exact test comparing education across gender did not show a significant difference p = .762. The Fisher's exact test was used instead of a χ² - test, because the majority of cells had an expected value smaller than five, thus violating the χ² - test requirements. Of the whole sample only one woman (5%) said she was not working and staying at home. And while also only one woman actually had a job compared to 4 (11.1%) of the men, a large proportion of women (30%) were actively looking for a job.

Graph 1

Gender differences in education
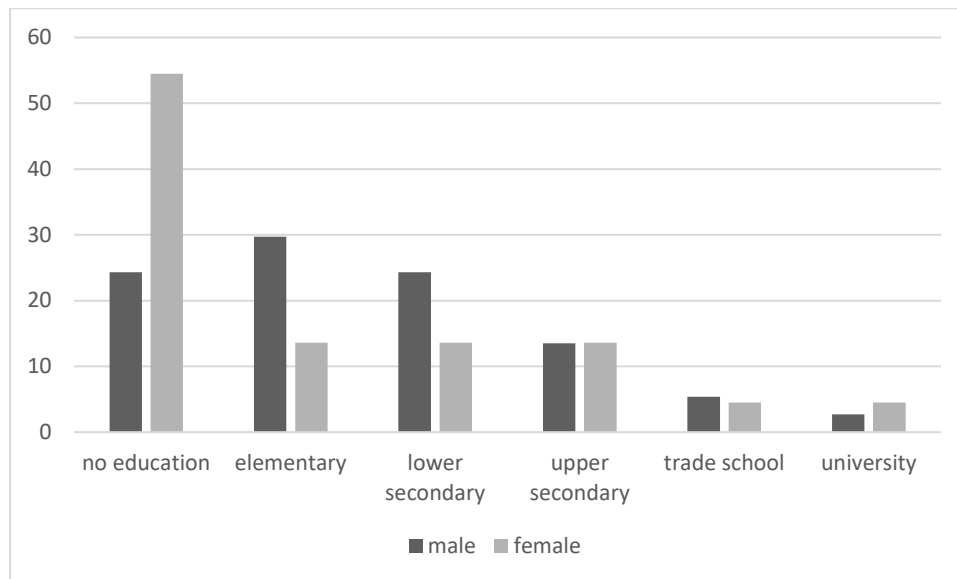
Note. Measures in percent.

Discussion

The discussion will follow roughly two lines of criticism, firstly criticising the item content based on theoretical background and secondly interpreting empirical results on the IPL - 12's validity and reliability. Furthermore, limitations of the study and ideas for future research are discussed.

Criticism of item content

In the theoretical background, the dimensions of integration, that is the aspects of integration that the questionnaire differentiates, were outlined. The review of the literature showed how complicated, intertwined, incomplete and normative the concept of integration is. The IPL - 12 seeks to reduce the complexity and to be a tool for pragmatically measuring and comparing integration across different migrant groups (Harder et al., 2018a). Inevitable in the construction of such a tool is the superficiality of the items. The following paragraphs will critically analyse some aspects of the item content.

