

# Using Walking Interviews in Migration Research: A Systematic Review of the Qualitative Research Literature

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## Abstract

In the field of migration research, the frequency of employing qualitative walking interviews has risen in recent years to delve into the construction, evolution, and negotiation mechanisms of migrant identities within everyday spatial practices. This novel mobile method emphasizes the interaction between micro-experience and macro-structure. It facilitates a shift away from viewing migrants as passive outsiders, empowering them with increased agency, and allow researchers to gain deeper insights into migrants' emotional dynamics, life experiences, and self-identification within new social landscapes and power configurations. This systematic review aims to evaluate, integrate, and analyse the current empirical evidence in qualitative migration research using walking/go-along interviews for different types of migrants (defined as an individual who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons). This review brings together for the first time the knowledge and insights from migration research that involves walking interviews. This review employs framework synthesis to analyse the 24 included articles, identifying five major themes: (1) synergising diverse research methods within different research designs; (2) adjustment of power dynamics; (3) migrants' place-based threefold agency; (4) migrants' identity construction; (5) place-based sense of belonging or exclusion. By integrating these themes, the methodological contribution of this review lies in recognizing the advantages of combining walking interviews with other research methods, which lies in capturing the multidimensional aspects of mobility, allowing researchers to flexibly switch between methodological strategies and spatial scales. Additionally, this paper recommends a deeper exploration of migratory experiences to transcend prevailing practical knowledge and pay sensitive attention to potential ethical issues throughout the research. Such investigation has the potential to uncover the dynamic evolution of agency, identity construction, and the fluctuating sense of belonging among various migrants throughout their journey.

## Keywords

walking interview, migration, migrant, qualitative synthesis, systematic review

## Introduction

Two decades ago, walk-along interviews, also referred to as walking or docent interviews, were introduced as an innovative qualitative research method within the mobilities paradigm, initially proposed for social science research (Kusenbach, 2003). Today, its recognition and range of application continue to expand (Sheller & Urry, 2006). "Walking with participants" has always been a focal point in anthropological research (Emmel & Clark, 2009). In the early stages of this field, anthropologists and geographers adopted this dynamic method, accompanying participants in their travels

during conversations – whether walking or driving – therefore broadening the perspective of fieldwork. This approach enabled researchers to observe, experience, and understand

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participants' lives, thereby exploring deeper relationships between people and social spaces (Anderson, 2004). In recent years, walking is gradually becoming an important cognitive tool in social science research. It is not only a way of thinking and a tool for refreshing memory but also a method that connects bodies with the surrounding nature, communities, and the broader urban or rural spaces (Fathi, 2023). The methods, agendas, purposes, and concepts of walking interviews have also undergone a significant re-evaluation. It is no longer just a simple walk-and-talk but has developed into interview frameworks with structure and objectives, focusing on exploring participants' perspectives and responses to specific places, spaces, and social connections.

Walking interviews are increasingly emphasized in place-based research, particularly within migration studies. With migration manifesting increasing levels of de-territorialization and hyper-mobility, scholars are shifting their focus from mere discussions of migration phenomena and causes to the transformations of spatial environments implicated in migratory processes, their effects on migrants' experiences, and the interaction between individual migrant narratives and broader socio-narratives (Conradson & Latham, 2005; Ley, 2004; Silvey & Lawson, 1999). This analytical approach contests the static view of migrant identities and underlines the crucial role of space in shaping the migrant experience. Such emerging spatial perspective in migration research also allows for a nuanced understanding of inclusion and exclusion issues that migrants encounter as they integrate into new social contexts, examining who holds the power to influence the practices and representational structures of public spaces (Middleton, 2009).

In-depth studies of the concept of space provide a solid theoretical foundation and methodological paradigm for the use of walking interviews in migration studies. Such methods and frameworks empower migrants as active creators of their own narratives, allowing them to shape these environments in return while adapting to new surroundings, to interpret the role of individual subjectivity more accurately (King, 2012). Researchers employing this method should not simply focus on emphasizing disruption or difference—where migrants are always observed as “the other”—or an overt focus on the perspective of assimilation, as this may obscure the subtle differences within migrant groups (Collins, 2012; Grzymala-Kazłowska, 2016). As a spatialised and embodied research tool (Warren, 2017), walking interviews can reveal how migrants navigate, negotiate, and transform social and physical spaces, exploring how space affects the reshaping of the upper strata of society, economy, culture, and politics, and how these processes of reshaping, in turn, influence migrants' identity formation and life experiences.

Qualitative methods, contrasting with quantitative approaches that prioritize causality and theory validation (Elliott et al., 1999), emphasize the exploration of individual experiences and context-dependent perspectives. These methods gather data on personal lived experiences and comprehension

of phenomena, facilitating the creation of nuanced knowledge systems and unveiling a diversity of insights not fully accessible through statistical analysis alone (Gough, 2015). Thomas and Harden (2008) argue that qualitative research provides valuable perspectives with a rigor comparable to that of quantitative methods. While there exists a body of systematic quantitative reviews on migrant working conditions and health status, such as those by Curtis et al. (2018) and Hennegan et al. (2015), qualitative reviews that seek to capture individual migrant experiences in host countries remain sparse. Moreover, there is a scarcity of using the walking interview method compared to traditional face-to-face sitting interviews, and a lack of systematic review assessing this method's implementation in migration research. Therefore, this review aims to bridge this research gap by conducting a systematic analysis of qualitative migration studies employing walking interviews, elucidating the applications of this method, its research outputs, and how it enhances our understanding of migrants' life experiences. This review will primarily explore the following questions:

1. In what ways have walking interviews been utilized within qualitative migration research to gather data?
2. How does the adoption of walking interviews enhance our understanding of migrants' lived experiences?

## Definitions

The definition of “migrant” varies by context, including legal, social, or research domains. A broadly accepted definition by the United Nations' International Organization for Migration (IOM) describes a migrant as an individual who “moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons (Sironi et al., 2019, p. 132).” This term includes well-defined legal categories such as migrant workers; those whose movements fall under specific legal definitions, like smuggled migrants; and categories not precisely defined under international law, such as international students. The definition acknowledges the variety of scenarios under which migration occurs and clarifies that migration can happen both within and across national borders. It further differentiates migrants from tourists and travellers, who are mobile for other purposes, such as leisure or business. In essence, internationally, a singular, universally accepted definition of “migrant” does not exist (Sironi et al., 2019). Consequently, for the purpose of this review, a broad interpretation of migrants has been adopted, inclusive of rural-to-urban migrants, regional migrants, international migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees.

## Method

A qualitative systematic review integrates and compares findings from qualitative research and, when conducted

rigorously, reveals new insights that can illuminate underlying reasons and contribute to theory building (Grant & Booth, 2009; Seers, 2015). This approach is particularly well-suited for this review of the evidence given that some migration studies have incorporated walking interviews as a distinct qualitative research method. This review was conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework (Moher et al., 2009), as well as the Enhancing Transparency in Reporting the Synthesis of Qualitative Research (ENTREQ) statement (Tong et al., 2012). The details of the process are provided in the following sections.

### Inclusion Criteria

This review focused on studies that reported qualitative evidence of migrants' experiences by using walking interviews. The studies were selected based on the following inclusion criteria:

- ⑩ The review included studies featuring a research sample of migrants, as previously defined, without restrictions on the geographical context or the country involved.
- ⑩ Publications were selected based on the inclusion of in-depth qualitative data analysis pertaining to migrants, including both qualitative studies and mixed methods research—provided that the qualitative component formed a significant aspect of the study and made a substantive contribution to the outcomes.
- ⑩ Publications were selected based on their focus on the individual lived experiences of migrants.
- ⑩ The review was confined to publications employing walking interviews as the only or important part of data collection technique(s), and such publications were required to contain explicit discussions on the use of walking interviews.
- ⑩ The beginning of the 21st century marks a period of globalization, economic transformation, and policy shifts, which have significantly influenced the academic sphere's burgeoning interest in innovatively understanding migration experiences. Introduced by Kusenbach (2003), walking interviews emerged as a novel qualitative research method. Hence, this review selectively examines English-language literature from 2000 to 2024 to chart the progression of this technique within migration studies.
- ⑩ The scope of eligible research only includes articles published in academic journals. Books, book chapters, theses or dissertations, reports, working papers, conference papers, and other grey literature were excluded.

The principal aim of this review was to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the methodologies and rationales underpinning the utilization of walking interviews with migrant populations. Accordingly, the central criterion for

quality assessment hinged on the presence of a thorough description of how walking interviews were conducted with the participants. Inclusion in the review was contingent upon articles containing explicit methodological statements.

