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Exploring pre- and in-employment experiences of refugees in Germany: A Bourdieusian approach

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Abstract

Employment is crucial to the integration of refugees in host countries. Using Bourdieu's theory of practice and data from interviews with refugees, employment agency representatives, and managers, we examine these issues through two complementary studies conducted in Germany. Study I explores how refugees experience the recognition of their academic and professional credentials while seeking employment, Study II examines the question of how various actors, including employment agencies, employers, and colleagues, contribute to the development of relevant cultural capital. Our finding show that refugees' pre- and in-employment experiences are largely shaped by their foreignness and by national institutions' protectionism. Even where foreign qualifications are formally recognized, employers invoke criteria such as the lack of local professional experience. While this research echoes the theory of practice by showing the limited capacity of refugees to access and accumulate capital, our analysis shows that while the collaborative efforts of different actors can provide information and guidance-related benefits, they offer limited support to refugees to access or utilize forms of capital to advance employment effectively.

KEYWORDS
employment, Germany, refugees, theory of practice

INTRODUCTION

> "The biggest challenge that many refugees face is access to the formal labor market. Language barriers, lack of recognition of their qualifications, and discrimination all limit job opportunities."
>
> (Kelly T. Clements, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR, 2023)

Natural disasters, conflicts, and violence around the world fuel large-scale displacement of people, creating continual growth in the number of refugees. Refugees are individuals who have been forced to flee their home country because of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or troubling public order (UNHCR, 2022). The United Nations High Commission for Refugees estimates that globally there are 103 million forcibly displaced people (UNHCR, 2022). The Russian invasion of the Ukraine, which began in 2022, added several million more (UNHCR, 2023). Most refugees stay in neighboring countries, but central Europe experienced considerable flows of refugees from the African continent, the Middle East, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe (Omanović et al., 2022). Despite demographic shifts, including declining birth rates and an aging population, creating labor shortages across Europe, refugees still experience major challenges in finding and retaining employment (Pesch & Ipek, 2024). Yet, employment is crucial to their integration into their new host society (Baranik et al., 2018; Traeger et al., 2022). This has led to calls to develop a better understanding of refugees' employment and integration (Ortlieb & Ressi, 2022).

While employability research mostly presents an agent-centric perspective (Bagdadli et al., 2021; Forrier et al., 2018; Peltokorpi & Xie, 2023), there is an ongoing debate about how much contextual factors contribute to individual employability (Forrier et al., 2018). Bourdieu (1977, 1986) criticizes the overemphasis on individual agency and suggests integrating agency and structure, a proposal endorsed by Pesch and Ipek (2024). This paper, therefore, grounds its rationale in Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice to explore employment of refugees in Germany. It argues that refugees' employment is often a result of the interplay between context and individual characteristics (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018). Building on the notion that actors are inseparable from the context in which they are embedded (Tatli et al., 2014), Bourdieu's (1977) focus on the destabilization of habitus under forced displacement offers valuable insights into refugee research. Refugees' sense of identity and routine practices are disrupted, making the theory of practice particularly relevant. Practices, as conceptualized by Bourdieu, emerge from the interaction between individuals' characteristics (habitus), their capital, and the social world they inhabit (field). These fields are dynamic, defined by internal rules and access to resources and shaped by ongoing struggles for legitimacy and power (Bourdieu, 1977). In the context of refugees, understanding how individuals navigate a new field and acquire relevant forms of capital becomes key to examining their employment prospects.

When refugees flee their home countries (familiar fields) and enter new ones, their existing capital may lose value (Hirst et al., 2023). The process of rebuilding capital becomes essential for resettlement and employment. Refugees face the challenge of having their qualifications and experiences validated in the host country, which may limit their access to employment (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011; Erel, 2010). To thrive, refugees need to acquire capital that is recognized and valued within the new field (Chudzikowski & Mayrhofer, 2011). While employment is critical for rebuilding economic and social capital, many refugees struggle with anticipatory stress and uncertainty in the job market (Porter & Haslam, 2005; Lee et al., 2020). Despite the potential benefits of employment for mental health and social integration, high levels of unemployment persist among refugees (Guo et al., 2020; Traeger et al., 2022). Moreover, refugees face uncertainty, lack of support, and sometimes even violence (Baranik et al., 2018).

In addition to economic and social capital, there is cultural capital: the cultural knowledge that confers status and power. This paper explores forms of cultural capital and how they are acquired or reinforced while seeking and maintaining employment. Whereas cultural capital may be objectified and institutionalized, for refugees embodied cultural capital may play a more critical role as this form is less tangible than the other two forms and therefore operates powerfully through processes finding and maintaining employment.

Empirically, we examine these issues in refugees' pre- and in-employment experiences in two complementary studies in Germany. In study I, we conducted in-depth interviews with 33 refugees, three government agency employees, and five firm representatives. In Study II, 16 interviews were conducted with matched samples of refugees and managers working in three organizations. We employed these two complementary studies to develop a more in-depth understanding of whether economic capital gains change before and after recruitment. Exploring refugees' pre- and in-employment experiences provides a more profound understanding of how the disposition of cultural capital is manifested. Given the barriers to refugee employment and their struggles to build cultural capital, our complementary studies aim to shed light on the effort of different stakeholders in those two crucial phases.

Our study contributes to extant research in three areas. First, we contribute to the literature on Bourdieu's theory of practice by showing both explicit and underlying issues involved in cultural capital development during job-search and in-employment. Second, we show how the development and transmission of institutionalized and embodied cultural capital is reflected throughout the search for employment and what happens once refugees are employed (Fernando & Cohen, 2015). Finally, we argue that having knowledge about general Human Resource Management (HRM) practices is not sufficient. It is critical that HRM specialists tailor practices to the needs of refugees within the organization, as a one-size-fits-all approach often fails to address unique challenges and contexts. Our evidence suggests that at the institutional level organizations are failing to achieve equity during employment. Training in the complexities of embodied cultural capital and elite advantage should be a component of unconscious bias training for employment agencies' staff, line managers and HRM professionals.