The IPL – 12 defines integration as "the degree to which immigrants have the knowledge and capacity to build a successful, fulfilling life in the host society" (Harder et al., 2018a, p. 11484). The aspect of building a fulfilling life as a part of integration is important in this definition as it recognises migrants as human beings with desires and motivation but falls short in the construction of the item content. The IPL - 12 for example only assesses the number of contacts with Austrians and is neither interested in the quality of these contacts nor in the relationships with family or coethnic people. This kind of item suggests that a fulfilling life depends more highly on contact with Austrians than contact with coethnic people or family. Firstly, having this implicit value judgement in the item is problematic, as it refers to the idea of assimilation and a certain expectation of how migrants are to behave. Secondly, research showed that refugees integrate more easily as a family than alone (McMichael et al. 2011; Correa-Velez et al. 2010) and that coethnic communities can be a support when learning to navigate the new place (Hughes 2019; Valenta 2008; Ager und Strang 2008). The label 'Austrians' is also problematic as it raises the question of who qualifies as 'Austrian' and who the respondents to the questionnaire perceive as 'Austrian'. Is this a group of people in Austria without a migrant background in opposition to the migrants that are faced with the questionnaire, may this be anyone with an Austrian passport, anyone who appears 'Austrian' or self-identifies as 'Austrian'? If the intention of the item is to inquire whether the respondent made contact with the wider society an alternative phrasing might be asking about contacts with people outside their family or of different ethnic background. The understanding of integration as leading a fulfilled life in the receiving society is further weakened by focusing disproportionately much on labour market integration in an overall reduced tool. The IPL - 12 has three items on labour market integration two in the economic subscale and an additional one on the perceived ability to find a job. This suggests that the IPL - 12 follows the mainstream understanding of integration, that frames FDPs either as a welfare burden or useful for the demands of the labour market (Heinemann, 2017). The item in the economic dimension measuring the amount of income is an example of framing integration as the usefulness of FDPs for the

labour market as it suggests that higher income indicates better integration. This translates such that a person with a higher paying job would be considered better integrated than a person with a lower paying job, when all other variables remain the same. Focusing on income thus creates a bias towards the economic value of FDPs for the receiving country. While research generally agrees upon the centrality of having a job for integration (Ganter 2019), it is important to create items on labour market integration that reduce this bias. An example of that may be that items on labour market integration look at the fit of qualification and job requirements or the opportunities for education, as the overrepresentation of FDPs in low income jobs is a known problem and cause of frustration for FDPs (Gericke et al. 2018; Ager und Strang 2008; Buber-Ennser et al. 2016).

A second criticism is that the IPL - 12 does not live up to the standard of understanding integration as a two-way process. One central aspect that most research agrees upon is that integration requires action and commitment by the receiving society as well as the FDPs (Ager und Strang 2008). The IPL - 12 focuses exclusively on the steps and efforts made by FDPs towards integration, suggesting their ability to integrate is solely their own responsibility. The item on whether the respondent feels to be an outsider is the only item where the role of the wider society comes into play, albeit only implicitly. To make it explicit, the item could be rephrased into asking about whether they feel welcomed. Another example of the IPL – 12 ignoring the structures with which the FDPs are met, shows in the political dimension, which assesses knowledge about the politics of Austria, not acknowledging that FDPs have limited political rights and are therefore structurally excluded (Sohler et al. 2009). A third example of the IPL – 12 focusing almost exclusively on the efforts made by FDPs comes to light in the linguistic dimension, which assesses the ability to speak and read German. Again, these items do not consider opportunities provided by state and society, such as language courses or the chances to speak and improve their German in everyday interactions. While the IPL - 12 is a self-report scale to be filled out by FDPs and

other migrants, it would still be possible to assess the perceived accommodation and help received by the receiving society and state.

Lastly the questionnaire has a scoring system that weighs all items equally. This means that perceiving the task of finding a doctor to be very easy is valued just as much as never feeling to be an outsider in Austria or having had 14 or more phone contacts with Austrians in the last four weeks. These values are not successfully defended or explained by the author. Furthermore, the IPL - 12 allows for calculating an integration score across all dimensions. Each item scores between one and five points, leading to a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 60 points across all dimensions. The scoring rule continues to rescale these points to a value between 0 and 1, which implies easier interpretability. It problematically suggests that a 0 means no integration and 1 complete integration. This interpretation is not true, as integration is neither a linear process that is taken step by step, nor is it ever complete (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; McPherson, 2010). A person is possibly only fully integrated once the question of integration does not arise anymore.

Thus, if researchers decide to employ the IPL – 12 for their research because of its easy and highly economic application, the interpretation of the integration score should be done carefully, with an awareness for the limitations and shortcomings of the tool.

