



Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

Author/s:

Adonteng-Kissi, O;Mabefam, M;Archibong, E;Meribe, N;Baffour, FD

Title:

Impact of Perceived Discrimination and Social Exclusion on Wellbeing of Black African Immigrants in Australia

Date:

2025

Citation:

Adonteng-Kissi, O., Mabefam, M., Archibong, E., Meribe, N. & Baffour, F. D. (2025). Impact of Perceived Discrimination and Social Exclusion on Wellbeing of Black African Immigrants in Australia. *Race and Justice*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/21533687251356287>.

Persistent Link:

<https://hdl.handle.net/11343/357073>

License:

[CC BY](#)

Impact of Perceived Discrimination and Social Exclusion on Wellbeing of Black African Immigrants in Australia

Race and Justice

1-28

© The Author(s) 2025



Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/21533687251356287

journals.sagepub.com/home/raj

Obed Adonteng-Kissi¹ ,
Matthew Mabefam²,
Elizabeth Archibong³,
Nnaemeka Meribe⁴,
and Frank Darkwa Baffour⁵

Abstract

Across the globe, a significant number of immigrants frequently encounter discrimination and social exclusion in their host nations, prompting discussions regarding policies and societal attitudes toward these groups. This study is guided by the structural social work framework which provides a very important structure to understand the experiences of Black African immigrants in Australia. Drawing on the case of Black African immigrants in Australia, this study investigates the effects of discrimination and social exclusion on their wellbeing. This research builds upon existing literature concerning the discrimination and social exclusion of immigrants, incorporating the perspectives of 27 social workers and immigrants who have resided in Australia for at least of 2 years. We conducted semi-structured interviews with eight social workers and 19 Black African immigrants purposefully selected from Brisbane, Townsville,

¹School of Arts and Humanities, Edith Cowan University, Southwest Campus, Bunbury, WA, Australia

²Development Studies, School of Social and Political Sciences, Faculty of Arts, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, VIC, Australia

³School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Sciences, Central Queensland University, Rockhampton, QLD, Australia

⁴Department of Politics, Media, and Philosophy, La Trobe University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

⁵School of Humanities, Social Science, and Creative Industries, The University of Newcastle, Callaghan, NSW, Australia

Corresponding Author:

Obed Adonteng-Kissi, School of Arts and Humanities, Edith Cowan University, Southwest Campus, 585 Robertson Dr, Bunbury, WA 6230, Australia.

Email: o.adontengkissi@ecu.edu.au

Melbourne, and Sydney. These interviews were conducted both face-to-face and online via Zoom, Teams, and WhatsApp calls. We audio-recorded and transcribed the interviews, employing a thematic analysis approach with the assistance of NVivo software to analyze the data. Our findings reveal that Black African immigrants often experience discrimination, primarily manifested through their perceptions of exclusion and discrimination in job recruitment, social environments, and social contexts. Participants emphasized that discrimination in its various forms affects their wellbeing. Our findings contribute to the scholarship on wellbeing. We argue that interventions aimed at enhancing the wellbeing of Black African immigrants should address discriminatory and exclusionary systems, advocate for policy reform, and re-emphasize the role of practitioners as agents of social activism and change.

Keywords

discrimination, social exclusion, wellbeing, Black African immigrants, structural social work

Introduction

A significant number of the Black African immigrant population often experience various forms of discrimination, such as social exclusion, exploitation, and marginalization in social services, which impacts their wellbeing and leaves them feeling powerless. Discrimination includes “actions, practices, or policies that are—in some appropriate sense—based on the (perceived) social group to which those discriminated against belong and that the relevant groups must be socially salient in that they structure interaction in important social contexts” (Holroyd, 2018, p. 384). Consequently, groups founded on race, gender, and religion qualify as possible grounds for discrimination in any contemporary society; however, groups normally founded on the length of an individual’s toenails are unlikely to qualify. Further, recent scholarship reconceptualizes wellbeing as a holistic phenomenon, encompassing not only the absence of negative conditions such as illness or stress but also the active presence of positive attributes, including purpose, meaningful interpersonal relationships, and resilience in the face of life’s challenges (Diener et al., 2018; Layard & De Neve, 2023). The concept of social exclusion explained in French as *Les exclus* (the excluded) possibly began in France in the 1970s. Burchardt (2000) defines it as “those who fell through the net of social protection” p. 385. A commonly acknowledged depiction of social exclusion is the degree to which people are unable to participate in sectors of social, cultural, and economic life of society.