UNDERSTANDING REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT THROUGH BOURDIEU'S THEORY OF PRACTICE

Social inequalities and power structures are at the center of Bourdieu's (1977) theorizing, making his work well-suited to exploring the challenges and opportunities refugees face when seeking and/or maintaining employment. More specifically, Bourdieu's theory of practice offers a useful lens for exploring refugees' employment challenges, allowing us to account for the relationship between context and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 16). It adopts a relational perspective, arguing that actors cannot be separated from context (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008). The theory of practice can be captured in the following formula: Field + [(habitus) + (capital)] = practice (Bourdieu, 1986).

Field represents the structures of differences between individuals, groups, and institutions, while the positions of individual actors are based on the distribution and possession of capital. Each field has its own rules, power dynamics, and logic (Schneidhofer et al., 2015). Fields are determined by the distribution of capital with their specific sets of beliefs, rules, determinate agents, histories, and institutionalized power formations, where actors advance their position within the scope of their habitus. Habitus is a set of dispositions to act in a certain way, generated by actors' experiences—closely linked to the capital actors possess—and modified with time in relation to the field (Bourdieu, 1977). Habitus develops in response to field conditions in the early stages of individuals' lives.

The way actors navigate the field is structured not only by individual characteristics but also by the actors' capital—the resources available to them. Bourdieu (1986) identifies four types of capital: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. Economic capital consists of financial resources, such as wages or property. Cultural capital consists of the social assets, such as education, style of dress, language, and the knowledge and skills of the actor in deploying them. Social capital refers to the network the actor has access to. Symbolic capital is related to the field: It is the combination of other forms of capital in so far as they are socially recognized, legitimatized, and therefore of value in each particular field (Chudzikowski & Mayrhofer, 2011). In the context of refugee employment, for example, symbolic capital may consist of the combination of recognized academic degrees, knowledge of the host country language and cultural values, and access to relevant social networks. As individuals compete for position in respective fields, they accumulate, transform, and invest in different forms of capital to strengthen their position within the respective social order (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018). The interplay between capital and field is circular (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) and dynamic as "[i]n order to construct the field, one must identify the forms of specific capital that operate within it, and to construct the forms of specific capital one must know the specific logic of the field" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 108). Individuals with field-relevant capital seek to maintain and/or improve their position in the social order (Bourdieu, 1977). Dominant groups use their capital to construct and maintain status and power distinctions compared to others, legitimizing their position in the hierarchy.

As capital is context bound, refugees arriving in the host country undergo a re-evaluation of their capital under the new, to them, conditions there (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011; Erel, 2010). To become legitimate actors, they require access to and accumulation of different forms of capital and their transformation into symbolic capital (Chudzikowski & Mayrhofer, 2011). Adapting to a new and unfamiliar country along with accessing and building capital is challenging for refugees: They have experienced significant loss of capital in almost every aspect of their lives and arrive in a new country without any preparation. To date, much of our knowledge of managing international workers is based on high-status expatriates relocated by multinational enterprises to work in foreign countries (McNulty & Brewster, 2019), predominantly well-educated people from advanced economies, with attractive compensation packages, who, for the most part, are welcomed by the host country (Caligiuri & Bonache, 2016). Unlike expatriates, or highly qualified economic migrants (Cerdin et al., 2014), refugees are forced to flee with little thought of, or preparation for, their destination. Many refugees experience legal, mental, socio-economic, and physiological distress (Agbényiga et al., 2012; Nardon et al., 2021).

Furthermore, refugees originate almost exclusively from developing and emerging countries (United Nations, 2019) which makes their integration into economically advanced Western societies more difficult. Employment has consistently been identified as a main contributor to issues such as housing, education, health, and economic independence, and personal advantages such as planning for the future, meeting members of the host society, providing opportunities to develop language skills, and restoring self-esteem and self-reliance (Ager & Strang, 2008; Bloch, 2008; Wehrle et al., 2018). Refugees who are working adjust better and faster to the host society than those who are unemployed (Bloch, 2008; Phillimore & Goodson, 2006; Wehrle et al., 2018). Yet, refugees remain economically and socially marginalized, and often unemployed, years after their arrival (Bansak et al., 2018; Dykstra-DeVette & Canary, 2019). The hope of many of them is that, when things get better in their country of origin, they can return (Lindley & Van Hear, 2007). Refugees often escaped from their country without documentation and, even when they have it, they struggle to get their qualifications acknowledged (Ortlieb, Eggenhofer-Rehart, et al., 2021). Their educational and professional experiences often happen in poor and underdeveloped countries, meaning that their qualifications may be considered suspect in rich industrialized host countries. Partly for this reason, large numbers of refugees remain unemployed (Hansen & Lofstrom, 2003; Newman et al., 2018). And refugees who do find work often suffer downward mobility to jobs that require a lower skill set than they possess (Mestheneos & Ioannidi, 2002; Zikic & Richardson, 2016).

Given these challenges we look to uncover both the explicit and implicit processes involved in cultural capital development during job-search, and in-employment, in order to explore the phenomenon of cultural capital to provide access to and maintenance of job opportunities.

The notion of cultural capital provides a working hypothesis for explaining the recognition and legitimization process through formal institutions. Institutionalized cultural capital, in the form of academic or other

formal qualifications, is "a certificate of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 50). When cultural capital is institutionalized, it transforms into a form of credential or qualification that is widely acknowledged and respected in that social context.

As recognition of academic and professional qualifications is defined in terms of a set of cultural and arbitrary norms, it is not surprising that individuals who possess the "right kind" of cultural capital (i.e., the forms valued by the formal labor market in the host country) are advantaged. The notion of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) explains how educational and professional institutions exercise nationally based protectionism by not recognizing qualifications acquired abroad. However, even when foreign qualifications are formally recognized, employers often use criteria such as lack of local professional experience to reject refugees. This creates barriers for refugees with international credentials, limiting their opportunities and reinforcing local professional standards. From this perspective, institutions are not passive in their role but rather actively legitimize certain forms of knowledge and the distribution of this form of cultural capital. Hence, our research aims to address, as a first question:

How do refugees experience the recognition process of their academic and professional qualifications while seeking employment?

As Bourdieu (1986, 245) noted "The accumulation of cultural capital … costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor" (Bourdieu, 1986, 245). The effort by refugees, employment agencies, employees, and managers may over time result in the accumulation of cultural capital becoming embodied through activities such as language training, community engagement activities, or internships. Employment agencies and employers may support refugees to build cultural capital in order to enhance their chances of securing and maintaining employment. However, they may not see how this preparation becomes part of the refugees' habitus and the cultural capital that then impacts the alignment process of habitus and field. In other words, there is scope for employment agencies and employers to train refugees in activities, which transmit capital that effectively impacts their ability to support their settlement in the host country. Hence, our second research question aims to explore:

How do various actors, including employment agencies, employers, and colleagues, contribute to the development of relevant cultural capital?