### Search Strategy

The following bibliographic databases were screened: Medline, PubMed, Web of Science, SCOPUS, ProQuest, and CINAHL in January 2024. The search strategy employed a broad combination of keywords pertaining to “migration” and “walking interview” to ensure an inclusive capture of relevant findings. The search terms included:

- (1) “walking interview\*” OR “mobile interview\*” OR “go-along interview\*” OR “walk-along interview\*” OR “docent interview\*”
- (2) “migrant\*” OR “migrat\*” OR “immigrant\*” OR “immigrat\*” OR “internal migrant\*” OR “internal migrat\*” OR “international migrant\*” OR “international migrat\*” OR “migrant worker\*” OR “smuggled migrant\*” OR “asylum seeker\*” OR “refugee\*”.

To ensure rigor and quality, two authors implemented a paired screening process. Initially, two authors independently reviewed the titles and abstracts of all search-identified publications against the inclusion criteria. Subsequently, in the second stage, the full texts of the selected and ambiguous studies were meticulously screened using the same criteria. Following inclusion, studies were rigorously assessed for quality, and only those classified as high or medium quality were incorporated into the evidence synthesis. Any disagreements between the reviewers were resolved through discussions.

### Data Extraction and Quality Appraisal

In systematic reviews that incorporate a wide array of empirical sources, it is advisable to evaluate and rate these sources based on key criteria pertinent to the review's focus, rather than adopting method-specific approaches (Whitemore & Knafl, 2005). Therefore, for the present review, the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI) criteria informed the quality assessment process. This framework facilitates the appraisal of various study designs and offers a tailored assessment of quality specific to the review (EPPI-Centre, 2010). The studies were evaluated based on three core criteria:

- ⑩ Methodological quality, reflecting the trustworthiness and credibility of the results.
- ⑩ Methodological relevance, gauging the suitability of the study design in addressing the review's research question.

- ⑩ Topic relevance, assessing the pertinence of the study's subject matter to the review's research question.

The first and second authors performed data extraction and quality assessment separately and independently, with any discrepancies discussed among the entire author team. Each study was scored across the three domains on a scale of 1 (poor) to 3 (good), resulting in a cumulative maximum score of nine. Studies achieving a total score of 3 or less were excluded due to inadequate quality.

## Methods of Synthesis

Framework synthesis presents data from included studies using a tentative priori framework of themes and concepts (Gale et al., 2013; Gough et al., 2017). As new concepts and themes emerge during data analysis, this framework is subject to change (Gough et al., 2017). This review follows five stages:

- *Familiarization.* Two reviewers familiarize themselves with the literature that has been included by screening.
- *Developing a working thematic framework.* Since there is no readily available framework to conceptualize the application and effects of walking interviews in migration research, the reviewers developed a preliminary framework based on a pilot review and their prior knowledge, including basic study information (such as research context), research population and sample size, study design (such as qualitative or mixed methods), details of the walking interview implementation (such as timing, location, and manner of interview), and methodological insights.
- *Indexing.* The reviewers conducted free line-by-line coding of the initial research findings. As new areas and themes emerged, the initial framework was revised accordingly, and themes within each empirical domain were identified.
- *Charting data into the framework.* Based on the free codes from the previous stage, the reviewers conducted a thematic analysis, examining the similarities and differences between each theme, and reorganized and regrouped the codes into higher-order categories according to review questions.
- *Mapping and interpreting.* Themes related to the review questions were selected, and the reviewers mapped the connections between these themes as a method of interpreting the findings.

## Results

### Results of Screening and Quality Appraisal

Out of a pool of 1581 academic journal articles sourced, 65 were selected for comprehensive evaluation of the full text

based on their title and abstract. Subsequently, 27 articles were identified for meticulous quality assessment. The results were presented in Table 1. In the end, 24 studies were assessed suitable for evidence synthesis. On the contrary, 3 studies marked as low quality were excluded, principally due to inadequate walking interview descriptions, sufficient data analysis process and limited scope and significance of results. The studies that were included embodied the most pertinent high-quality qualitative evidence to address the research questions. The full selection process is systematically illustrated in Figure 1.

### Study Description

This systematic review referenced 24 articles published between 2016 and 2024. Table 2 describes these publications in terms of research locations, participant types and demographic details, research methods, rational for using walking interviews, main research questions, and key methodological insights. Geographically, one study was conducted in China, one in Singapore, two in Ireland, one in Ireland, Caribbean and Poland, three in Australia, three in the United Kingdom, four in the Netherlands, two in Greece, one in Norway, two in Germany, one in Belgium, one in Canada, one in Palestine, and one in Bangladesh. The ages of participants ranged from 7 to 92 years old. The subjects of 12 studies were (im)migrants; 10 studies targeted refugees; 2 studies focused on a combination of refugees and migrants. Of these studies, six had an all-male sample, four had an all-female sample; two studies exclusively involved the elderly, and one focused solely on children. Five studies used walking interviews as the only research method, while the remaining nineteen combined walking interviews with other methods, including semi-structured interviews, participatory interviews, video interviews, cognitive mapping, ethnography, and visual ethnography.

### Findings

To address Research Question 1, qualitative data regarding the application of walking interviews were extracted from 24 publications, specifically focusing on one area: "Synergising Diverse Research Methods within Different Research Designs."

#### *Synergising Diverse Research Methods within Different Research Designs*

In this review, 19 articles employed a multi-method approach, incorporating walking interviews to examine the complicated relationships among migrants, and between migrants and the spaces they inhabit. While walking interviews open up epistemological avenues for understanding the nuances of migrant experiences, its exclusive use has also exposed certain limitations, such as questions surrounding data utility and diminished productivity (Evans & Jones, 2011). Therefore,

**Table 1.** Quality Appraisal Results.

Author(s)	Methodological quality	Methodological relevance	Topic relevance	Overall score	Decision
Alam et al. (2020)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Anderson (2023)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Botfield et al. (2018)	3	3	2	8	Inclusion
Delaisse et al. (2021)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Fathi (2022)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Fathi (2023)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Feingold and Wasser (1994)	1	1	1	3	Exclusion
Flick et al. (2019)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Gardner et al. (2022)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Huizinga (2023)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Huizinga and van Hoven (2018)	2	2	3	7	Inclusion
Huizinga and van Hoven (2021)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Kim-Bossard (2017)	1	1	1	3	Exclusion
Kochan (2016)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Lenette and Gardner (2021)	1	1	1	3	Exclusion
Loong (2018)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Lórinç et al. (2022)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
O'Neill (2018)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Ratnam and Drozdowski (2020)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Ryan et al. (2021)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Sepehr et al. (2023)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Smets and Ahenkona (2024)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Van Liempt and Staring (2021)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Veronese et al. (2020)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Warren (2017)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Zisakou et al. (2023)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion
Zisakou et al. (2023)	3	3	3	9	Inclusion