Building upon existing literature, Black Africans also face violence and are pressured to assimilate into the norms of the dominant cultural group, resulting in cultural imperialism exploitation (Afiouni & Karam, 2019; Saleem et al., 2022). The discourse surrounding Black African immigrants as problematic, both in Australia and globally, significantly impacts their wellbeing and necessitates further examination. The multifaceted identities of African immigrants, within the context of the prevailing hostile

rhetoric surrounding immigration and racial identity, alongside the adverse portrayal of Africa in the media, exacerbate their vulnerability to detrimental outcomes compared to other migrant groups. In Australia, engagement with immigrants constitutes a significant area of focus within social service provision. Unlike certain other immigrant groups, Black African immigrants are characterized by their pronounced visibility, a phenomenon that some Afrocentric scholars have termed hypervisibility as a form of minority status. The intersection of various factors, including race, culture, religion, and dress, contributes to the perception of Black African immigrants as “exotic” and as the conspicuous foreign “other” within Western contexts. These dynamics have resulted in constraints on social mobility and other indicators of vulnerability, particularly among Black African immigrants (Molla, 2021) consequently, affecting Black African immigrants’ wellbeing.

In the context of Black African immigrants, the average time for them to find job relatively remains high (Gatwiri *et al.*, 2021). A Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia shows that while men take 3.6 months to find a job, women take 4.9 months to do so (Chiswick & Miller, 2006). Further, Black African immigrants’ time to first employment is higher for people who enter Australia through the humanitarian stream and immigrants with weak English language proficiency (Renzaho *et al.*, 2024). Regrettably, not much research assesses the quality and suitability of employment that Black African immigrants secure or the work outcomes of immigrants. Reid (2012) finds that 40% of immigrants are not applying their expertise and educational credentials in their employment up to 18 months after their entry into Australia. Much research indicates that discrimination based on an individual’s ethnicity or race may impact on employment conditions and the prospects for new arrivals to find suitable employment (Akinlade *et al.*, 2020; Kosny *et al.*, 2017). Black African immigrants who possess foreign-sounding names seeking for employment have been proven to have limited chances of being invited for interviews (Dovchin & Dryden, 2022; Gowan, 2023), and other research have revealed that hiring managers prefer employees with English-speaking and European backgrounds (Dovchin & Dryden, 2022). Additionally, discrimination against Black African immigrants leads to longer periods of joblessness than for other immigrant groups (Gatwiri *et al.*, 2021; Udah *et al.*, 2019). Further, the workplace may be a context for ethnic and racial discrimination (Nguyen & Velayutham, 2018). In investigating ethnic and racism relations, and cultural diversity in Australia, immigrants suggest that the most common place they encounter discrimination is at restaurants/shops and in the workplace (Kosny *et al.*, 2017). Again, verbal abuse in the form of racial slurs is the most common type of discrimination (Kwansah-Aidoo & Mapedzahama, 2018). Another research carried out among 2,100 Australian workers suggests that 10% of the workforce had faced some racial discrimination or harassment in their workplace in the preceding 12-month period. Black African employees are considerably more likely to experience discrimination than Australian-born employees (Daly *et al.*, 2018; Kosny *et al.*, 2017). Discrimination at the individual level including dismissive or rude acts, contemptuous treatment or racialized harassment (Swannie, 2020)—can have an adverse effect on the mental health and potentially physical health of Black African immigrants (Idemudia & Olonisakin, 2021; Nkimbeng *et al.*, 2021). Similarly, discrimination that happens at

the organizational level can impact health (Ziersch et al., 2020). It may result in employment discrimination where particular people are systematically demoted to jobs that are psychologically and/or physically difficult or unsafe and with little prospect for mobility and development (Kosny et al., 2017). In Australia, some Black African immigrants have been downgraded to jobs that are prone to workplace hazards (Abdalla et al., 2018; Gatwiri, 2021; Udah et al., 2019). In view of factors such as discrimination and economic stressors of immigration process, recently arrived Black African immigrants can accept menial jobs or jobs that are not consistent with their credentials (Kavian et al., 2020), and they may feel pressured to take any available job to support family income (Gatwiri et al., 2021; Mwanri et al., 2022). To shed light on Black African immigrants' experiences and the perspectives of social workers in Australia, when discrimination is a factor, this paper asks the research question:

What is the impact of the discriminatory and social exclusionary experiences on the well-being of Black African immigrants in Australia?