To address these two research questions, we explore refugees' pre- and in-employment experiences in two complementary studies in Germany, in order to understand how the development and transmission of cultural capital is reflected in the search for employment and what happens once refugees are employed.

METHODOLOGY

Research site: The German context

Demographically, newly arrived refugees in Germany have predominantly been young and male: In 2015, 71% of refugees were under 30; and around two thirds were men (IOM, 2018). There is no representative data on the qualifications of these refugees, but information gathered from the refugees themselves indicates that they broadly match the distribution of skills in the local population: About 20% have a professional education and about 30%–40% of them have relevant practical work experience (OECD, 2017). Eight percent of eligible refugees gain regular employment within their first year in Germany, 50% within 5 years, 60% within 10 years, and 75% within 15 years (Bach et al., 2017). These are often in jobs where the refugees are unable to use their skills, such as in hospitality or warehousing (Bach et al., 2017), or in the informal sector (Aumüller & Bretl, 2008).

In Germany, refugees are given up to 3 months to complete basic administrative necessities and obtain access to language courses. Once this period is completed, refugees may obtain a *Duldung* ("tolerated status") and are entitled to seek employment, on condition that there are no German nationals or EU citizens who can do the job instead—the "priority review." Tolerated status is a short-term decision on the stay of the refugee in Germany. Individuals who have obtained an *Aufenthaltserlaubnis* (residence permit), which may take a couple of years, are granted access to employment without any further restriction (BAMF, 2019).

Research design

This paper is based on two complementary studies, each addressing different aspects of the research question. While the two studies are presented independently, they are interconnected in their exploration of refugees' experiences in the labor market. Study I aims to explore the question: "How do refugees experience the recognition process of their academic and professional qualifications while seeking employment?" This study provides deeper insights into the personal challenges and barriers refugees face during the qualification recognition process in their pursuit of employment. Study II focuses on the question: "How do various actors, including employment agencies, employers, and colleagues, contribute to the development of relevant cultural capital?" This study examines the role of external actors in helping refugees acquire and build cultural capital that enhances their employability. We subsequently bring the learning from the studies together in Section 5. This ensures that interaction between field and capital is explored in different phases and through different actors' views and approaches, first separately and then together.

Sample and data collection

Study 1

In study I, purposeful and snowball sampling was utilized to find interviewees: Thirty-three refugees, three employment agency employees, and five firm representatives. The sample was determined to investigate the phenomenon where it is found (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986). Hence, the main criterion for selecting the organizations was their experience in recruiting and managing refugees. The participants did not know each other and discussed general experiences. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality.

Interviews were conducted in English, but interviewees were given the possibility to conduct the interview partially or fully in German, Farsi, or Arabic. The aim of providing multiple languages as means of communication was to ensure participants were comfortable and confident in explaining their views and experiences.

Whenever a language other than English was used, the interview transcript was translated into English. The average time for completing an interview was 45 min. A number of refugees did not agree to being recorded, so in these cases, intensive notes were taken instead. Interviews were conducted according to a schedule (details available from the lead author on request). The two interviewers met frequently to exchanges notes and experiences, and the interview schedule was adapted as we progressed.

In Germany, a network of agencies (government and nongovernment) acts as brokers between refugees and employers. The main role of these agencies is to assist refugees in their effort to find employment. As job placement centers, they are in constant contact with employers and crucial to their recruitment efforts. In addition to checking documents such as residence permit or educational and professional certificates, the agencies also work with German language providers to ensure refugees gain linguistic capital for successful employment placement.

In the purposeful and snowball sampling strategy (Patton, 2014), the research team used the following criteria: (1) the agency acts a consultancy and placement center (2); it works with refugees, federal government agencies, German language providers, and employers; and (3) it has a minimum of 3 years' experience of such work. Initial contacts were established through personal knowledge. In some cases, agencies put us in touch with peers in other agencies for further data collection. In total, we approached 12 agencies, and five agreed to an interview.

These lasted between 90–120 min and were conducted in German. In addition to the interviews as the main source of data, documents, such as flyers, information from their websites, and summaries of organizational structures, were collected to develop a better understanding of their role, tasks, and experiences in placing refugees in companies.

The job placement centers connected the research team to 11 employers interacting frequently with the agencies for employment of refugees. After initial contact, three firms invited the research team for an interview. Interviews with an HRM specialist, an integration coordinator, and a CEO were conducted on-site. These interviews were conducted in German and/or English and lasted between 60 and 90 min.

Recursive interplay between the data and emerging conceptual ideas related to existing theories allowed us to develop new theoretical insights (Doz, 2011). Our evidence provides the substance of the disciplined imagination process central to theory building and is more faithful to the richness of the phenomenon being researched than deductive methods could be (Doz, 2011). Tables 1–3 summarize the characteristics of the sample set included in Study I.

Study II

In this study, 15 interviews were conducted with refugees and managers working in three large German multinational enterprises. Hence, the main criterion for selecting organizations was their experience in recruiting and managing refugees. Five interview participants were refugees who did internships or had already secured employment in one of the interviewed firms. The research team was put in touch with these refugees by the organizations in first sample. Ten interviews were conducted with managers who have worked with refugees. Unlike Study I, Study II included participants who had experienced direct interaction with each other. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality and asked to discuss their views and experiences with in-employment issues and challenges. Each semi-structured interview was again conducted by an empathetic researcher as in study I, and similarly conducted in an appropriate language, and lasted around 60 min. All interviews were recorded.

Data were, therefore, collected on general perspectives and experiences (Study I) and specific details (Study II), providing the opportunity to explore the interaction between field and capital under different conditions. Table 4 summarizes the characteristics of the sample set included in Study II.

Throughout the interviews, the well-being and trust of participants (Refugee Studies Centre, Ethical Guidelines for Good Research, 2007) were a high priority. For example, the interviewer allowed them time and space to explain their experiences, with breaks if a participant seemed to be exhausted or anxious. Refugees were offered food and beverages if they asked for it. To ensure their privacy and interest are protected, their personal details were separated from interview data prior to transcription and kept them in separate files.