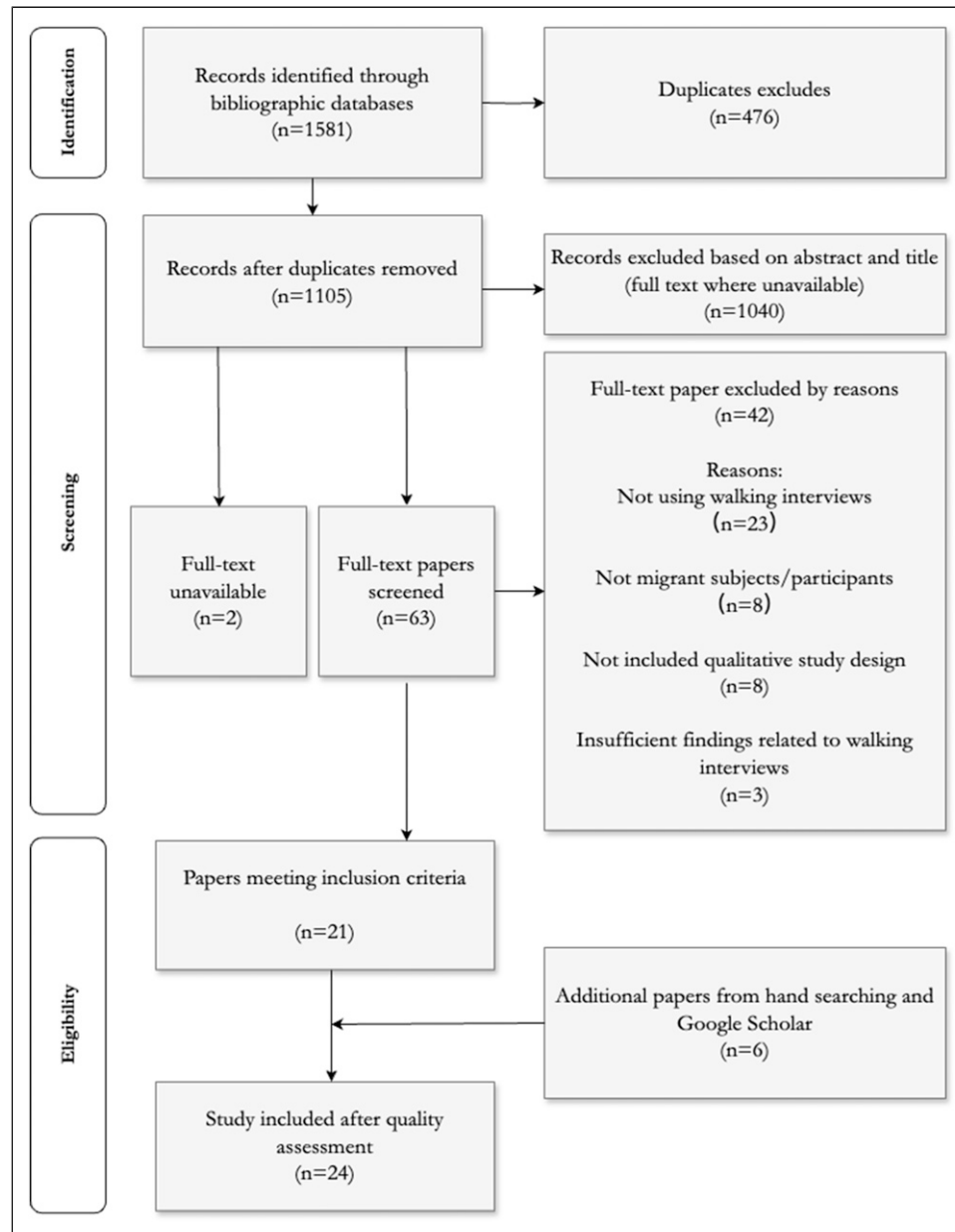
Carpiano (2009) and Flick et al. (2019) advocate for actively pursuing triangulation strategies that combine walking interviews with other data collection techniques to fully capture the heterogeneous, layered, and often contradictory realities encountered by migrants daily.

Multimethod research designs offer substantial benefits, including enhanced triangulation, complementary narratives, the illumination of contradictions and paradoxes, and the potential for the extension of current research directions (Brannen, 2005). In practice, an integrated methodological framework can dynamically respond to diverse research themes and contexts, avoiding homogenization in research. Such an approach can uncover the intricate processes through which migrants negotiate and reshape their multifaceted identities across various locations and scales, as well as their interactions with the spatial dimensions of daily life (Darbyshire et al., 2005; Denzin, 2009; Mendoza & Morén-Alegret, 2013).

Furthermore, in response to the growing need for research on mobility (Fincham et al., 2009; Sheller & Urry, 2006), forming a combination of qualitative methods including walking interviews can facilitate a nuanced understanding of migratory phenomena and their impact on immigrants' living spaces (Collins, 2012). Unlike the static perspective of

traditional quantitative migration studies, the methodological combination of the papers under review fosters a closer engagement with mobility. For instance, walking interviews generate profound observations into migrants' life experiences and their interactions with micro-geographical settings. Through visual/arts-based methods such as participatory video-making and visual artefact production (Smets & Ahenkona, 2024), self-photography (Kochan, 2016), visual ethnography (Fathi, 2023), photovoice (Fathi, 2022), filming (Ratnam & Drozdowski, 2020), photo-taking (Van Liempt & Staring, 2021), drawing (Veronese et al., 2020), photography and film (O'Neill, 2018), photo-response (Alam et al., 2020), researchers can deeply and intuitively understand migrants' personalized behaviours and expressions towards mobility through images and videos. In addition, by integrating participatory methods like participant observation (Delaisse et al., 2021) and field observations (Anderson, 2023), researchers immerse themselves in their research context. This immersion facilitates the acquisition of background knowledge and offers insights into the manifold dimensions of migrant-environment interactions that face-to-face interviews may fail to reveal. Overall, each selected tool captures different facets of mobility, allowing researchers to transition between methodological strategies and spatial scales to highlight the meaning,





**Figure 1.** PRISMA flow diagram of the study selection process.

performance, and identity associated with mobility and dynamism itself.

It is noteworthy that 13 included papers adopted a combination of sedentary/face-to-face interviews with walking interviews (Alam et al., 2020; S. Anderson, 2023; Botfield et al., 2018; Delaisse et al., 2021; Huizinga, 2023; Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018, 2021; Loong, 2018; Lőrinc et al., 2022; Ratnam & Drozdowski, 2020; Ryan et al., 2021; Sepehr et al., 2023; Van Liempt & Staring, 2021). Walking interviews were utilized as second-round interviews to confirm and enhance the insights gained from the initial traditional interviews or observations. The authors consistently emphasized that the knowledge acquired from the first round of stationary

interviews informed more focused objectives for the subsequent walking interviews.

Moreover, in terms of research design, in addition to generic qualitative research design, walking interview strategy was applied across various study designs, including phenomenological research and ethnographic research in included papers. In the article by O'Neill (2018, p. 74), it is explicitly mentioned that the use of walking constitutes a phenomenological method. From a phenomenological perspective, the significance of walking resides in its capacity to establish a tangible connection with the external world through movement and conversation across varied settings. This method offers a novel point from which to comprehend phenomena

**Table 2.** Descriptions of the Included Research.

Author(s)	Title	Location(s)	Participants' migrant type	Method(s)	Rationale for using walking Interview(s)	Main research question	Key methodological take away
<a href="#">Alam et al. (2020)</a>	Women's mobility, neighbourhood socio-ecologies and homemaking in urban informal settlements	Bangladesh	Rural migrants (N = 17; age: N/A; gender: Female)	Photo-response (N = N/A), individual and group interviews (N = 17), and day long walking interviews (N = 3)	Walking interviews highlight how mobility becomes a crucial resource for homemakers to cultivate a sense of home	How do migrant homes establish connections with neighbourhood socioecology, demonstrating fluidity and interconnectedness?	Urban planning and policies should recognize the diverse ways in which migrants develop spatial competencies and maintain their homes in cities. Adopting a non-territorial understanding of home proves valuable in acknowledging the spatial opportunities for communities that extend beyond physical shelter
<a href="#">Anderson (2023)</a>	Mobilising memories and practices from the past: Refugees' belonging in the Norwegian outdoors	Norway	Refugees (N = 21; age: 17–55; gender: Mixed)	In-depth interviews (N = 21), walking interviews (N = 17), and field observations (N = N/A)	Walking and place-centric interviews facilitate open-ended dialogues that carve out room for capturing lived experiences during data collection	How do memories and past practices influence refugees' efforts to create a sense of belonging through participating in friluftsliv?	The findings of this study call for further research into intentional resistance of place norms as a means of cultivating a sense of belonging. Such research would enhance our comprehension of how agency and personal expression shape refugees' endeavours to establish belonging in their host societies
<a href="#">Borfield et al. (2018)</a>	Engaging migrant and refugee young people with sexual health care: Does generation matter more than culture?	Australia	Young people from a migrant or refugee background (N = 27; age: 16–24; gender: Mixed)	Semi-structured interviews (N = 27), follow-up interviews (N = 9), and walking interviews (N = 15)	Walking interviews can establish harmony and trust with participants, providing an opportunity to seek additional insights, especially on issues that were not explored during the initial face-to-face interviews	How do migrant and refugee young people perceive and experience sexual and reproductive healthcare?	The study identifies ways in which sexual and reproductive health services could enhance the engagement of migrants and refugees. The utilization of walking interviews provides an opportunity for the participants to actively express their agency in seeking information and support, challenging the cultural norms and expectations that they described