The origin of treating different races differently is not a new one; instead, it is deeply embedded in historical policies that have influenced Australian identity and nation-building (Brown et al., 2023; Martin et al., 2023). With the stigmatization of blackness in colonial outlooks to Indigenous people, racial dominance has consequently permeated how Australia treats non-whites coming from elsewhere. In settler countries such as the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, white immigrants are the dominant and privileged group with white institutions being at the center of the society (Carangio et al., 2021). Discrimination and racism against Indigenous people in Australia are an existing reality heightened by common experiences of intergenerational trauma from prevailing colonial legacies, practices, and dispossession (Blagg & Anthony, 2019; Cunneen & Tauri, 2019). There is evidence to show that one-third of Indigenous people aged 15 years or above had experienced unfair treatment because of being Indigenous (Kairuz et al., 2021). Further, there are more direct contacts between police and young Indigenous people as well as young Indigenous males being regularly stopped, interrogated, questioned, and searched by police in Australia (O'Brien, 2021). While Indigenous people represent 3% of Australian population, they constitute more than 33% of the national prison population because of systemic bias in the criminal justice system (Cunneen & Tauri, 2016, 2019; Kong, 2024).

Theoretical Perspectives: Structural Barriers in Australia

Society is viewed as a bridge structure, on which the foundation, or on which the bridge is constructed is the philosophy that supports society. The foundation of a bridge is not detectable; nonetheless, it is critical in supporting the structure on which it is constructed. The philosophies of society offer a similar foundation. The pillars supporting the bridge structure are the different social institutions established to handle society's basic functions, comprising but not restricted to social, economic,

and political welfare, labor regulatory, educational, and health systems. The structure of the bridge on which the broad population depends on and interacts is fundamentally identified by the lower parts of the structure. The foundation of the society is made up of a dominant philosophy, which is transferred to every member of society through the process of socialization and establishes the nature of societal institutions and the interactions among its people (Carrillo & O'Grady, 2018; Libal, 2018). To accomplish social change, there is the need for change to occur at every level and the social worker must be prepared to navigate through the three levels put forward by the structural social work (SSW) model. The connected or bridged model is demonstrated (Kjellgren et al., 2024; Lucio et al., 2024).

In 1979, Maurice Moreau first postulated SSW in Canada in response to the "medical and disease model" which attempts to practice with people in a dependent situation, highlighting change at the personal instead of the socio-political level (Carrillo & O'Grady, 2018; Libal, 2018). SSW attempts to place the intervention on the direct interface among individuals and social, economic, and political systems (Spero & Werkmeister Rozas, 2022). Originating from radical social work, which is founded in socialist philosophies, SSW analyses conventional social work for inadequate critical self-awareness and pathologizing the disadvantaged/marginalized by choosing for personal diagnosis at the expense of dealing with substantial social problems (Tadam, 2021). Even considering the focus on concept levels of the society, SSW is intended to be a generalist model of practice for social work with individuals, families, communities, and groups, while focusing on the interface between the personal and greater political and cultural forces (Curry-Stevens et al., 2020). Using a dialectic understanding, SSW acknowledges that social welfare and social work encompass contrasting forces of social service and social control. Considering this understanding, the highlight of practice is intended to optimize the emancipatory prospect of social work and social welfare to offset or reduce the oppressive factors (Libal, 2018). At its core, SSW is meant to be both prescriptive as well as descriptive. The model works to understand the way society's structure causes social problems as well as to identify the way these structures must be transformed to reduce destruction (Carrillo & O'Grady, 2018). To reach this goal, the critical concentration on relief must be associated with a long-term focus on institutional and structural change.

Methods

This section explores the ethics statement, research design, and detailed interviews with participants, data generation activities and data analysis trustworthiness, and research limitation. This section also examines how data were gathered using this method and the approaches used to analyze these data.

Ethics Approval

This research involving human participants was reviewed and approved by the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee (ACU HREC)

with Ethics Register Number (2020-145H) to carry out detailed interviews with social workers and immigrant service users. In this study, accepted principles of ethical and professional conduct have been followed. In observing the principles of the University Ethics Committee, we respected cultural variations and protected the rights of immigrants before, during, and after our research. We requested our participants to sign consent forms and provided them with participant information statements before interacting with them in the interviews. We followed all steps that adhered to the highest ethical standards before, during, and after the research. In our meetings with participants, we provided detailed information about our research to social workers and immigrant service users and allowed to provide their informed consent. The research team is the only group that could access the transcripts.

Research Design

Our research is designed as a qualitative exploratory study approach, using in-depth interview methods with social workers in immigrant services to gather the necessary data for the research in four research locations across three states in Australia: Brisbane and Townsville in Queensland, Melbourne in Victoria, and Sydney in New South Wales. The qualitative exploratory research method has gradually become a popular alternative due, in part, to a greater interest in examining new phenomena and exploring issues that have not been thoroughly examined in the academic community (Ward et al., 2018). Hence, a semi-structured interview schedule was utilized to obtain information in the participants' own words, to generate an account of situations, and to offer detailed information. We recruited 27 participants, who are social workers and immigrant service users. Purposive sampling was used to select all the participants deliberately identified by us to provide specific information about the study population. The inclusion criteria for selecting participants for this study were being qualified social workers of at least 18 years old or above, practiced with Black African immigrant service users, and possessing at least 3 years or more experience in their professional practice. Immigrant service users must have lived in Australia for at least 2 years, 18 years old or above, and accessed welfare-connected services during their stay in Australia. On the other hand, the inclusion criteria for the immigrant participants were that they were Black African immigrants who had lived in Australia for a minimum of 2 years. This length of stay of Black African immigrant participants was deemed relevant to obtain reflective lived experiences over a considerable period of in-country residence.