TABLE 1 Study I—Summary of refugee sample.

Respondents	Age	Gender	Nationality	Marital status	When did you arrive to Germany?	Asylum status	When did you arrive to Germany?	Qualification
1	23	M	Afghanistan	Single	2015	Pending	2015	Secondary School
2	21	M	Afghanistan	Single	2015	Pending	2015	Middle School
3	29	M	Eretria	Married	2015	Pending	2015	Secondary School
4	36	M	Iraq	Married	2017	Pending	2017	University Degree
5	22	M	Pakistan	Single	2015	Pending	2015	Middle School
6	26	M	Syria	Married	2015	Pending	2015	Secondary School
7	18	M	Sudan	Single	2016	Pending	2016	Middle School
8	24	M	Syria	Single	2015	Pending	2015	University Degree
9	18	M	Syria	Single	2016	Pending	2016	Secondary School
10	31	M	Afghanistan	Married	2015	Accepted	2015	Primary School
11	25	M	Iraq	Single	2016	Pending	2016	Secondary School
12	22	M	Afghanistan	Single	2015	Pending	2015	Secondary School
13	19	M	Syria	Single	2015	Pending	2015	University Degree
14	20	M	Iraq	Single	2018	Pending	2018	University Degree
15	30	M	Iraq	Married	2015	Pending	2015	Secondary School
16	29	M	Syria	Single	2015	Accepted	2015	University Degree
17	22	F	Syria	Single	2016	Pending	2016	University Degree
18	39	M	Afghanistan	Married	2015	Pending	2015	Secondary School
19	23	M	Syria	Single	2019	Pending	2019	University Degree
20	25	M	Syria	Single	2015	Pending	2015	Secondary School
21	24	M	Afghanistan	Married	2017	Pending	2017	Secondary School
22	22	M	Afghanistan	Single	2015	Pending	2015	Secondary School
23	33	M	Iraq	Married	2015	Pending	2015	Primary School
24	41	M	Afghanistan	Married	2016	Accepted	2016	University Degree
25	25	M	Syria	Single	2015	Pending	2015	University Degree
26	34	F	Syria	Married	2017	Pending	2017	Secondary School
27	27	M	Syria	Single	2015	Pending	2015	University Degree
28	28	M	Afghanistan	Single	2016	Pending	2016	University Degree
29	23	F	Afghanistan	married	2018	Pending	2018	Secondary School
30	41	F	Syria	Married	2018	Pending	2018	University Degree
31	27	F	Benin	Married	2017	Pending	2017	No School
32	19	F	Ghana	Single	2019	Pending	2019	Primary School
33	16	F	Afghanistan	Single	2016	Pending	2016	Primary School

Data analysis

During the data collection process, the evidence was reviewed frequently to develop a better understanding of emerging patterns. Once first observations were collected, the research team followed a three-phase process of coding the data to build theory. Theory-driven qualitative categorical content analysis was deployed to allow new categories to emerge (Navis & Glynn, 2010). Accordingly, theoretical ideas were developed alongside an increasingly detailed analysis of the interview data by using the process of data reduction, conclusion drawing, display, and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The initial analysis of interviews showed the prominence and importance of related matters. To avoid losing any relevant information, interviews were first coded into one category that covered all professional qualifications and academic degree matters.

The subsequent analysis showed the relevance of context-specific acknowledgment of professional and academic qualifications and related social interactions and employment. For example, when a participant said that they experienced a higher level of difficulty or failed to get their home country qualification acknowledged, we

TABLE 2 Study II—Summary of organization sample.

Agencies	Age	Gender	Position and responsibilities
Agency 1	42	M	I am the director for external relationships. We are mainly working with the job centers and support refugees to find adequate jobs. Once the paperwork with the job centers is completed and the German language course part I (B1) is passed successfully, we start a first competency screening. According to our scoring system, we are allocating scores for, e.g., degrees or job experiences. Only those refugees with a score above the threshold would be managed by us. These are mostly adults above 25 years.
Agency 2	36	F	I am the head this unit. We are mainly responsible for supporting refugees to get prepared for the job market and get into employment.
Agency 3	27	M	I am a job and career advisor in this job center. Our main responsibility is to look after the refugees. Once they arrive, they are registered with us, and then we take it from there: Assign a place to live. The first 6 months they live in a place, which offers cooked food, then we try to move them to another place where they are paid to buy and cook their own food, Further, our role is to help refugees to contact the right agencies for employment. Once the legal formalities are completed, we connect them with local agencies for work placement.
Agency 4	34	F	We are a subsidiary of the German Chamber of Commerce and support mainly businesses to benefit from employing refugees. Our main task is to represent the interests of the firms. Considering the priorities of employers, we contact local agencies for sourcing the right skills and competencies. Often, we do not interact with the refugees directly.
Agency 5	51	F	I am working as an admistrator in a unit, which operates under the umbrella of a federal government agency. Our main job is to support the integration of refugees into the society.

TABLE 3 Study I—Summary of participant at agencies.

Agencies	Age	Gender	Position and responsibilities
Director/Agency 1	42	M	I am the director for external relationships. We are mainly working with the job centers and support refugees to find adequate jobs. Once the paperwork with the job centers is completed and the German language course part I (B1) is passed successfully, we start a first competency screening. According to our scoring system, we are allocating scores for, e.g., degrees or job experiences. Only those refugees with a score above the threshold would be managed by us. These are mostly adults above 25 years.
Head of department/Agency 2	36	F	I am the head this unit. We are mainly responsible for supporting refugees to get prepared for the job market and get into employment. I am working closely with a teams, which looks after the recognition of foreign certificates and help the refugees to learn German.
Career Advisor/Agent 3	27	M	I am a job and career advisor in this job center. Our main responsibility is to look after the refugees. Once they arrive, they are registered with us, and then we take it from there: Assign a place to live. The first 6 months they live in a place, which offers cooked food, then we try to move them to another place where they are paid to buy and cook their own food, Further, our role is to help refugees to contact the right agencies for employment. Once the legal formalities are completed, we connect them with local agencies for work placement.
Manager/Agency 4	34	F	My role is to manage the communication between agencies and employers. Our main task is to represent the interests of the firms. Considering the priorities of employers, we contact local agencies for sourcing the right skills and competencies. Often, we do not interact with the refugees directly.
Administrator/Agency 5	51	F	I am working as an admistrator in a unit, which operates under the umbrella of a federal government agency. Our main job is to support the integration of refugees into the society.

coded the statement as "challenges to building symbolic capital" or capital loss and "failure to accumulate cultural capital in the host country."