Summary of results

The analysis of reliability for the IPL - 12 is acceptable with α = .75. The reliabilities for the two - item subscales vary drastically, with the psychological and economic subscale showing reliabilities around zero, the navigational subscale at .54 and the social, linguistic, and political subscales showed reliabilities above .76. The exploratory factor analysis resulted in one factor getting extracted, but only about half the items load significantly on it. Rerunning the EFA based on polychoric correlations, results in the factor explaining a larger amount of variance in the data and overall slightly higher loadings with eight of 12 items loading significantly on the factor. The items of the psychological subscale appear to be the

least relevant to the factor. Running an EFA for the individual subscales resulted in one factor being extracted for each subscale, but only for the social, linguistic and political subscales did the items load significantly on their factor. The multiple regression analysis showed that only the predictor gender explained a significant proportion of the variance of the integration outcome. An exploration of the predictors influences on the integration outcome on a subscale level showed that gender explained a significant amount of variance for the economic, social and linguistic integration. Visa status explained a significant amount of variance of economic integration and length of stay of social integration, albeit against the expected direction, such that shorter length of stay predicted higher social integration.

Interpretation of results

Interpretation of reliability analysis

The hypotheses for research question one regarding reliability can only partially be supported. While the scale overall reaches acceptable reliability some of the subscales show reliabilities around zero, thus the hypothesis (H1.1) that the subscale reliabilities will be acceptable, with the exception of the economic subscale, has to be rejected. Psychological and economic subscale show the worst results. The economic subscale in the previous validation study showed the lowest reliability at α = .32 (Harder et al., 2018b), in this study the reliability, more specifically the internal consistency, calculated with the spearman-brown formula, is lower again at -.01. that is essentially zero. Indicating that income and employment situation do not measure the same concept. The results may be partly attributable to the extremely low variance in the data, with most respondents scoring one on income and employment situation also being categorical data, offering only scores of one, three and five as options. For the psychological subscale the internal consistency was at α = .66 in the previous validation study with migrants (Harder et al., 2018b). That in this analysis with FDPs the internal consistency is around zero, may indicate that feeling connected to the country and feeling to be included or excluded in society are two different aspects of integration and do not show the same results. Research on FDPs typically underlines their high motivation to integrate, the plan to stay and build a new life (Buber-

Ennser et al., 2016), which might show in the perceived high connectedness to the country, whereas research also regularly points at the hostility and negative attitudes of natives towards FDPs, which might be represented item two, feeling to be an outsider. This disconnect between own feelings of connectedness and perceiving oneself as an outsider may be a specificity of the FDP population.

Interpretation of the construct validity

The research question two, relating to construct validity can also only partly be supported. While the analysis of the individual subscales extracted one factor per subscale as predicted (H2.1), the psychological subscale and economic subscale had two factors that both explained about half of the variance. Furthermore, only the social, linguistic and political subscale had significant factor loadings. The factor analysis of the two - item subscale was conducted to parallel the previous validation study by Harder et al. (2018a) who conducted a factor analysis on the subscales, albeit with the IPL - 24, thus having four items per subscale. They also found one factor per subscale, with almost two factors for the economic subscale. Thus the results are similar to the results of the current analysis with the addition of the psychological subscale also having almost two factors, reinforcing the interpretation that feeling connected to the country and feeling to be an outsider in society are two independent experiences for FDPs. This may be interesting to explore in follow-up research, as the comparability of different groups that the IPL seeks to achieve would be violated with these items relating differently to migrants and FDPs. Hypothesis 2.2 expecting significant correlations between all items also must be rejected, as only some correlations are significant, namely that of the items which load significantly on the factor. This may be attributable to the small sample. There was no hypothesis on the factor structure of the questionnaire. The analysis was exploratory and resulted in one factor, which should represent integration. But not all items loaded significantly on the factor. The highest loadings were for the linguistic, social and political items as well as the finding a job item, in this order from highest to lowest. These items, much more than the non-significant ones are centered around language, asking about language ability, socialising and discussion. This