Data Generation Activities and Data Analysis

The social workers' interview schedule contained 35 questions. Additionally, the interview schedule of the immigrants comprised of 28 questions; and each interview lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. Participants were provided with the interview protocol before the interview and invited to arrange the interview time, place, or medium. Twenty interviews were conducted face-to-face, and the remaining seven conducted

through Zoom and telephone. The interview questions focused on participants' viewpoints about immigrants' interactions with social services and aimed to ascertain the impact of discrimination and social exclusion on African immigrants' wellbeing in Australia. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded using NVivo software. We applied a thematic analysis technique as the primary qualitative data analysis approach in this paper. Thematic analysis was conducted on the coded data. Thematic analysis is a descriptive way of analyzing qualitative data. The research team separated and classified the data according to core themes that conveyed the shared viewpoints of participants (Terry et al., 2017). The themes were developed through an inductive, systematic process that involved careful listening/reading and coding, as is typically done in qualitative research. The interview transcripts were initially read to gain a broad understanding of each participant's viewpoints and how they related to the research topic.

Trustworthiness

The experience, qualifications, background, and credibility of the researchers are crucial in qualitative research technique because the researchers are the main instrument of data gathering and analysis (Tracy, 2019). Hence, our competence in interviewing skills became the foundation for ensuring the trustworthiness of the data gathered and analyzed. Our interviewing method evolved during the data collection as we engaged with participants and improved our approach. Furthermore, we enhanced interviewer reliability by conducting two pilot interviews to gain experience and relevant skills. We used a tape recorder to record all interviews, thereby increasing trustworthiness. Additionally, we audited the research by describing each stage of the research process, amplifying and justifying what was done. We addressed issues of bias by maintaining a neutral stance and refraining from expressing our own views throughout the data-gathering process. Subsequently, we checked and referred the data and tentative interpretations to the study participants to confirm their credibility and authenticity at the end of the data analysis. Essentially, our results were supplementary and complementary to one another. We triangulated our data by using different sources (e.g., interview data) to confirm the emerging findings and establish the extent to which we had reached saturation. We also considered relevant literature, which gave us confidence that the interactions with social services and the impact of discrimination and social exclusion on the wellbeing of African immigrants, as perceived by the participants, were as accurately conveyed as possible.

Presentation of Findings

The 27 participants were social workers and immigrant service users who resided in Australia. Below we present participants' encounters with social services and the impact of interpersonal, community, institutional, and structural discrimination, as well as challenges imposed on immigrants' wellbeing, and how social workers and immigrant service users responded.

Immigrants' Interaction with Social Services

The participants explained their subjective understanding of substantial level of discrimination in service delivery, as they observed that they were discriminated against because of the color of their skin. For instance, the two participant groups used words such as “biases,” “prejudices,” “stereotypes,” “labels,” “fixes,” and “bigotries” to describe why they were discriminated against. Meanwhile, 10 out of the 19 immigrant participants perceived that based on discrimination, their applications for employment as support workers were not processed to enable them to move to the next level. The relevance of wellbeing to how immigrant service users are treated dominated the social workers' data set. Phrases that run through all the interviews with the social workers were “wellbeing of immigrants are central to our practice,” “we value the wellbeing of immigrants,” and “the social work profession promotes wellbeing.” For instance, one of the social workers said:

Our profession is built on the values of human rights, and social justice are inherent in whatever we do. (Social worker 1)

Although all 19 immigrant participants have sought different social services at different levels in Australia, the narration of their experiences suggested a sense of disappointment and belief that more reforms need to be carried out. For instance, a Nigerian immigrant narrated how she was discriminated against when she sought services at the pathology, where the attendant asked her about her country of origin and her reasons for coming to Australia. Further, a Ugandan immigrant echoed that she has been discriminated against several times when seeking different services because of her visa type (student visa). Eleven out of the 19 immigrant participants made assertions such as “sometimes they openly show prejudice against us” and “there are times their actions make you feel discriminated against and marginalised.” More than half of the immigrant service users perceived that their wellbeing was ignored when accessing services. The phrase, “our wellbeing are disregarded” appeared in 10 out of the 19 immigrant participants' interviews. For example, an immigrant with a Burundian background based in Brisbane recounted her ordeal to get childcare enrolment for her son. She explained that a childcare center confirmed to her over the phone that there were many vacancies, but minutes after the phone call when she went to the center in person, she was told there was no vacancy. She explained:

I just told my husband I'll call the centre again, and he said don't do it. I, however, ignored him and called again. To my surprise, she said there were vacancies so I should bring my son. It was absolutely disgusting. (Immigrant 1)

The data set indicated agreement between both participant groups that service inclusion is critical to the wellbeing of immigrants, but the participants perceived that much needs to be done to ensure service inclusion and to achieve the wellbeing of immigrants. For instance, a Kenyan immigrant explained that she worked in an

Aged Care Centre where one of the elderly residents made it clear that she did not want a Black African to serve her which affected her mental wellbeing. She further explained that her daughter was born in Australia, and it was expected that her daughter would benefit from a few Australian welfare services. However, her daughter is not eligible to access any welfare service. Most of the participants, especially the immigrants, were of the view that service inclusion is also about cultural responsiveness and having access to services and resources irrespective of where they find themselves. For example, a first-year Master's student, a Nigerian immigrant suggested the need for cultural support for immigrants due to the variations in how some words are pronounced. Another immigrant student explained that sometimes African students in Australia fail their assignments not because they are not intelligent but because they do not understand the Australian accent. An immigrant pointed out that as a person of color, accessing services is difficult in Sydney. He expressed shock about how professionals could choose to behave unprofessionally toward service users. A social worker said:

When it comes to services delivery, there is discrimination against immigrants. We see that in different settings. We see that in the hospitals. (Social worker 2)

The social workers' understanding of "discrimination" complements that of the immigrants. However, the social workers provided different layers of conceptualizing discrimination suggesting that immigrants experience discrimination at the "interpersonal level," "community level," "institutional level," and "structural level." There are instances in which service providers doubt the stories of immigrants when accessing some services and these appeared in five out of the eight social workers' data sets. This suggests that social workers acknowledge that some service providers are skeptical about immigrants' narratives when they want to access some services. For instance, an immigrant suggested that sometimes one can become worse off after an attempt to seek support—no respect, no cultural awareness—they make you feel like you are robbing the system—you feel like you're perceived as a criminal, and you're unwilling to go back. Another immigrant based in Sydney explained:

I've heard a social worker saying that my story doesn't add up and that I'm making up the story. In a social work setting the level of discrimination you experience is way above what you'll experience in a non-human service space. (Immigrant 2)

The quote above attempted to explain the skepticisms and suspicion within the social service around some of the Black Africans who attempted to access social services. This perception of suspicion around Black Africans is expressed in 15 out of the 19 interviews from the immigrants' data set. For example, some immigrants in Sydney recounted their ordeal around the level of discrimination and favoritism for Australians and their experiences in the job market. An immigrant echoed:

We're at the lower end of the preference list—even if you're a black person with an Australian passport, they prefer to hire white Europeans. (Immigrant 3)

The social workers' responses regarding discrimination and inequality consistently highlighted the importance of a rights-based practice. For instance, a social worker indicated that the system favors Australian citizens, and specifically, there is a strong preference for white Australians. The perception of another social worker was that while the institutions in the country favor white people from European background, the selection criteria is lowered when the system cannot find people with European characteristics. This is consistent with the immigrant service users' perceptions of inequalities and discrimination in Australian society. The analysis suggests that more than half of the immigrants were concerned with the problems of "inequality" and "inequity" perceiving it to be the "bane of their wellbeing." Another social worker echoed that when the system cannot find any qualified candidate, the selection criteria is lowered to embrace people from Asian background before Black Africans are considered. An immigrant based in Townsville narrated the racism she experienced when she tried to apply for the Australian driver's license. She recounted that she had her maiden name on all her documents, including her driver license from her home country, but had sworn to an affidavit to change her surname to her husband's name after she got married. According to her, despite the documents that she provided as evidence of the change of name, the attendant refused to listen, insisting that she needed to change the name on her home country's driver license before they could convert it to Australian driver license. She explained:

How am I going to change my maiden name as I'm not in my home country. The proof of change of name from my home country was not enough for the attendant to convert my license for me. (Immigrant 4)

An immigrant explained that she would incur a considerable cost by going to her home country to effect the necessary change. Fifteen out of the 19 immigrants believed that human rights-based practice may position practitioners to deliver services that promote the wellbeing of service users.