We coded for the field to which statements referred (home country, transit country, host country, final destination). Each interview was coded separately, then we collated them for cross-checking purposes. Frequent meetings between the research team members took place to discuss and adjust the coding scheme. Once consensus among the research team was achieved, we organized our findings on interaction between field and capital before and during employment. Some emergent higher order themes were identified: relocation, lack of alignment, discrimination, advantages of working with refugees, challenges at the workplace, and limited access to additional resources.

FINDINGS

Study I: Pre-employment

Early interactions in the new country are characterized by challenges for all refugees and the recruitment and

TABLE 4 Study II—Sample characteristics.

Participant	Participant type	Firm	Nationality
R-1	Refugee	MNE2	Syrian
R-2	Refugee	MNE1	Syrian
R-3	Refugee	MNE1	Afghani
R-4	Refugee	MNE2	Syrian
R-5	Refugee	MNE1	Syrian
MWR-1	Manager worked with refugees	MNE1	German
MWR-2	Manager worked with refugees	MNE1	German
MWR-3	Manager worked with refugees	MNE2	German
MWR-4	Manager worked with refugees	MNE1	German
MWR-5	Manager worked with refugees	MNE1	German
MWR-6	Manager worked with refugees	MNE1	German
MWR-7	Manager worked with refugees	MNE1	German
MI-1	Main Initiator of Integration Project	MNE3	German
MI-2	Main Initiator of Integration Project	MNE2	German
MI-3	Main Initiator of Integration Project	MNE1	German

selection of refugees poses additional challenges for all parties. It has been argued that refugees' do not carry fixed forms of capital with them that either "fit" the new arrival context or not (Erel, 2010). Rather, employment in more or less prestigious positions depends on complex intersections between the refugees' structural and institutional conditions, their resources, and individual trajectories. For example, all the refugees in our sample had entered Germany unlawfully and needed to access resources such as social and administrative support to complete paperwork, such as obtaining permission to stay and to progress their asylum application.

Lack of knowledge of the rules of the field

Refugees shared similar motives for relocation: primarily, the need for safety and security as a key basic resource. The journey to Germany lasted months, even years in some cases, and involved traveling through several countries and refugees had left behind their belongings, families (in most cases), and careers. To recover from those losses, most of the interviewees planned to remain in Germany for an indefinite period, though some wanted to return once the situation in their home country improves: "I wish the situation in my home country would get better, then I don't mind going back. I miss my family and my country. We were promised another life in Germany …. [but] it is terrible to be foreigner" (Refugee 8).

Acquisition of resources, such as permission to remain in the country, is constrained by lack of agency. Unlike economic migrants, refugees' location choices depend almost entirely on the outcome of their asylum application, which creates stress. All of the interviewees were aware of their legal status and the implications of their asylum application: "For the children it is better to stay. However, this is not our decision. We hope to be able to stay, although is not easy for me and my wife to get used to this country" (Refugee 15).

The interviewees wanted to work, either because of its positive effects on their asylum application or as a means to financial independence but transitioning into a new field is problematic in terms of capital validation.

Overall, the data show the limited agency available to refugees.

Dependence and the process of finding a job

Prior to any form of employment, asylum seekers must report to a state organization (border or immigration authorities), which then sends the individual to an reception center (BAMF, 2019). The German authorities decide on their location and length of stay. The geographical allocation of individual refugees is not determined by any attempt to match their skills with available jobs, making advances in finding employment more challenging. "You know, when we arrived in Germany, we were just thankful for being alive (….) We had no idea where we were and where they brought us. They didn't speak to us much and we followed their advice. We were moved to this camp. There are a lot of refugees here" (Refugee 30).

Company interviewees emphasized that businesses need to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible, arguing that often refugees were not fit for purpose: "In general, we don't mind hiring refugees but sourcing them is not as easy as recruiting via the employment market. The authorities are always somehow involved. For

example, most of them have some work permit issues or their asylum applications are pending. Sometimes it is not clear whether they will remain in the same location. To be honest, these are not very favorable conditions for employment" (HRM specialist, Company 1).

Refugees were concerned about the administration processes involved, and managers agreed that these impede employment: "We are aware that employment is important to the refugees" stay in Germany, and to the federal authorities but, as a company, our priority is to look after our business. "It doesn't make sense to invest in an employee whose destiny is not decided yet" (Manager of Diversity and Inclusion, Company 2).

Refugees' living and housing conditions often cause difficulties. They were separated from the rest of the population in camps, which generates a stigma and may limit potential resources gained from social interactions with host country nationals: "It would be good to move out from these camps into normal neighborhoods … Companies don't employ us when they realize where we live … we are expected to work like the rest of the population but are not allowed to live … like other people" (Refugee 5).

The duration of their stay in Germany is uncertain and is determined by the decision on their asylum application. In general, refugees depend strongly on state support pre-employment. The rather unpredictable outcome of their asylum application leads to additional difficulties in restoring or acquiring cultural capital relevant to employment.

Mismatch between expectations and offerings

Although all participants agreed that employment is critical, the roles and expectation of the different parties were often misaligned. Our interviews with the agents highlighted factors influencing the employment of refugees: "Most of the refugees have unrealistic expectations, almost naive. They are not used to regular working hours and days" (Career advisor, Agency 3).

A major barrier to employment is the difficulty created by the non-recognition, or non-verification, of qualifications and previous work experience. Consequently, employment that fails to utilize their skills is common—and frustrating: "I am a fully educated mechanical engineer. I don't know why they don't accept my degree. Instead, I am told to do a six-month internship. I don't want to do it, but I guess I have to …" (Refugee 4).

These divergent expectations impede or rule out acquiring capital that is critical to successful settlement in the new country. This is in particular true in the case of refugees resisting or refusing to learn the language: For them, it is hard to develop a better understanding of the institutional and cultural context in the receiving country.

The German agents and managers, by contrast, do not see the necessity for alternative employment paths: "Most of the refugees want good jobs with high income. (…) They don't understand that they are not equal to someone who speaks German and has a recognized degree." (Administrator, Agency 5).