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Author(s)	Title	Location(s)	Participants' migrant type	Method(s)	Rationale for using walking interview(s)	Main research question	Key methodological take away
<a href="#">Delaissé et al. (2021)</a>	Occupation's role in producing inclusive spaces: Immigrants' experiences in linguistic minority communities	Canada	French-speaking immigrants (N = 15; age: over 19; gender: Mixed)	In-depth semi-structured interview (N = N/A), go-along interview (N = 9)	The walking method enables a specific understanding of the lived and perceived space of participants	How does the occupational engagement of French-speaking immigrants contribute to the creation of francophone community spaces?	Go-along interviews suggest further research is needed to understand how occupations in informal spaces impact immigrants' daily lives, with a focus on how intersecting identities influence the spatiality of their activities
<a href="#">Fathi (2023)</a>	'City as home': Conducting walking interviews as biographical method with migrant men in cork	Ireland	International students (from outside EU and EEA countries) and refugees (not asylum seekers) (N = 20; age: N/A; gender: Male)	In-depth ethnography (N = N/A), walking interview with visual methods (N = 14)	Walking sessions were served as visual data supplementary to the interview content	How is the concept of 'city as home' understood by international male migrants?	During the walking interviews, the narrative elements (stories that form a linear and continuous biographical thread, typical in face-to-face interviews) are consistently disrupted by external factors
<a href="#">Fathi (2022)</a>	'My life is on hold': Examining home, belonging and temporality among migrant men in Ireland	Ireland	Irish young migrants (N = 19; age: 19–36; gender: Male)	Photo-elicited and follow up walking interviews (N = 19)	Walking interviews, combined with photography, can provide interviewees with a sense of homecoming and serve as a novel method for understanding the concept of home	How are narratives of home in migration linked to the sense of belonging in domestic spaces for male migrants?	It becomes apparent that the concept of home for migrant men is a complex and ever-evolving phenomenon. This is primarily attributed to the various interdependent aspects of home, including its spatial, temporal, emotional, inter-relational, and structural elements. Furthermore, the traditional association of home as a feminine domain creates a conflicting intersection between gender and space
<a href="#">Flick et al. (2019)</a>	Walking and talking integration: Triangulation of data from interviews and go-alongs for exploring immigrant welfare recipients' Sense(s) of belonging	Germany	Welfare recipients with an immigration background (N = 40; age: 27–53; gender: Mixed)	Episodic interviews (N = 40), and walking methods (N = 10)	By engaging in shared space, time, and experiences with the study participants through walking, researchers could observe how their everyday lives are intimately connected to the utilization of space and places	How do immigrants perceive and aspire towards belonging, participation, and integration from an intersectional perspective?	The study illustrated various modes of belonging related to space and place, emerging through diverse choices, perceptions, and utilization of urban environments. Incorporating mobile methods allowed researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the present realities in our participants' lives, surpassing what could have been achieved solely through face-to-face interviews focused on their pasts

(continued)



Table 2. (continued)

Author(s)	Title	Location(s)	Participants' migrant type	Method(s)	Rationale for using walking interview(s)	Main research question	Key methodological take away
<a href="#">Gardner et al. (2022)</a>	Who is the host? Interrogating hosting from refugee-background Women's perspectives	Australia	Refugee-background women (N = 3; age: N/A; gender: Female)	Walking interview (N = 3)	Walking along familiar routes allowed researchers to understand women's narratives of homemaking, the diverse interpretations of home, and the various factors contributing to a sense of home	How do refugee-background women conceptualize hosts and hosting in the resettlement process?	This article provides a micro-level analysis that emphasizes the gendered nuances of everyday, intra-cultural practices of hosting among refugee-background women. The act of walking reveals that rituals of hosting hold greater significance for newcomers from similar backgrounds, as opposed to the so-called host communities
<a href="#">Huizinga (2023)</a>	Carving out a space to belong: Young syrian men negotiating patriarchal dividend, (in)visibility and (mis)recognition in the Netherlands	Netherlands	Syrian heterosexual refugees (N = 44; age: 19–36; gender: Male)	In-depth interview (N = 42) and walking interview (N = 18)	Walking interviews facilitated the exploration of experiences related to place-making, enabling participants to narrate their interactions with their local social and built environments	How do syrian male refugees in the Netherlands navigate exclusionary state and public discourses in their everyday lives?	The empirical findings from walking interviews advances the understanding of the diverse lived experiences of male refugees in different places, the ways in which masculinities are shaped after migration through intersections of identity markers, and how individuals challenge state-defined repression and public discourses through grassroots efforts. The participants navigate their visibility by actively seeking or claiming public spaces, where they can cultivate a sense of self-worth and belonging

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Table 2. (continued)

Author(s)	Title	Location(s)	Participants' migrant type	Method(s)	Rationale for using walking interview(s)	Main research question	Key methodological take away
Huizinga and van Hoven (2018)	Everyday geographies of belonging: Syrian refugee experiences in the Northern Netherlands	Netherlands	Syrian male refugee (N = 10; age: 22–32; gender: Male)	In-depth interviews (N = N/A), and walking interviews (N = 7)	Walking interview will produce more place-specific data than the indoor interviews	How is the understanding of refugee integration influenced by opportunities for belonging and obstacles within the ethnically homogeneous context of the Northern Netherlands?	This research highlights that a sense of belonging is rooted in and manifested through space and place. It argues for a more constructive understanding of migrant communities and suggests the recognition of multiple spaces that foster refugee belonging. Achieving a sense of belonging is a complex, nuanced, and relational process, yet one that is often overlooked in the context of refugee dispersal in the Netherlands
Huizinga and van Hoven (2021)	Hegemonic masculinities after forced migration: Exploring relational performances of syrian refugee men in The Netherlands	Netherlands	Syrian refugee (N = 22; age: 19–35; gender: Male)	In-depth interviews (N = N/A) and walking interviews (N = N/A)	By highlighting their expertise in areas such as religion, through a walking interview, respondents were empowered to mitigate power imbalances during the research encounter	How do respondents shape their masculinities in relation to a restrictive host society using their personal biographies and generational narratives?	Through the utilization of a walking interview, participants were given an opportunity to exert influence over the research process and navigate power dynamics by highlighting their expertise in areas such as religion, their studies, or their own neighbourhood. The examination of masculinities among young syrian refugee men reveals their complex, contextual, and multi-faceted nature as spatial and temporal constructs
Kochan (2016)	(Re)placing migrants' mobility: A multi-method approach to integrating space and mobility in the study of migration	China	Chinese rural-to-urban migrant workers (N = N/A; age: 20–40; gender: Mixed)	Cognitive mapping (N = 50), walking interviews (N = N/A), and self-photography (N = N/A)	A blend of innovative methods can effectively accommodate diverse research subjects and environments, offering the potential to uncover the varied places and scales where migrants negotiate and transform their multiple identities	What are the relationships between migrants' identities, forms of attachment, and everyday spatial experiences?	The mobile methodological framework is instrumental in challenging the perception of migrants as inconspicuous inhabitants or contributors within urban settings, and it draws significant attention to the individual and collective endeavours of migrants in redefining their social and spatial affiliations, employing participatory, engaging, and empowering strategies

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Author(s)	Title	Location(s)	Participants' migrant type	Method(s)	Rationale for using walking interview(s)	Main research question	Key methodological take away
Loong (2018)	"This country, law very strong": Securitization beyond the border in the everyday lives of Bangladeshi migrant workers in Singapore	Singapore	Low-wage Bangladeshi migrants (N = 10; age: 24–35; gender: Male)	Static interview (N = 10), and walking interviews (N = 9)	Walking interviews were used to elicit more informative narratives about specific sites	How do Bangladeshi male migrant workers experience securitization within the state territory of Singapore on a daily basis?	Walking interviews make it clear that labour migrants contend with state authority on two levels: They navigate through little India with strategies that help them evade state surveillance and control, and they reframe state securitization measures as opportunities to advance their migration objectives
Lórinç et al. (2022)	"You still Want to Go lots of places": Exploring walking interviews in research with older migrants	Caribbean, Ireland, and Poland	Older migrants (N = 45; age: 65–92; gender: Mixed)	In-depth interviews (N = 45), walking interviews (N = 9), and follow-up sit-down interviews (N = 9)	Walking interview was a solution to an ethical challenge encountered during the initial round of sit-down interviews	What are the experiences of aging migrants in England in terms of their wellbeing, care needs, and support?	Walking interviews offer a distinctive methodology for examining multiple facets of older migrants' lives, encompassing their mobility, health, and well-being. Such interviews prove invaluable in investigating environmental factors that either facilitate or impede recreational and utilitarian walking among this demographic
O'Neill (2018)	Walking, well-being and community: Racialized mothers building cultural citizenship using participatory arts and participatory action research	England	Women seeking asylum (N = 10; age: N/A; gender: Female)	Walking interviews (N = 10), photography (N = 10) and film (N = 10)	Walking as a biographical and phenomenological approach has been proved to be an effective way for conducting arts-based biographical research	How can research with racialized migrant women be conducted in a democratic manner, and what can citizenship studies learn from the experiences of migrant mothers?	The utilization of walking as an arts-based biographical research method presents an impactful approach to comprehending the lived experiences of women and fostering processes and practices of inclusivity, all contributing to the cultivation of a transformative democratic vision