Impact of Interpersonal Discrimination on Immigrants' Wellbeing

All the participants recounted their perceptions around interpersonal discrimination as in each situation, nothing was done by their white colleagues and eyewitnesses. For instance, a social worker based in Townsville encouraged people to call out people who discriminate against Black Africans suggesting that muteness and idleness in reaction to interpersonal racism is a kind of collusion and support to maintain structural racism. Another immigrant perceived that discrimination has a negative impact on immigrants' wellbeing. This was echoed by another immigrant who indicated that discrimination leads to extreme levels of stress. Another immigrant said:

We're many sitting down in our workplace meeting room, and a lady just walked into the room, and she said that's her chair. I just got up and sat somewhere else. Before that incident I had tried to greet her, and she ignored me. (Immigrant 5)

The importance of wellbeing of immigrants to social work practice cannot be overemphasized. In Australia, the basic principles of the social work profession (respect for person, social justice, and professional integrity) are rooted in human rights values. All the social workers who participated in this research, when discussing wellbeing, referred to the basic values of the profession, echoing the indivisibility of human rights. A social worker indicated that social workers need to spend their time and energy in speaking against racist microaggressions and advocate for equality in the delivery of social services. A Melbourne-based immigrant echoed:

We need to speak up, don't be quiet, advocate for change! I know a lot of Black Africans fear that if they speak up, they may lose their jobs or will be accused of making inappropriate comments. (Immigrant 6)

Meanwhile, four out of the eight immigrant participants were of the view that when some immigrants are in leadership positions in the social services, they are undermined or resisted by some of their white colleagues who work under them.

Impact of Community Discrimination on Immigrants' Wellbeing

In this section, we present the findings of community discrimination against African immigrants in Australia. Participants pointed out the collective beliefs and some assumptions around Black African identity generally held by Australian society. The findings from our analysis suggest that there are specific community-held stereotypes about African immigrants such as being poor, gangs, criminals, lazy, docile, and lacking vision. A social worker based in Brisbane perceived that the discrimination in Australian communities have created "Us versus Them" paradigm. Another social worker reiterated the earlier assertion and further explained that stereotypes, biases, and prejudices in Australian communities have intensified xenophobia and anti-immigrant rhetoric. A social worker pointed out particularly the media for perpetuating stereotypes around Black African gangs in Melbourne area casting aspersions on all Black African people calling them gangs and this does not make Africans feel safe in Melbourne. An immigrant echoed:

Many Australians assume that all that Black Africans know to do best is forming gangs. I think the media has contributed to this narrative. I'll encourage the average Australians to challenge their own prejudices, biases, and stereotypes. (Immigrant 7)

The quote above tried to explain the "assumptions," "stereotypes," "biases," and "prejudices" against Black Africans from the perspectives of Black African immigrants. The perceptions of stigma against Black Africans are expressed in six of the eight

interviews from the social workers' data set. Meanwhile, all the eight social worker participants explained that the intersection between individuals who identify as both Africans and immigrants can increase the impact of community-based stereotypes, prejudices, and biases and can infuse community spaces including the media. The data set indicated agreement between both participant groups about the inherent racism in the rhetoric and language of some Australian politicians. For instance, 12 out of the 19 immigrant participants suggested that some Africans with strong African accent cannot practice their original profession because they were trained in their home countries. The data set indicated agreement between both participant groups that racism is massive, casual racism, stereotyping in general, is a massive problem in Australia today because people think immigrants have come here to steal their jobs. However, a social worker said:

Most of the jobs that immigrants do are jobs that Australians don't even want to do. Because some immigrants don't look like them and don't speak their language, they accuse them of taking their jobs. (Social worker 3)

Six out of the eight social workers perceived that racism around job application using African native names and accent can negatively affect a Black African candidate. While there have been successive waves of immigration to Australia over the last 50 years or more, the perceptions that the inherent racism in Australian society have not subsided are reflected in seven of the eight interviews from the social workers' data set. Seven out of the eight social workers perceived that most Australians do not have an idea of how their discriminatory behavior impact on the mental wellbeing of many immigrants. This corresponded with what the immigrant service users perceived to be the situation.

Impact of Institutional Discrimination on Immigrants' Wellbeing

The data set indicated agreement between both participant groups that community-level discrimination is rooted in structural and institutional systems that intersect with social, economic, and political settings. Most participants pointed out evidence of the intersection of institutional and structural levels of discrimination while drawing some significant differences. The perceptions of institutional discrimination as structures and policies that cause challenges among immigrants appeared in five out of the eight social workers' data sets. Twelve out of the 19 immigrant participants perceived that some social workers working in statutory social services who have the mandate to uphold social justice and human rights of all people including immigrants engage in discriminatory practices themselves thereby strengthening the structures of discrimination in those institutions they work for. For example, an immigrant based in Brisbane questioned why international students who studied social work with English as the medium of instruction in their home countries must write International English Language Testing System (IELTS) before they become members of Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW). Another immigrant in Brisbane said:

I'm like why they still must write the IELTS test to be eligible for permanent residency when they already studied for two years Master program or more in Australia, did all their assessments in English. (Immigrant 8)

Similarly, seven out of the eight social workers questioned the rationale behind denying an international student membership of AASW if the person studied social work in a non-Western English-speaking country and, while in Australia used the English language in all communications in the university, wrote all assessments in the English language, and did all communication with lecturers in English. The perception that international students in Australia who engage very well with people in the university or workplace should be exempted from IELTS appeared in nine out of the 19 interviews with the immigrants. The perceptions of 13 out of the 19 immigrants suggested that institutions of state should not treat people differently based on nationality considering the contribution that international students make toward the Australian economy in terms of paying taxes.

Impact of Structural Discrimination on Immigrants' Wellbeing

The social workers' data set suggested that structural forms of discrimination are established to be race-neutral, while they disproportionately impact immigrant communities. More than half of the social workers perceived that structural forms of discrimination target immigrants and strengthen systemic discriminations and oppression. For example, five out of the eight social workers perceived that while many employment agencies have race-neutral policies and practices to employment, there tends to be less job application success for African immigrants. The perception that there is a lot of systemic discrimination that is recorded on a regular basis appeared in five of the eight interviews from the social workers' data set. Further, statements such as "the nature of systemic racism promotes unconscious bias," "people do not realise that they are discriminatory" appeared in 14 out of the 19 immigrant participants' interviews. Although the social work participants perceived that many structures in Australia are race-neutral, the narration of their experiences suggested that they discriminate against immigrants affecting their wellbeing. For instance, five out of the eight social work participants made statement such as "there is massive structural discrimination." One of the social workers made this statement:

Racism is illegal in Australia, so people don't go out being racist. However, they can be racist indoors which is why when you go out you can see people staring at you because they can't say it loud, but they can look at you and you can feel like their eyes are telling you that you don't belong here. (Social worker 4)

The data set indicated agreement between both participant groups that there are job application systems where African immigrants are underrepresented in job application success even though they do relatively more applications and attend more interviews. The perception, "there is a lot of discrimination by hiring managers based on language

and accent” appeared in 10 out of the 19 immigrant participants’ interviews. For instance, an immigrant echoed:

I have come to appreciate how language can disempower people—your ability to express yourself in a particular accent is important to determine your success in job interviews—if you can articulate yourself in a clear way, it gives you a chance. (Immigrant 9)

Meanwhile, 15 out of the 19 immigrant participants recounted their experiences of discrimination based on their accent. Further, phrase that run through 14 out of the 19 interviews with the immigrants was “I don’t want to work with a Black African because they have a thick accent.” One of the social workers said:

There are many institutions we see as respectable, but you go in and the kind of language they use makes you surprised—they use racial and inappropriate language to refer to you. (Social worker 5)

The quote above tried to explain the discrimination faced by immigrants in different institutions and agencies. These perceptions of immigrants’ strong accent and language barrier exacerbating the impact of structural discrimination is reflected in four of the eight interviews from the social workers’ data set. Further, the immigrants’ perceptions of succeeding in job interviews consistently depended on the ability to speak clearly or in an Australian accent. This corresponded with what the social workers perceived to be essential to interview success. The analysis suggests that more than half of the participants perceived speaking with “Australian accent” as critical to “job interview success.” The two participant groups suggested this, in turn, has impacts on the emotional and psychological wellbeing of immigrants. Meanwhile, all the 19 immigrant participants suggested that systemic discrimination has also led to unfair disciplinary practices in workplaces and tertiary institutions. The problem of unfair treatment at the workplace dominated the immigrants’ data set. The statement “immigrants are more likely to face suspension or expulsion compared to their white Australian peers” appeared in 11 of the 19 immigrants’ data set. The perception of the police treating Black Africans different from white Australians appeared in six out of the eight social workers’ data sets. Phrase that run through all the interviews with the social workers is “more Black Africans are in deportation pipeline.” More than half of the immigrant service users perceived that systemic discrimination within immigrant communities has resulted in policing practices such as racial profiling and stop-and-frisk. The social worker data set perceived that the criminalization and policing of immigrants are associated with legal cynicism, stigma, and psychological distress, highlighting the negative impact of colorism in structural practices and policies. Fourteen out of the 19 immigrants perceived that the police are more likely to take the side of white Australians in altercations between them and immigrants. The social worker data set echoed that Australian police are more likely to believe a white Australian over a Black person in Australia. Fifteen out of the 19 immigrants perceived it is difficult for a person with black skin to win a case against a white