Despite valuing their resilience and patience, employers showed less concern about providing resources to refugees with different education and professional backgrounds: "Personally, I think refugees are resilient, but lack positive attitudes towards work and progress …. Sometimes it is easier to convince individuals with no formal education to start employment as a cleaner or packer, rather than someone with a university degree. However, refugees without any formal educational background can be quite challenging, too" (HRM specialist, Company 1).

Among themselves, refugees viewed employment as a short-term engagement with a positive effect on their asylum application. In general, the interviewees did not refer to long-term career plans and goals. "Our future is uncertain. We don't even know if we can stay in Germany. With the agency, we don't really talk about my future career prospects. It seems, the best scenario is to get me any sort of a job" (Refugee 24).

Politically, the agencies are responsible for bridging the gap between refugees' and employers' expectations, but, in practice, they struggle with this task. Some agency interviewees were concerned about their growing responsibilities. They reported that they are in the unpleasant situation of acting on behalf of employers (e.g., recruiting and training potential employees) and making political decisions: "Managers and politicians have to do something about this chaos. We are not able to handle the workload and the mess … We need the assistance of the companies to prepare refugees for successful employment. We are not trained to do the jobs of HRM specialists" (Career Advisor, Agency 3). Some were more optimistic: "The lack of skilled labor will drive refugees' employment in the right direction, but it will take time …. we need faster asylum decisions if we are to create sustainable employment" (Director, agency 1). Overall, agency representatives' major concern was the lack of communication with other stakeholders. The different views, expectations, and approaches of the actors involved impede or even hinder refugees' ability to handle capital losses or access new capital relevant to finding employment.

Social status and employment

Some refugees were dissatisfied with the employment assistance offered, reporting unfair and discriminatory attitudes and behaviors: "… people think we are murderers and thieves. I wish I knew what can be done to remove this idea …. We are normal people and need support to find a decent job. How can you find a good job, if the person on the other side of the table thinks you are a

criminal?" (Refugee 7). Discrimination is an obvious barrier to integration: "We remain as foreigners who are tolerated. We carry an official document which says 'tolerated'. I mean, we are very different from the German population, and they want us to be different" (Refugee 28). And: "Generally speaking, it is almost impossible to find a good job. We are considered as low-class labor compared to the Germans. The companies make it very clear that a refugee is recruited if there is no other option available" (Refugee 16).

While refugees report different forms of discrimination, agency workers refer to reduced levels of trust and language abilities as challenges to finding employment: "They have been through very harsh experiences and are therefore quite difficult to handle. You never know if they are telling you the truth or not. I personally never know if I can trust refugee job seekers. In addition, a lot of miscommunication happens due to the lack of a common language" (Head of Department, Agency 2).

Study I shows how the interplay between field and cultural capital, specifically embodied cultural capital, can presents a number of challenges in the pre-employment phase. For example, refugees experience difficulties in getting recognition of qualifications and work experiences from the home country. The social status of refugees with uncertain prospects and unfamiliarity with the German language and culture are major contributors to their fragile situation while searching for a job. The pre-employment stage is characterized by lack of agency and access to capital. Refugees are, to differing extents, unable to engage in educational and skill-enhancing measures and opportunities to obtain qualifications. Their experiences indicate the differential social valuation of different groups: The different functions played by different stakeholder have different values (Westlund & Bolton, 2003) depending on how these stakeholders are positioned in relation to structures of power but also depending on what the goals are. For instance, employment agencies might be useful for securing a job but not that advantageous for advancing careers.

Study II: Post employment

Study II delves deeper into the interplay between field and capital for refugees who managed to get into work, from both the refugees' and the firms' perspectives.

The role of employers

The managers we interviewed believe that hiring refugees will bring more openness and cultural diversity to their teams: "We are an international company (…) We are also interested to have people from other countries to bring new and fresh ideas … .. we can learn from them too" (Manager 9). The refugees bring different kinds of knowledge and ideas to a firm, particularly in the "research and development" and international sales departments: "For example, in R&D, we want to be creative and have new ideas. Having a refugee in our team will help us, because we exchange ideas about our cultures—in the long-term maybe you will have a good colleague" (Manager 5).

Most of the managers were proud that their firm offered integration projects and provided internships to refugees, meeting their social responsibility commitments: "I think [supporting refugees] gives us a positive image, but that's not important to us. I mean, we do it because we feel ourselves responsible and we want to help. They are new in this country and culture. If we have the possibility to give them a chance in our company, why not? I think everyone is happy to have them" (Main Initiator of Integration Project 2). The key motivation of the managers for offering internships and employment to refugees was their feeling of obligation to society, in terms of corporate social responsibility: "For our CEO, it was also important to do something not just about environmental issues but also in respect of refugees" (Main Initiator of Integration Project 9).

In addition, some firms offer unpaid internship programmes for refugees. Such low- or no-cost projects may decrease the expenses associated with recruitment, but even so, organizations wanted to be careful in the way they allocate them: "We have a limited budget for every department. If we want to start such a project, we need to make sure that it will not cost us much, otherwise these integration internships will stand in contrast with our normal interns. Of course, then we will choose someone who has studied in Germany" (Manager 3).

Refugees were only rarely provided with job-specific resources such as training and development. The refugees in our study are socialized by their environment and the people they are interacting with.

Developing linguistic capital during employment

Work in such circumstances presents a new situation for both the refugees and the members of the indigenous majority group. Language proficiency was seen as an important issue, especially in technical fields, like working laboratories, where "professional" language was used. This is challenging for refugees in the first years of arrival, but language skills are one of the most relevant resources: "In our technical working environment, a refugee's German skills could be good for a conversation, but there is some particular technical vocabulary that they find difficult to understand" (Manager 1).

For some jobs, German language skills are not a priority, and greater focus is placed on other professional skills and experience. For instance, IT or similar jobs focus more on technical skills rather than language: "In

our work, language is not the most important thing, they can learn it by working. I had three refugee interns; they learned it while they were here. Now they can speak very good German" (Manager 6).

Despite the importance of speaking the local language, organizations seemed reluctant to incur the costs that providing language courses would entail.