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Table 2. (continued)

Author(s)	Title	Location(s)	Participants' migrant type	Method(s)	Rationale for using walking interview(s)	Main research question	Key methodological take away
Ratnam and Drozdowski (2020)	Detour: Bodies, memories, and mobilities in and around the home	Australia	Sri lankan refugees (N = 26; age: N/A; gender: N/A)	Filmed walk-along interviews (N = 26), and in-depth interviews (N = 26)	The walks created opportunities for 'talk' combined with 'encounter'; the participants' embodied, emplaced, and habitual movements highlighted the interplay between memory and place	What prompts detours and what are the outcomes of these detours?	This paper theorizes detour as a moment or moments of rupture, where lived experience and movement intersect with memory, identity, and place. Detour offers a unique entry point for mobilities research, allowing for an exploration of various spatial and temporal scales. Importantly, detour incorporates storytelling, walking, and non-verbal/representational approaches, providing theoretical and methodological versatility for application in diverse contexts
Ryan et al. (2021)	Analysing migrants' ageing in place as embodied practices of embedding through time: 'Kilburn is not Kilburn anymore'	United Kingdom	Ageing migrants (N = 45; age: 65–92; gender: Mixed)	In-depth interviews (N = 45), and walking interviews (N = 9)	The walking method enabled researchers to delve deeper into participants' experiences of their own local areas	How do older people experience their local neighbourhoods daily?	Through the act of walking, the concept of embedding provides a more effective framework for analysing migrants' ongoing negotiations of place as they age. This approach addresses the need for more research on the intersection of ageing and other dimensions of diverse identities, as well as the embodied and situated experiences of ageing migrants

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Author(s)	Title	Location(s)	Participants' migrant type	Method(s)	Rationale for using walking interview(s)	Main research question	Key methodological take away
Sepehr et al. (2023)	City, consumption and interculturalism: How cities can facilitate consumer acculturation	Germany	Iranian immigrants (N = 18; age: 25–76; gender: Mixed)	Semi-structured interviews (N = 18), and unstructured go-along interviews (N = 7)	Walking in an urban system is akin to the act of speech in language, which could help researchers better understand their experiences of the city	How do cities and city-related consumption practices contribute to the process of consumer acculturation?	The walking interviews identified three ways in which cities can contribute to the consumer acculturation process: Rituals, reterritorialization, and the private appropriation of public space. Immigrant consumers may experience the spatial constructs of the host country and host city in various ways. In this process, both the social and material aspects of urban spaces play a crucial role in fostering inclusive societies by enabling positive intercultural interactions and dialogue
Smets and Atenkona (2024)	Counter-documentation tactics: Participatory, visual, and walking research with undocumented migrants	Belgium	Undocumented migrants (N = 6; age: 35–55; gender: Mixed)	Visual walking interviews (N = 5)	Visual walking interviews have demonstrated great effectiveness in capturing participants' experiences, generating new multisensory knowledge, and fostering horizontal research relationships	How do migrants shape more humane, inclusive, and authentic media representations based on their experiences?	The article aims to make a methodological contribution by reflecting on ethics and the pragmatic combination of various participatory methods. The integration of different participatory, spatial, and visual approaches facilitated practicality and adaptability when working with a vulnerable group. This unique setting, marked by pandemic politics that heightened inequalities experienced by undocumented migrants, provided an unexpected opportunity to observe societal structures and alterity

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Author(s)	Title	Location(s)	Participants' migrant type	Method(s)	Rationale for using walking Interview(s)	Main research question	Key methodological take away
Van Liempt and Staring (2021)	Homemaking and places of restoration: Belonging within and beyond places assigned to syrian refugees in the Netherlands	Netherlands	Syrian refugees (N = 49; age: 19–64; gender: Mixed)	Sedentary interviews (N = 49) and walk-along interviews (N = 7)	Walking interviews generated more site-specific data than indoor interviews, aiding researchers in better understanding the impact of the physical environment on refugee household management	How do Dutch dispersal policies and the refugee experience influence refugees' processes of homemaking?	Homemaking for syrian refugees occurs transnationally and through "sticky" place-making in the public and natural environment. Walk-along interviews identified "places of restoration" in urban areas and green spaces as sites where refugees start to feel at home through material practices that trigger memories. The interviews reveal the importance of belonging and control in syrians' homemaking. Policy makers should recognize the significance of local spaces in fostering belonging and restoration for refugees
Veronese et al. (2020)	Spatial agency as a source of resistance and resilience among palestinian children living in Dheishah refugee camp, Palestine	Palestine	Palestinian children from Dheishah refugee camp (N = 29; age: 7–13; gender: Mixed)	Drawings (N = 29) and walk-along interviews (N = 10)	Walking with children can help understand how they utilize domestic and social spaces to actively sustain positive functioning and subjective well-being in refugee camp	What sources of spatial agency do children rely on to cope with the negative effects of trauma?	By examining the practice of walking with children in their everyday environment, it becomes evident that spatial activities serve as forms of embodied resistance through which children enhance their subjective well-being and sustain positive functioning

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Author(s)	Title	Location(s)	Participants' migrant type	Method(s)	Rationale for using walking interview(s)	Main research question	Key methodological take away
Warren (2017)	Pluralising the walking interview: Researching (im) mobilities with muslim women	United Kingdom	Muslim migrants (N = 11; age: N/A; gender: Female)	Walking interviews (N = 11)	Walking practices intersect with social differences, especially regarding faith, ethnicity, and gender, and can be utilized to explore the socio-spatial experiences of minority groups in public spaces	How do multiple ethnic and cultural groups coexist in the city, and what are their different attitudes and practices towards walking in a context of pluralism?	This article contends that a more nuanced understanding of walking practices, such as walking interviews, can be achieved through a deeper exploration of the intersections of faith, ethnicity, and gender. This necessitates a critical examination of the cultural and spatial dynamics inherent in qualitative methods, with a focus on adapting these methods towards pluralism, particularly in rapidly evolving urban settings
Zisakou et al. (2023)	Integration and urban citizenship: A social-psychological approach to refugee integration through active constructions of place attachment to the city	Greece	Refugees (N = 25; age: 19–51; gender: Mixed)	Walking interviews (N = 25)	Walking interviews are appropriate for exploring emplaced aspects of identity, offering situated knowledge rich with meanings that emerge from the immediate social and cultural contexts	How do active constructions of everyday life contribute to refugee integration in Greek cities?	This article suggests a re-examination of integration by using the concept of urban citizenship to investigate the everyday politics of intergroup relations in migration contexts. Each public space embodies unique dynamics of people and place, resulting in diverse citizenship constructions and claims. These constructions shape how individuals and groups position themselves and others and form the foundation for redefining integration
Zisakou et al. (2023)	Future plans and integration in the Greek cities: Time as a resource and implication of belonging in refugees' discourse	Greece	Refugees (N = 25; age: 19–51; gender: Mixed)	Walking interviews (N = 25)	Walking interviews are well-suited for bottom-up integration constructions	How do refugees utilize temporal constructions to express their future and claims for belonging?	The integration of walking interviews into the toolkit of peace psychology research can offer fresh perspectives, foster deeper engagement, and enhance the field's comprehension of the multifaceted intricacies associated with conflict, reconciliation, and peacebuilding

within neighbourhoods (Morris, 2004) and enhances the perception of movement through landscapes and time (Solnit, 2001). The included papers adopt the practice of walking interviews to delve deeper into the migratory experience, advancing beyond the confines of established pragmatic knowledge. This method grounds the personal experiences of individuals fundamentally, aligning with the phenomenological worldview. This perspective argues for the necessity of critically engaging with the experiences of migration themselves, moving past existing practical knowledge to reveal the dynamic evolution of social actors' identities throughout their migratory journeys.