may represent the extremely high level of importance of the German language for all aspects of integration for FDPs in Austria (Geistlinger, 2018; Heinemann, 2017; Radinger, 2018), but also may be an indicator that the IPL - 12 in this study failed to assess the full scope of integration. Further research is needed to explore the relationship of the items of the IPL - 12 with the construct of integration, as some items, while making sense theoretically, did not load significantly on the extracted factor. This is especially the case for the items of the psychological subscale, which stands out with its items having an emotional quality that the other subscales lack. The low factor loading of the income item can be explained with the lack of variation in the responses. The loading of item three ('finding a doctor'), while not reaching significance, was not far off, and might have produced a more robust finding with a larger sample. Field (2009, p. 647) discussed adequate sample sizes for EFA, concluding that while smaller samples may be adequate, samples of N = 300 and more are preferable for robust results.

Interpretation of the criterion related validity

The hypotheses (H3.1 - H3.4) for the criterion related validity expected gender, length of stay, visa status and mental health to explain significant proportions of the integration outcome. This can only be supported by the analysis for the predictor gender (H3.2), all others must be rejected. Trying to understand these results, further exploratory analyses of influence of all four predictors on the integration outcome on a subscale level were calculated. The psychological and navigational subscale outcomes were not significantly explained by the predictors, again showing the extraordinary character of the psychological subscale throughout all analyses. The economic subscale outcome was significantly explained by gender and visa status. It makes sense for visa status to first show effects in the economic subscale, as asylum seekers are not allowed to seek employment whereas FDPs with temporary or permanent visas are (AMS Österreich, 2020). Against expectations this effect did not carry over to other aspects of integration, such as that having employment would help build social contacts and learn the German language, as no effects of visa status were found in other subscales. One reason for this might be that also people with a

permanent visa (refugee status, citizenship) had not yet had the chance to establish themselves in the new country. Most of the participants had been in Austria for only about four years, and the average time in months to receive refugee status was at $M = 19.65$ ($SD = 15.98$), nearly two years. The effect of visa status would be expected to be stronger the longer a person has time to benefit or suffer from their respective visa situation. Length of stay showed a significant effect on the social subscale, but in a counterintuitive direction. That shorter stay should lead to better social integration is difficult to explain. One idea is that social contacts to Austrians were mainly through NGOs or other organisations helping with the arrival, this might lead to a reduction in social contacts with Austrians with time, as the person gets set up in their new life. This effect of having contacts with natives mainly through aid organisations is frequently described in the literature (Gericke et al., 2018; Valenta, 2008). That length of stay overall did not contribute to explaining the integration outcome might be due to not enough variation between participants, as 71.2% had stayed in Austria between three and five years. Considering that integration is a long - term process, effects of length of stay might only come to show comparing groups of newly arrived with groups of people who had many years to settle in. The validation study by Harder et al. (2018a), which found an effect of length of stay on the IPL – 12 integration scores compared samples with an average length of stay at four, twelve, twenty and thirty five years. This could indicate that the IPL – 12 is not sensitive enough in measuring more subtle integration efforts early on in the integration journey. Mental health as the fourth predictor neither explained a substantial amount of variance of the integration outcome nor of any of the subscale outcomes. This again may be caused by low variation in the data as all participants had mental health issues above a threshold value as a criterion for participation in the study, while also not having such severe issues that acute treatment would be necessary, as that also would have led to the exclusion from the study. The effect of mental health on integration remains an important one to explore. Comparing integration of refugees with and without mental health issues may be a route of exploration as the IPL - 12 does not seem to be sensitive enough to be predicted by variation only in severity of mental health issues, as it