Adopting to embodied cultural capital relevant to the field

Key challenges for the employment of refugees are matching job requirements with the refugees' skills and "on-boarding." Some internships were successful, and refugees received an extension of the internship period and then full-time employment with the same organization. Other internships were terminated before the deadline. The reasons for both involuntary and voluntary turnover were seen as a limited involvement of HRM specialists in the process, a mismatch between refugees' skills and educational background and the job, not enough focus on cultural differences, and the length of the internship. "In our integration internship, HRM played the administrative role. They prepared the personnel number and documents, but I don't think they were really involved …. It was planned by the CSR department" (Manager 4).

Religion could be another source of problems. The majority of the refugees who have come to Germany are from Muslim countries (ECRE, 2016): "We normally go together for lunch, which is important for team building. This refugee did not join us because of Ramadan. In another event, the colleagues did not come to work - we knew about Ramadan, but we did not know that nobody will come to work" (MI-1). One of the refugees mentioned that he decided not to share with his colleagues the fact that he was fasting, due to a fear that it may give a negative impression: "It was hard for me, but I also did not want to show everyone that I am fasting. At lunchtime colleague knew that I am fasting because I didn't go for lunch. But they respected that" (Refugee 1).

The Muslim practice of covering women's hair was another religious issue: "One time we suggested a female refugee to our HRM department for processing the paperwork. The manager said yes, but she wears a headscarf …. OK, what then! It is the same as you are wearing a tie" (MI-3).

Many managers observed a lack of confidence in the refugees: "Germans are more direct, and refugees communicate rather indirectly. This may also hinder them from asking questions or having an individual voice or opinion" (Manager 1). The refugees agreed that it is part of their culture to be polite and rather indirect in their communication, which is often interpreted as lack of confidence. Refugees observe different communication styles and adapt to new ways of communication over time: "At the first meeting, I was a bit shy and nervous. Colleagues were so cool and always laughed. It made me feel more comfortable to speak, and everything was OK afterwards. I felt good … We have another culture and mentality at home, but here it is always good to ask questions, and ask for feedback for your work" (Refugee 4).

Study II shows that the challenges of being a refugee associated with the pre-employment phase continue during employment. The management of refugees is associated with good will and CSR-based practice rather than effective resourcing strategies with economic benefits.

For the refugees, using Bourdieu's theory of practice, mastery of the new rules to access and accumulate capital to advance employment continue to present challenges associated with skills, language, and cultural differences, particularly aspects associated with religion.

Overall, refugees' employment experiences remained constrained due to fact that on-the job-specific resources are rarely provided. Organizations rely either on the government agencies to equip the refugees with the skills and competencies they need or they consider the employment of refugees as their social responsibility. Although the refugees faced numerous challenges, we found examples of significant social support from managers. One example concerns managers helping a refugee to learn the language and support for integration: "After we realized that it was too much for him - he was really overwhelmed. Then we tried to help him find an apartment, learn German with us, and also get his university documents from his home country. We gave him information about how to apply to universities to get admission, etc. For him, I think it was good and successful, though for us it was not a help" (Main Initiator of Integration Project).

Overall, as data in Study II show, the in-employment experiences of refugees are shaped by a set of challenges, often hindering them from securing long-term employment. Despite the effort of employment agencies, employers, and colleagues, their situation remains rather disadvantaged and fragile.

DISCUSSION

This research used a Bourdieusian perspective to explore the questions (1) *How do refugees experience the recognition process of academic and professional credentials while seeking employment? (2) How do various actors, including employment agencies, employers, and colleagues, contribute to the development of relevant cultural capital?* While Study I provides evidence of how refugees and the agencies overcome the individuals' limited ability to locate and accumulate relevant embodied cultural capital to secure employment, Study II shows how refugees' ability and opportunity to transform embodied cultural capital into institutionalized cultural plays out once they get employed. As our findings show, organizations often step in to help either because they want to contribute to the

greater good or they believe it helps their branding. However, their efforts tend to be rather superficial with limited attempts to create an inclusive environment that recognizes refugees' identities and leads to greater inclusion. Their approaches do not generally help the refugees acquire or accumulate capital valuable to their employment. Even after securing an internship, or employment, refugees feel and experience the implication of transitioning into a new field.

Although the employment and integration related aspects of refugees have recently gained greater attention in management, or more specifically HRM, research (Bešić et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2020; Ortlieb, Glauninger, & Weiss, 2021; Schmidt & Müller, 2021) less is known about the interrelations and convertibility of embodied and institutionalized cultural capital. This study suggests that legitimization of context-specific language and cultural capital as a tradeable asset in the local environment leads to asymmetric power relations between refugees and other job seekers in the German employment market. Moreover, the dynamic relationships between cultural capital and various actors exemplify the ups and downs refugees experience in the validation of their cultural resources. While refugees arrive with particular, internally different, forms of cultural capital created in their home countries, they also acquired, accumulated, and lost cultural capital, at times in unexpected ways. This process is not just bound to individual resources, but they must be seen in the light of wider historical, sociopolitical, and institutional development.

Refugees actual, or assumed, lack of skills is mainly caused by their foreign status and limited ability to understand the embodied cultural capital, so that they have difficulties accumulating field-relevant capital to advance their employment. They find it hard to transform different capitals into institutionalized capital. Consequently, developing embodied cultural and institutionalized capital remains a major challenge both during job-search and in-employment. This limitation in turn hinders the (re)production of symbolic and economic capital, so refugees are kept out of the circulation of capital, leading to them being disadvantaged in the employment market.

Accessing and accumulating cultural capital is difficult for refugees because employability is characterized and established by dominant groups of nationals, and power and status allow them to create standards, policies, and practices. In the context of migration, the notions of skill in migration are geographically specific as professional regulations and national policies play an important part in the construction of the category of "skilled migrant," and, indeed, many migrants experience a devaluation or nonrecognition of their skills (Kofman & Raghuram, 2006).

The legitimization of cultural capital is accepted and upheld by locals because its value is created and legitimized over time in local fields. These standards, policies, and practices often conflict with the resources refugees are equipped with. Refugees' ability actively to constitute their cultural capital to fit in with the ethnically dominant culture of Germany is limited. Resources and assets such as language knowledge and accent may legitimize belonging (Hage, 1998, 53) but can also jeopardize it (Śliwa et al., 2023). Refugees are often aware of being marginalized, and that it limits their ability get employment, leading to a lack of agency and greater dependency.

