

# Review of: "Choosing to Stay: Unpacking Immobility Amidst Adversity in Migration Studies"

Cláudia Santos<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Lisbon

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

- This paper adds to the existing body of literature on immobility/non-migration, with a focus on exploring why and how individuals remain in place despite adversities. While there is a plethora of research on migration in response to climate and environmental changes, studies on why people stay put during conflicts are relatively scarce. This paper provides a vital contextual contribution, playing a crucial role in comprehending the intricate web of (non-)migration decisions that are deeply rooted in local contexts.
- The paper requires a more comprehensive abstract with a precise statement of what the issue is, how the author addresses it, including the methodology employed, and the results obtained. The introduction also requires a more robust argument and clarity in terms of what the author aims to achieve. For example, the introduction refers to a research question but without explicitly mentioning what this is.
- I would suggest focusing more on the literature pertaining to non-migration/immobility and on the most recent literature, rather than providing an overview of the literature on migration, which can be overwhelming. While the focus is on immobility in conflict-affected areas, literature that addresses other types of adversities (e.g., climate or environmental changes) can indeed also serve this purpose. The author could also consider a brief comparison between staying put due to climate/environmental change versus conflict. Are the reasons for immobility the same when the adversity changes? Literature suggestions:

Wiegel, H., Warner, J., Boas, I., & Lamers, M. (2021). Safe from what? Understanding environmental non-migration in Chilean Patagonia through ontological security and risk perceptions. *Regional Environmental Change*, 21(2), 43. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-021-01765-3>

Zickgraf, C. (2021). Theorizing (im)mobility in the face of environmental change. *Regional Environmental Change*, 21(4), 126. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-021-01839-2>

Zickgraf, C. (2021). Theorizing (im)mobility in the face of environmental change. *Regional Environmental Change*, 21(4), 126. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-021-01839-2>

Santos, C., & Mourato, J. M. (2022). 'I was born here, I will die here': Climate change and migration decisions from coastal and insular Guinea-Bissau. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 0(0), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/04353684.2022.2154689>

Feyissa Dori, D., Hagen-Zanker, J., & Mazzilli, C. (2024). The Entanglement Between Tangible and Intangible Factors

in Shaping Hadiya Migration Aspirations to South Africa. *International Migration Review*, 01979183241226635.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/01979183241226635>

- Only use page numbers if directly citing the authors, adequately recurring to double quotations. Explanations on existing literature require clarity. For example, when referring to de Haas' work, the reader is unsure what study locations the author is referring to.
- Concepts also require clarity. For instance, the paper could benefit from more recent and critical definitions of resilience and vulnerability that appear in disasters literature, which are not merely about the capacity to cope or adapt. Please see:  
Chandler, D. (2022). Decolonising resilience: Reading Glissant's *Poetics of Relation* in Central Eurasia. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 35(2), 158–175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2021.1944984>  
Bankoff, G., & Hilhorst, D. (Eds.). (2022). *Why Vulnerability Still Matters: The Politics of Disaster Risk Creation* Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- On migration categories, I also recommend exploring issues related to ambiguity and subjectivity through the lens of these authors:  
Parsons, L., & Nielsen, J. Ø. (2020). The Subjective Climate Migrant: Climate Perceptions, Their Determinants, and Relationship to Migration in Cambodia. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 1–18.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2020.1807899>  
Kelman, I. (2019). Imaginary Numbers of Climate Change Migrants? *Social Sciences*, 8(5), 131.  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8050131>
- The paper requires a methodology/methods section before delivering any outcomes of the focus groups. We need to have an understanding of how the research was conducted, including a description of the location (a map?), the timeframe of the study, the number of participants, and a description of the participants (gender, age group, etc.).
- The contribution of this work (to both science and policy) needs to be clear, particularly in light of the existing research on voluntary and involuntary mobility/migration that draws similar conclusions on the many reasons why people stay put amidst adversity.