was used in this study. Mental health issues are an important barrier to integration (Miller & Rasmussen, 2017; Schick, 2019) and, while there was not enough variance within the predictor, mental health was still an important characteristic of the participants of this study. Thus it is possible that this characteristic of low mental health produced overall lower integration than would otherwise be expected of a sample with healthy FDPs and might furthermore overpower the effects that length of stay and visa status could have developed in a healthy sample. Gender, the fourth predictor, did explain variance in the integration outcome significantly. Core elements of the theoretical foundation were expected lower education and work experience causing women to have a harder time finding a job and learning the language (Groen et al., 2018; Morrice et al., 2019), as well as that traditional family roles might result in women staying home and thus living lives more secluded from the receiving society (Casimiro et al., 2007). While gender did significantly predict the integration outcome overall as well as of three subscales, the mechanisms are not as expected. While more than half the women had no education background at all, no significant differences in education between the genders were found, because men also had very low education levels. Thus, education may lose its effect of predicting gender differences with bottom effects like in this sample. The results that a large proportion of women were looking for a job can be interpreted as an indicator against traditional family structures. It is therefore not clear how the gender effects came to be. One possibility may be that the found effects are gender influences on answering styles, that is that men have higher confidence in their integration than women. But this explanation would expect gender differences also on the psychological and navigational subscale, which were not found, as these are particularly subjective in their answering options. There remains need for further exploration.

Limitations of the study

The main limitation of the study was a small sample size. The multiple regression analysis as well as the factor analysis would have benefitted from a larger sample to produce more robust results (Field, 2009). The sample was originally planned to reach 120

participants, this was made unachievable with measures fighting Covid-19 setting a halt to the testing. Furthermore, this analysis was part of a larger research project focused on validating the intervention manual PM+, by the WHO. Thus, the sample was selected based on criteria for the intervention analysis and did not focus on the IPL - 12, which created the difficulty of limited and insufficient variability in the predictors of especially mental health, but also length of stay. This analysis was the first study to evaluate the IPL - 12 with a sample of FDPs, it was even more specific in analysing a sample of FDPs with mental health issues. The finding cannot be generalized and may differ when looking at a more general FDP sample.

Further Research

The current analysis was a first step in trying the IPL - 12 as a new measure for psychological research. The results have been mixed. Firstly, the IPL - 12 will need further validation when working with FDPs, preferably with a study design that is specifically laid out to do so, as to avoid the limitations encountered in this analysis. Secondly running a confirmatory factor analysis may give clarity, comparing a one - factor model as found in this analysis with a six - factor model following the structure of the questionnaire. Holding onto the idea of using the IPL - 12 as a measure to compare different groups of migrants, it may be a route for research comparing FDPs and other migrants in their integration experience once, the IPL - 12 has been understood better in relation to FDPs. Furthermore, the connection between mental health and integration remains underexplored. The data generated by the PIAAS project may help explore this connection a little further by allowing to analyse the development of integration and mental health during the study, with the baseline data used in this study, post intervention and follow up data. Assuming a circular model between mental health and integration, improved mental health through a successful intervention should show results in increased integration scores. Gender as a predictor of integration was significant in this study, but the mechanisms that were assumed to be underlying the gender difference cannot fully be supported by the data of this study. Thus, it would be interesting to explore how these gender differences came to be, possibly comparing

subjective and objective measure of integration, to understand whether men and women perceive and report their integration in the same way.

Conclusion

      The IPL – 12 covers important areas of integration in a very short format, but is one sided in its assessment, as it asks only about the integration efforts of FDPs without taking into account the specific barriers and levels of discrimination FDPs face in different societies, which limits the comparability of the tool, which was one of the main motivations in its construction. The usefulness of the IPL – 12 for research with FDPs cannot fully be supported. Firstly, the unexpected behaviour of the psychological subscale may be an indicator of the particularities of the FDP population. Secondly, the extracted factor seems to have language as a confounding aspect in the factor that is supposed to represent integration. Thirdly, gender effects in the IPL – 12 were found, but could not clearly be attributed to precursor gender differences, thus the possibility remains that men and women show different answering patterns, which should be addressed in the construction of the IPL – 12. Further research is needed, to determine whether the IPL – 12 can be used for research with FDPs and generates data that can be compared to other migrant groups.