In addition to the phenomenological exploration of individuals' cognitions, the included papers have integrated walking interviews into the research design of ethnography (Fathi, 2023), thereby facilitating an understanding of the various strategies employed by different types of immigrants to navigate and maintain a sense of order, and to seek a sense of belonging within new environments. Although walking as a methodological innovation does not require the intensity or time commitments typically demanded by traditional ethnography (DeLyser & Sui, 2013), it retains the pertinent contextual insights in a flexible manner. This approach is not a simple substitute for ethnography; rather, it can be employed as an effective tool that, when combined with participatory methods (Anderson, 2023; Delaisse et al., 2021), enhances the foundational basis of qualitative research for those scholars who may be constrained by the inability to invest the requisite time and resources into conventional anthropological studies (Carpiano, 2009). From the vantage point of ethnographic research design, the walking interview accentuates the intrinsic reflexivity of human interaction with the socio-spatial environment and offers an innovative method to better comprehend the significance of place and space (Carpiano, 2009). By constructing the research upon the foundation of participants' lived experiences, researchers share real-time fieldwork with the interviewees, rendering visible certain filters that shape the participants' lifeworld (Kusenbach, 2003).

This leads to the answer to the second question: In migration studies, how do novel walking interviews offer us deeper insights into understanding migrants' lived experiences. After rigorous review, four key themes were identified: (1) adjustment of power dynamics; (2) place-based threefold agency; (3) migrants' identity construction; and (4) place-based sense of belonging or exclusion.

### *Adjustment of Power Dynamics*

Researchers often choose to use walking interviews as the primary research method because they have recognized the inherent power imbalances between researchers and participants in migration studies. The papers in review collectively inquire how walking interviews can be assimilated into research methodologies as a means to navigate power

dynamics, which circulates unevenly among individuals and locales, generating both material and symbolic repercussions (Huizinga, 2020).

Firstly, this method represents a more egalitarian approach to research, empowering participants to select the walking paths, thus addressing the power disparities prevalent in conventional interviews and fostering a distinctive collaborative dynamic (Kusenbach, 2003). Research by Kochan (2016) indicated that when interviewees have the autonomy to determine the interview setting, they deliberate on the advantages and disadvantages of various locales and their relevance within the local socio-environmental context. The choices interviewees make regarding their pace, routes, moments of stopping and turning, and the pausing and resuming of conversations (Fathi, 2023), are pivotal in revealing their socio-geographical identities. Guided tours by interviewees through their own communities, villages, or cities not only reinforce their expert status but also provide researchers with intricate insights into the migrants' life narratives from a micro-geographical standpoint (Carpiano, 2009; Elwood & Martin, 2000).

Moreover, walking interviews not only facilitate the interaction between immigrants and the environment but also enable researchers to delve into immigrants' new interpretations of space under the multisensory stimuli of the surrounding environment. This method promotes a "triadic dialogue" among researchers, interviewees, and various locations (Evans & Jones, 2011, p. 850). By "walking into people's lived experiences" (Carpiano, 2009, p. 264), researchers can explore new interpretations of space by migrants and uncover meanings that may not have been realized by either party (Anderson, 2004). This technique effectively dismantles the power imbalances inherent in conventional static interview formats, fostering a more balanced discourse. The act of researchers and interviewees walking together, engaging in everyday activities, and witnessing social dynamics, as well as the challenges and opportunities encountered, fosters trust and rapport (Kusenbach, 2003). Additionally, some interviewees may share positive perspectives and experiences during walking that they had not expressed in face-to-face interviews, thereby reshaping the hierarchy of power between the researcher and the researched (Botfield et al., 2018).

It is important to note that in contexts of significant power disparities, walking interviews provide insights into how migrants renegotiate their identities and engage with urban spaces within the city (Alam et al., 2020; Zisakou, Figgou, & Baka, 2023). For instance, in migration studies with a clear gender imprint, male refugees experiencing forced migration, shaped by dominant hegemonic masculinity, often struggle to confront the upheaval, or decline in their lives post-migration, including discussing the loss of status and encountering discrimination. In such cases, walking interviews empower interviewees, as men, to assert their expertise in areas such as religion, education, or community leadership, thus balancing

the power dynamics in the research context (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2021). This approach necessitates that researchers are explicitly aware of their positionality and its possible influence on knowledge generation (Anderson, 2023), and possess a high degree of reflexivity (Lichterman, 2017), enabling adjustments in power relations with participants (Brown & Durrheim, 2009).

Despite this, Warren (2017) and Smets and Ahenkona (2024) raised caution against oversimplified assumptions regarding the empowerment afforded by mobile research methods. Warren (2017)'s empirical research prompts a re-consideration of the assumed direct link between self-determination and increased empowerment, considering cultural and social diversity as well as the entrenched power structures between researchers and subjects. When notable social status disparities exist (such as those between university lecturers and Muslim women), a compounded by age and gender variances, these factors may compromise the aim of rebalancing power dynamics via walking interviews. Participants often seek clarity and confirmation from researchers due to unclear roles, indicating their respect for authority rather than feeling empowered. Consequently, the power dynamics within walking interviews are complex and fluid, and the anticipations of research dynamics, grounded in varying social, cultural, and educational contexts, may unintentionally become more salient (Gardner et al., 2022). If not meticulously approached, walking interviews might only reinforce perceived hierarchies. Researchers must recognize that empowerment is not an automatic consequence of these methods and that cultural, social, and interpersonal factors critically influence their efficacy.

Furthermore, although the included papers universally concentrate on the positionality of both researchers and participants within walking interviews, two studies omit an in-depth account of how participants actively participated in shaping the walk (Botfield et al., 2018; Huizinga & van Hoven, 2021), despite presenting rich new insights generated through walking interviews.

### *Migrants' Place-based Threefold Agency*

In included papers, the concept of "agency" is a recurrent theme. Within migration studies, agency is widely recognized as migrants' capacity for decision-making and strategic action (Paret & Gleeson, 2016), or their transformative power in shaping their own life narratives (Vlase & Voicu, 2014). Walking interviews afford insights into how migrants exercise their agency in shaping, challenging, and negotiating their lived environments and societal circumstances. This review systematically compiles papers that illustrate how the subjects exercise agency, identifying three distinct forms of place-based agency: the ability to "resist" norms, the aptitude for "adaptation" to norms, and the capacity to "negotiate" between established and emergent identities, thus creating new possibilities.

Firstly, migrants exhibit agency by reclaiming control over the spaces they have been dispossessed of, transitioning from passive "objects" to empowered "subjects," and enhancing the welfare of themselves and their communities—a process identified as resistance. Veronese et al. (2020) observed that in conflict-affected regions such as Palestine, settler colonialism's spatial power dynamics profoundly shape children's daily spatial interactions (Akeson, 2012). Despite the hardships of the Dheisheh refugee camp, Palestinian children employ spirituality and community engagement as coping and resistance mechanisms, reclaiming their sense of agency. In walking interviews, researchers witness these resilient strategies and children's cultural expressions, such as play and folk dancing, which serve as subtle forms of resistance to colonial control. These actions demonstrate children's agency in their daily lives amidst adversity. Similarly, O'Neill's (2018) study illustrated that asylum-seeking women exhibit creative agency in the quest for citizenship by opposing racialized forms of oppression and exclusion. These women assertively navigate legal obstacles to their well-being and safety in the host nation, engaging in legal advocacy and asserting their rights within the judicial framework. In conditions of instability, migrants use resistance to reinvent themselves and their circumstances, rejecting the victim narrative and instead claiming agency to achieve freedom, normality, and tranquillity (Habashi, 2013).

Secondly, migrants often encounter cultural discrepancies in host countries, impacting their sense of belonging and compelling an adaptation or ongoing quest for equilibrium. Through walking interviews accompanying refugees, Anderson (2023) identified their strategic adjustments in behaviours and expectations to align with the cultural norms and values of Norwegian outdoor life, which fostered their integration. Specifically, refugees proactively chose to leave behind familiar practices to adapt to new habits in the Norwegian outdoor leisure activity "friluftsliv", recognizing that their status as newcomers represented a barrier to acceptance. Similarly, Bangladeshi labour migrants in Singapore tackle the precarious and insecure employment landscape by strategically navigating state-controlled spaces and reinterpreting security measures, enabling them to conform to regulatory power while advancing their migratory aspirations. These adaptive strategies and narratives empower them to manoeuvre through and negotiate their existence within the highly regulated context of the host nation (Loong, 2018).