Thus, institutionalized cultural capital acts as an arrangement of domination and power. Due to their minority status and low power status, refugees often have no other choice than to accept the legitimized rules of the socially rooted rules, which create, and uphold, their disadvantageous position in the employment market. As the findings show, refugees attempt to develop more field specific capital, such as learning the German language, but at the same time, they accept their disadvantaged position within the employment market and organizations. Challenges to transform different forms of capital to institutional capital present different manifestations of discrimination and devaluation, exemplified by the government agencies taking over roles and responsibilities that it might be thought would be performed by HRM specialists. Even when refugees secure employment, HRM expertise continue to be, largely, absent.

This may partly be context-specific, given the institutional focus in Germany on long-term employment and the existence of codetermination (Festing, 2012). Long-term employment and development contrast with refugee employment, as evidenced in Study II. Bourdieu's conceptualization of institutional cultural capital may explain how national institutions exercise protectionism by not recognizing qualifications acquired abroad. Yet even where "foreign" qualifications are formally recognized, employers invoke criteria such as the lack of local professional experience. This turns apparently neutral job specifications into "national capital" (Hage, 1998) and enables privileged access to skilled jobs for those considered properly part of the nation—and that does not include refugees (Erel, 2010). As our findings show, this tacit national capital contains elements of embodied cultural capital, such as the ability to participate in locally shared professional cultures. These concrete practices of professional protectionism differentially influence refugees' career trajectories. In contrast, a comparative study of German professionals working in developing countries, and highly skilled migrants from the Third World in Germany, found that German professionals do not depend on the local cultural capital of the countries they work in because their "western" cultural capital is universalized. In spite of some having outstanding academic credentials, migrants from developing countries were, however, disadvantaged by their slow career progression (Weiss, 2005).

In our sample, participating refugees wanted to work, but most were stymied by the system and the institutions

that they faced. Although some restrictive regulations concerning employment in Germany have been eased, refugees still encounter many bureaucratic obstacles. Moreover, short-term contract, internships, or the lack of personal and professional development ensure that the social hierarchy across groups is maintained.

CONCLUSIONS

Our study contributes to two streams of research. First, by connecting our insights on refugees' interaction between field and capital, we contribute a different theoretical approach and further information on a specific context to the literature on migrants' and refugees' labor market integration (Lee et al., 2020; Nardon et al., 2021). The theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991) has been criticized for downgrading the capacity of individuals to transform existing systems through their actions (Pula, 2020). While this research echoes the theory of practice by showing the limited capacity of refugees to access and accumulate capital, there is room for individual agency as demonstrated by the refugees in Study II who sought to improve their cultural capital and gain work. Furthermore, our study adds to the applications of the theory of practice in refugee research. While previous studies (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018; Ortlieb, Eggenhofer-Rehart, et al., 2021) used this theory to show how lack of or limited access to capital constrains the employment of refugees, our study extends this line of argument by showing how refugees can, or fail to, transform different capitals into institutionalized capital after employment. While the importance of refugees' unique value in host countries has been emphasized (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018; Ortlieb, Eggenhofer-Rehart, et al., 2021), less attention has been paid to employment market rules and how the practices of organizations are dominated by local players (Bešić et al., 2022). Our analysis shows that while close-knit networks of different actors can provide information and support-related benefits, they offer limited support to refugees to access or utilize forms of capital to advance employment effectively. Greater involvement of HRM specialists could facilitate the acquisition of capital by refugees.

Second, we demonstrated in two complementary studies how the conversion of different capitals into symbolic capital occurs pre- and in-employment. For refugees, moving to Germany is associated with significantly different rules (Cohen & Duberley, 2015). The theorization of cultural capital in migration studies has been labeled a "rucksack approach" (Erel, 2010). From this perspective, migrants bring with them a package of cultural resources that may or may not fit with the "culture" of the country. In comparison to locals, who are unconsciously endowed with the aligned cultural habitus—the feel for the game (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991)—refugees lack practical mastery of the game's logic. This research demonstrates how and why cultural capital contributes to refugees' status and their liability of foreignness: The hazards of discrimination and unfamiliarity with refugees' foreign human capital (Fang et al., 2013) in the local context. Refugees' problems in terms of capital gains change but are not resolved, once employment is secured: The effects of employment-related capital devaluation persist (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This study also contributes to research on employment and integration of refugees by focusing on the interrelations of the capital types in the coordinated market economy of Germany.

Limitations and future research agenda

While this research enabled us to gain some insights into the immobility of capital in different fields, longitudinal studies of the same people would be preferable. Although our findings show the different challenges refugees face prior and during employment, future research would benefit from studying different forms of capital within different phases of employment. Similarly, we only interviewed employers who have taken on employees, so that we could assess their policies and the effects, but it would also be useful to collect data from employers who do not take on refugees and include those organizations in a larger study. Our data was gathered in the German national context, which is a relevant research site for these purposes, but it would be useful to be able to compare our findings with the situation in smaller countries, countries where refugees are less common and countries without the high levels of protectionism and the longer term thinking that characterize Germany.

Practical implications

Employment of refugees has practical implications for several stakeholders. For refugees, working to understand the system through discussion with other refugees, agencies, and so forth, will help them navigate through it. The agencies need greater recognition of their role in assisting refugees to establish themselves by accessing and accumulating employment-related capital (e.g., faster recognition of home country qualifications). Without further government support, well-meaning employers and volunteers are forced to rely on inadequate resources, meaning that they get personally discouraged, and refugees do not trust them, but further government support seems unlikely given the current political and economic debates in Germany. In the absence of appropriate resources, a key implication from this research is that there is a need for more consistent policy-making and more attention given to linking the agencies and potential employers with the aim of

improving refugee employment success. HRM specialists are encouraged to think carefully about the costs and benefits that including refugees could bring in order to reinforce their role as resource allocators.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Washika Haak-Saheem: Data collection; methodology; conceptualization; writing and review (lead). **Rita Fontinha**: Conceptualization; writing; editing (equal). **Chris Brewster**: review and editing (equal). **Sarah Margaretha Jastram**: Methodology; writing and editing (equal). **Ahmad Zubair**: Data collection and analysis (equal).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

As the authors of this manuscript, we declare that there are no conflicts of interest to disclose related to the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

ETHICAL STATEMENT

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2008. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. Any potential conflicts of interest were disclosed and managed according to institutional guidelines.

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