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List of Abbreviations

AMS	Arbeitsmarktservice (labour market service)
DRKS	Deutsches Register klinischer Studien (German registry of clinical studies)
EFA	exploratory factor analysis
ELF	English as lingua franca
EU	European Union
GHQ	General Health Questionnaire
FDP	forcibly displaced person
IPL - 12	integration index (developed by the immigration policy lab; 12 item version)
IRB	institutional review board
IS	Islamic State
KMO	Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin criterium
LGBTQI*	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual (* for inclusiveness)
NGO	nongovernmental organisation
PIAAS	psychologische Kurzintervention für afghanische Geflüchtete in Österreich (short psychological intervention for Afghan refugees in Austria)
PM+	Problem Management plus
RULS	unweighted least squares
SPSS	statistical package for the social sciences
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States

VIF   variance inflation factor

WHO   World Health Organisation

Abstract

Integration is a complex construct with no agreed upon definition. The study analysed the IPL – 12, a short self – report tool assessing integration with 12 items on six dimensions with a scoring range of 12 – 60. The sample consisted of n = 55 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers with mental health issues. In the study an exploratory factor analysis, to assess construct validity, and a multiple regression analysis with the predictors length of stay, gender, visa status and mental health, to assess criterion related validity, were conducted. The factor analysis supported one factor to be extracted, but only eight of the twelve items loaded significantly on the extracted factor. Of the predictors only gender explained a significant amount of variance R^2 = .15 of the integration outcome, with male participants (M = 32.27, SD = 7.95) scoring significantly higher on integration than women (M = 25.94, SD = 5.10). The main criticism of item content is that, while integration is mostly understood as a two – way process between receiving and migrant communities, the IPL – 12 only assesses the integration efforts of refugee and asylum seekers, without shedding light onto the adaptations made by the receiving side. The use of the IPL – 12 for research with refugees and asylum seekers cannot fully be supported.

Keywords: IPL – 12; integration; factor analysis; validity; asylum seeker; refugee

Abstract (Deutsch)

Integration ist ein komplexes Konstrukt ohne klare Definition. Die Studie validierte den IPL – 12, einen kurzen Selbsteinschätzungsfragebogen zu Integration mit 12 Items auf sechs Dimensionen, bei dem 12 – 60 Punkte erzielt werden können. Die Stichprobe bestand aus n = 55 afghanischen Geflüchteten und Asylsuchenden mit psychischen Problemen. Durchgeführt wurden in der Studie eine explorative Faktorenanalyse, um die Konstruktvalidität und eine Multiple Regressionsanalyse, um die Kriteriumsvalidität mit den Prädiktoren Länge des Aufenthalts, Gender, Aufenthaltsstatus und psychische Gesundheit, zu erheben. Die Faktorenanalyse resultierte in einem zu extrahierenden Faktor, allerdings luden nur acht der zwölf Items signifikant auf diesen. Von den Prädiktoren erklärte nur Gender einen signifikanten Teil der Variation R^2 = .15 der Outcome Variable Integration, wobei Männer (M = 32.27, SD = 7.95) signifikant höhere Punktzahlen erzielten als Frauen (M = 25.94, SD = 5.10). Am Iteminhalt ist hauptsächlich zu kritisieren, dass obwohl Integration als zweiseitiger Prozess zwischen Aufnahmegesellschaft und Migrant*innen verstanden wird, erhebt der IPL – 12 ausschließlich die Integrationsbemühungen von Geflüchteten und Asylsuchenden, und lässt die der Aufnahmegesellschaft außen vor. Die Benützung des IPL – 12 für die Forschung mit Geflüchteten und Asylsuchenden kann nicht vollständig befürwortet werden.

Schlagworte: IPL – 12; Integration; Faktorenanalyse; Validität; Asylsuchende; Geflüchtete