Furthermore, when migrants are deprived of the powers, liberties, and capabilities they once enjoyed in their homeland, they forge a novel type of agency by capitalizing on the environment, resources, and social networks at their disposal. The study by Huizinga and van Hoven (2021) highlighted that governments often disregard the vulnerability of male refugees in host countries, reinforcing stereotypes that contribute to their marginalization. In these disadvantaged circumstances, young Syrian refugee men deliberately utilize their personal narratives, expressive voices, and agentive strength to enhance their visibility and solidify their identity. By

asserting themselves in space and making their presence felt, they transform settings and affirm their undeniable connection to these places. In facing challenges such as gender-based violence, trauma, and political persecution, O'Neill (2018) employed walking interviews as well as other participatory arts and performative methods, to offer female participants ways to convey their personal stories and encounters. This empowers them to elevate their voices, defy stereotypes, and foster dialogue and solidarity. Through the sharing of intimate narratives, the establishment of support groups, and the exploration of innovative methods, these women carve out spaces for conversation and mutual support, asserting their agency in often-dismissed public realms. Such activities highlight the importance of acknowledgment and inclusion in transnational contexts, demonstrating resilience and purpose.

### *Migrants' Identity Construction*

Immigrant agency is crucial in identity formation, with walking interviews providing a platform for individuals to contemplate and articulate their dynamic identities in an ever-changing context (D'Andrea et al., 2011). The studies under review illustrate how migrants navigate and negotiate identity through their interaction with diverse environments. For instance, Sepehr et al. (2023) discovered that unstructured mobile interviews allowed participants to exhibit individualism in public settings. Recognizing the parallels between their new surroundings and their places of origin, they established a bond with the host city, simultaneously triggering nostalgia. The social and physical dimensions of urban landscapes afford immigrant populations broader opportunities for space personalization, facilitating the reshaping and communication of their identities.

For migrants, identity is inherently non-static, but rather a fluid and often intersecting construct (Kochan, 2016), continually shaped by personal experiences and the encompassing social and chronological frameworks. In Zisakou et al.'s (2023:6) exploration, participants grappling with the "refugee" identity experienced a sensation of being "trapped-in-time" during walking interviews, as their precarious circumstances—including feelings of exclusion and marginalization—hindered their ability to envision a future. Nonetheless, these researched refugees remained receptive to an undetermined future, employing negotiation as a mechanism to sustain a cohesive self-identity in the face of disrupted temporality. Echoing this, the study on refugee-background women by Gardner et al. (2022) revealed that walking interviews became an avenue for sharing spatial strategies for creating a sense of home in new environments, where they simultaneously are perceived as outsiders to both their birth and host countries. This juxtaposition underscores the ongoing, dialectical reconstruction of home and identity. In specific contexts, refugee women can be both recipients of aid (guests) and support providers (hosts). Influenced by this dynamic

interplay, the concept of home transcends physical confines, embodying an internal geography of belonging that is as complex, dynamic, and evolving as the individuals themselves (Dam & Eyles, 2012).

The papers under review repeatedly reference migrants' sentiments of diminished control over their present and future. Studies using walking interviews have discovered that to cope with these feelings, participants engage with public spaces to create new societal bonds and establish their emerging identities (Huizinga, 2023), a process less readily facilitated by conventional seated interviews. Many favor incorporating walking interviews with activities that resonate with their personal interests, choosing ethnically or culturally familiar locations such as "Turkish" supermarkets, barber shops, or religious establishments (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018). In these settings, they seek familiarity, consolation, and identity, thereby forming a collective identity. Moreover, everyday public spaces, such as streets, parks, libraries, and community cafes have been identified as critical sites for establishing social connections and personal identities in the context of walking interviews (O'Neill, 2018). Therefore, for immigrants, the host country is primarily a place for identity construction. Within this realm, their personal identities synergize with the urban environment, while the city functions as a venue for routine engagement and opportunities for direct social interaction (Van Liempt & Staring, 2021). The nature of this interaction varies: it can be affirming for migrants lacking a permanent home, where personal identity is woven into collective movement; however, it may also emerge as a burden. Faced with the uprooting from their homeland and separation from loved ones, migrants are compelled to reforge their identities, reconciling the loss with the acculturation process, and finding their place at the intersection of their native and host countries (Puvimanasinghe et al., 2015).

### *Place-Based Sense of Belonging or Exclusion*

The individual identity recognition can lead to complex psychological experiences such as feelings of "displacement" or "alienation" (Cuba & Hummon, 1993, p. 550). These experiences have facilitated extensive research focused on the ways migrants establish relationships and cultivate a sense of belonging in new settings (Ryan & Mulholland, 2015). A recurring argument in this review is that walking interviews, by engaging with spaces of significance to migrants, unearth the processes through which migrants find belonging within their new environments, as well as the nuanced manifestations of exclusion (Antonsich, 2010). Belonging, as an experience denoting deep social integration, community connection, or connection to a transnational location (Ehrkamp, 2005), transcends mere past recollection (Ahmed, 1999). It is a key factor shaping current practices (Fenster, 2005) and is intertwined with broader trends of integration or marginalization (Delaisse et al., 2021).



Huizinga (2023) contended that walking interviews offer a window into participants' creation and perception of space, particularly in contexts where the subtle meanings embedded within the architectural environment might not be immediately apparent. This flexible research method encourages migrants to engage in discourse or reflection on socio-political matters pertaining to social inclusion and exclusion. A synthesis of research by Huizinga (2023), Huizinga and van Hoven (2018, 2021), and Van Liempt and Staring (2021) revealed that in the Netherlands, a racial hierarchy engenders marginalization, framing refugees as threats to national identity rather than individuals seeking security and belonging. Critically examining the spatial co-creation by Syrian refugee men, the studies highlight walking interviews as a method to capture refugees' physical and emotional engagement with Dutch spaces. This engagement sheds light on how refugees integrate into social networks and establish their lives through meaningful connections with community centres, parks, and places of worship. Similarly, the study by Smets and Ahenkona (2024) revealed that walking interviews rendered the content from video-making about undocumented migrants, conducted earlier in the research, more vivid and tangible. During the walk, interviewees would pause or take pictures at vocational schools where they received training, associations established to build cross-cultural solidarity networks, or cultural centers. These footsteps, narratives, and images embody a "realist aesthetics" (Jaguaribe, 2005), anchoring deeply personal, tangible, and authentic representations within the urban landscape. This approach offers diversified opportunities to illustrate how immigrants attain different forms of dignity and recognition through educational pursuits, networks of solidarity, and engagement with local communities.

The studies by Lórinç et al. (2022) and Ryan et al. (2021) indicated that, similar to identity formation, migrants' perceptions of locales and the development of a sense of belonging are fluid and shaped by variables such as aging and diverse migratory experiences across time. This is particularly true for older migrants, for whom belonging is a multifaceted and evolving process influenced by factors such as personal history, social connections, cultural ties, and the political climate. Walking interviews serve to examine the immediate reactions of participants upon their arrival in a new country, as well as the progressive establishment of "home." They portray older migrants as proactive agents in creating a sense of place. These insights are readily apparent during walking interviews, as researchers can observe the strategies and networks—including religious affiliations and ethnic societies—that migrants employ to cultivate belonging. Furthermore, the construction of a new sense of belonging within a destination is characterized by the changing material and symbolic significance of place over time (Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). Kochan's (2016) research, which employs walking as a research method, offered fresh insights into migrants' interactions with and re-evaluations of urban spatial constructs, including notions of

home, community, and the urban environment itself. Through a multifaceted approach that included cognitive mapping, walking interviews, and self-photography, Kochan discovered that migrants reconstruct their identities by altering or diminishing previous self-concepts while forming new ones, thereby facilitating their integration into the host society. The concept of home, or the connection to place, is subject to continuous transformation, evolving through experiences across various scales—always within the broader context of global movement and socio-political landscapes.

However, public spaces are subject to normative violence as various groups impose their norms, values, and traditions on the public domain (Lefebvre, 2010; Massey, 1997). Despite migrants leverage their agency to integrate into the host country, they may still encounter exclusion. The studies reviewed suggest that during walk-along, researchers gain firsthand awareness of how migrants navigate and negotiate structured spaces affected by religious, cultural, and gender dynamics. They also gain a clearer understanding of the boundaries of exclusion in the public spaces of migrants' daily lives (Warren, 2017). Zisakou et al. (2023) pointed out that the inclusion or exclusion of immigrants in the host nation is shaped by the power differential between residents and immigrants. Unless migrants show politeness and remain inconspicuous, thus meeting the "good immigrant" archetype, they risk being ostracized from the community and delineated in their social existence. This unequal treatment and the daily challenges they face encourage migrants to interact with space strategically, thereby accentuating the disparities in day-to-day power dynamics. Loong (2018), examined how governmental structures have the capacity to regulate and, at times, curtail the rights of migrants in host nations through a variety of policies and actions. For example, the practice of differential exclusion allows for the legal inclusion of migrants in certain societal facets, like the labour market, while concurrently denying them rights in other domains, such as social welfare, citizenship, and political engagement. This has resulted in Bangladeshi migrant workers facing restricted rights, increased vulnerability to deportation, economic instability, as well as expectations for compliance and passivity, ultimately leading to their spatial marginalization. In a parallel study, Botfield et al. (2018) utilized walking interviews at healthcare facilities and noted that participants, in response to experiences of exclusion, expressed a need for services that are inclusive and adaptable. Consequently, belonging is understood as relational, sustained by intricate webs of routine interactions within local settings that cater to the intersectional identities of individuals.

## Discussions

In recent years, the number of studies on so-called "mobile investigations" has increased (Pink et al., 2010). Such movement is not merely a one-way process from point A to point B. It is an activity that involves immersing oneself in the

environment, perceiving and attributing meaning through the senses (Ingold, 2021), a concept also discussed in the works of Merleau-Ponty (1982). Through walking and conversing, researchers encouraged the target immigrant groups to share their life experiences in the host society or in their everyday neighbourhoods, as well as the perceptions obtained through the physical movement within the environment world they inhabit.

This review effectively revealed two specific rationales for employing walking interviews with migrant populations. First, this approach navigates ethics and power dynamics between researchers and those being researched. Trust-building with migrants can be challenging in migration research, especially while studying individual migrants who may encounter varying degrees of adaptation challenges and difficulties, regardless of the reasons for leaving their home countries or how the host nations treat these transient groups (Pernice, 1994). Thus, traditional interview models could further impede establishing a more egalitarian connection between the researcher and the respondent (Kusenbach, 2003). Walking interviews, to some extent, provide respondents with increased opportunities for engagement in the research process. They can navigate and express themselves and their agency autonomously, in the very environments and settings where they live out their daily lives. This dynamic underscores the facilitative nature of this method. The second rationale is that this method appears to foster a natural role reversal. Walking interviews position respondents as “guides” (Carpiano, 2009), dictating the design of the walking process, which allows them to wield control over the generation of data. Given that migrants often occupy marginalized positions in mainstream migration research, both reasons are effective and significant considerations.

Reviewers found that the walking interview has introduced a transformative dimension to the field of migration studies by altering the established power dynamics between researchers and the migrant subjects of their studies, where participants are afforded a degree of autonomy and influence that was previously lacking (Fathi, 2023; Warren, 2017). This shift enables migrants to steer the conversation, often leading to a richer, and has allowed for a more layered understanding of their agency, revealing multiple forms in which migrants exert control over their lives. In delineating their own stories, migrants navigate through and negotiate with the various social, cultural, and political forces that shape their migration experience (Carpiano, 2009; Gardner et al., 2022; O'Neill, 2018). Consequently, they do not passively traverse these landscapes but instead actively participate in the creation and re-creation of their identities.

Moreover, the leverage of such agency highlights their strategies for negotiating identity within often conflicting cultural paradigms. The narratives captured through walking interviews thus become more than just accounts of physical journeys; they are testimonies to the complex process of identity formation undergone by individuals who find

themselves navigating between the cultural expectations of their homelands and those of their host societies (Anderson, 2023; Sepehr et al., 2023). It also influences their potential sense of belonging or exclusion in different contexts, which is crucial for understanding their daily struggles, resistance, and lived experiences in the host society. This nuanced understanding includes both overt social barriers (Loong, 2018), and the more insidious, psychological battles against alienation and disenfranchisement (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018, 2021), which further led to their sense of belonging or exclusion. Walking interviews have exposed the significant capacity of migrants to enact resistance in the face of these challenges. Such resistance may be overt, such as through participation in migrant organizing and advocacy (Alam et al., 2020), or more subtle, as seen in the everyday tactics migrants use to sustain their cultural practices and community ties despite the pressures of assimilation (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018; Veronese et al., 2020).

However, within mainstream migration research, migrant populations often remain in a marginal position, and walking interviews frequently present complex ethical dilemmas. This method must avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes of migrants' vulnerability while balancing existing power relations, which requires researchers to be highly sensitive to relevant ethical issues and to undertake comprehensive and meticulous considerations. For instance, in studies focusing on aging migrants, it is necessary to use large print for informed consent forms, take into account the physical and health conditions of elderly individuals during the walking process, and actively collaborate with non-governmental organizations that understand the needs of the elderly (Lőrinc et al., 2022; Ryan et al., 2021). In research concerning refugees, researchers should seek methods that go beyond the ethical research standard of minimizing harm and recognize the obligation to design and implement research projects intended to bring reciprocal benefits to refugee interviewees and/or their communities (Gardner et al., 2022; Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018; Zisakou, Figgou, & Baka, 2023). Moreover, throughout the research process - from the preliminary preparations to the implementation phase and through to the analysis - attention must constantly be paid to the privacy and data security of the participants. Carelessness or malicious disclosure by researchers could increase the vulnerability of the participants or even jeopardize their safety (Huizinga, 2020).

In summary, the use of walking interviews in migration studies represents more than a methodological innovation; this strategy provides a framework more intimately connected to the actual experiences of migrants (Smets & Ahenkona, 2024). It enables researchers to gain deeper insights into the daily struggles, acts of resistance, and the rich tapestry of experiences that constitute migrant narratives. As a tool, walking interviews highlight the complexities of migrant lives within academic research. With sufficient ethical sensitivity and consideration, the walking method can maximise empowerment of groups marginalized by official discourse, allowing

them to negotiate the spaces of their daily lives based on their perspectives and choices. This approach facilitates a more empathetic and equitable understanding of migration phenomena and signifies a shift toward a more inclusive and collaborative model of social research (Kinney, 2021).

## Strengths and Limitations

This review represents the first systematic qualitative review focused on utilizing walking interviews to examine the lived experiences of migrants. The principal strengths of this review are manifold: (1) It synthesizes a range of standard-conforming studies to discuss the theoretical underpinnings of using walking interviews with diverse migrant groups, including internal migrants, international migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers; (2) It encompasses investigations that employ walking interviews either as a core or supplementary data collection method and analyses how this technique enhances our understanding of migrant life experiences; (3) The review conducts a rigorous scrutiny to reveal that walking interviews should not be viewed as a panacea for democratic engagement. Researchers must carefully weigh the research setting, participant demographics, and power differentials to precisely apply the participatory potential of walking interviews in migration research. The main limitation of this review is its exclusive inclusion of peer-reviewed articles in English, potentially omitting other pivotal scholarly contributions.

## Implications for Research

There is a need for future research and methodological assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of walking interviews within migration studies and their capacity to capture the full spectrum of migrant micro-lives, considering the diverse influences on individuals' experiences in the context of worldwide mobility. Empirical studies informed by this review should pinpoint critical aspects of daily migrant life and implement robust longitudinal research frameworks to enhance inquiries in this field. Furthermore, future studies should consider methodological triangulation or integration with quantitative research approaches, offering a holistic and multifaceted perspective on migrants' lived experiences in host countries.

## Implications for Practice

This review indicates that walking interviews enable researchers to directly engage with and experience the life-worlds of respondents, becoming deeply involved in the process of knowledge transfer, and how individuals impart knowledge to others (Mackenzie et al., 2007). This method helps prevent researchers from overly relying on preconceived notions about the subjects of study. Through walking interviews, researchers can collect data that reveals the reactivity of the respondents (Mackenzie et al., 2007), which is dynamic,

uncertain, and elusive, thus requiring researchers to maintain continuous criticality and reflexivity to respond flexibly. The use of walking interviews in future migration research presents both great promise and many challenges. Although the label "migrant" may imply connotations of passivity, victimhood, and dependency, walking interviews empower respondents with the right to self-expression, thereby aiding in challenging and changing these stereotypical perceptions.

## Conclusion

We conducted a qualitative systematic review of 24 migration studies utilizing walking interview methods to examine their application in migration research and their effectiveness in enriching our understanding of migrants' life narratives. Our analysis reveals that the walking interview technique is intrinsically linked to phenomenological and ethnographic inquiry. By placing researchers within the mobile space of participants, walking interviews can aid the in-depth comprehension of participants' practices within dimensions of time and space, and strengthening the knowledge base of the walking interview methodology. Moreover, our research suggests that walking interviews increase the ethical awareness within migration studies, enabling researchers to pay greater attention to dimensions of human experience frequently neglected by both observers and subjects. This method clarifies and makes more explicit how migrants incorporate their past knowledge, experiences, and emotions into their current context, as they navigate their daily practices beyond the immediate moment.

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