Australian in a police station, as anything a Black African says is dismissed by the police. The phrase, “Black Africans are more likely to be arrested than White Australian” appeared in 14 out of the 19 immigrant participants’ interviews. Further, the statement, “more Black Africans are suspected of theft” “Black Africans are searched by security personnel in shopping malls, while White Australians are not” appeared in 12 out of the 19 immigrant participants’ interviews. For example, a participant recounted his experience living in a predominantly white neighborhood in the north side of Brisbane, where a neighbor broke their phone and would kick their door, and despite multiple calls, the police failed to act. However, four out of the 19 immigrants indicated that while Black Africans are not fully protected, the Australian police are fair when it comes to altercations between two Black Africans. Seventeen out of the 19 immigrants perceived that community prejudices, biases, stereotypes, and policies targeting Black African immigrants are rooted in the structural fabric of Australian society and these reinforce structural discrimination in Australia. Further, seven out of the eight social workers suggested that the deep-rooted nature of these prejudices, biases, stereotypes, and policies affect Black African immigrants’ wellbeing. This indicates that discrimination is constantly present across different levels of the society. Additionally, 11 out of the 19 immigrants indicated that systemic discrimination within real estate agencies has resulted in mental health challenges for Black African immigrants. For example, another immigrant in Sydney echoed:

I have encountered a lot of discrimination from real estate agents—when I am looking for housing, these people make my life miserable. They ask for every document they can think of, and I provide them with it, yet they decide not to give it to me. (Immigrant 10)

The social workers’ data set suggested that discrimination against immigrants is a human rights issue that needs to be taken seriously. Further, the social workers’ data set indicated that discrimination against immigrants contributes to high depression levels.

Discussion

Evidently, our participants’ interactions and experiences with social services were molded not just by discrimination but by their intersecting social locations. Immigrants’ perceptions reveal experiences of discrimination through feelings of having encountered marginalization and racism in the job application and social environment as well as social locations such as socio-economic status, immigration status, class, nationality, race, ethnic background, and culture. Participants identify that discrimination, and its varied manifestations have a negative impact on the wellbeing of immigrants.

Immigrants’ Interaction with Social Services

Our research reveals negative experiences that African immigrants have when accessing social services, and the detrimental effects on their wellbeing. We also discovered that negative experiences with the social service system led to feelings of low self-

esteem, lack of respect, and a lack of cultural awareness, as well as a feeling of trying to exploit the system or being treated as a criminal. Most of our immigrant participants had negative experiences with social service providers and the social workers employed by these services. These negative experiences, whether they were the result of deliberate discrimination or unconscious bias, created feelings of disrespect and discomfort that hindered some immigrants from engaging with social workers and other professionals in the social services sector. Furthermore, many immigrants viewed their ineligibility to access certain social services as a form of discrimination, as they believed they contributed to the economy through fulfilling their tax obligations. Additionally, the relationships between immigrants and social services are crucial, as they impact how immigrants perceive their sense of belonging and membership (Armenta & Sarabia, 2020; Potocky & Naseh, 2020). Experiences of discriminatory practices may have a long-lasting impact that eventually mold the integration of immigrants (Grasser & Jovanovic, 2022; Hochman et al., 2018). We cannot determine if the positive perceptions expressed by the participants align with the actual quality of service provided. It is also important to note that the experiences shared by our participants may not represent the views of all Black African immigrants (Marmo & Berkman, 2018; Steinheider et al., 2020), we are unable to draw any conclusions about the way our findings impact the real wellbeing (or self-reported). SSW approach is one that challenges the prevailing social order and considers this order as unfair, unequal, and socially divisive (Chiwara, 2024). SSW rejects the explanation given to the structure and nature of the state recognized by the maintenance approach (Fook, 2022). SSW contends that the state in preserving the majority interests reinforces inequality and related forms of discrimination and domination. In view of this, SSW challenges narratives that indicate that the state plays a neutral, humanist role in relation to its people (Levin & Liberman, 2019). There is the need to acknowledge that any part played by the state that seeks to maintain the status quo in relation to state institutions and welfare policies reinforces inequality and its accompanying discrimination, marginalization, and stigma. Critical SSW scholarships contend that social workers need to interact with the different ways in which the nature of state power and social structures constructs social work as a factor of state control and discrimination (Fook, 2022). Social workers need to identify how service users' lives and opportunities influence and are influenced by structural elements (Adams, 2017). Practice which is supported by this understanding is about challenging and seeking to change discriminatory and dominant processes and structures. Further, SSW is about changing the interactions between social work and service users in the direction that give voice to those without it, and emancipate and empower people (Levin & Liberman, 2019).

Impact of Interpersonal Discrimination on Immigrants' Wellbeing

Our findings provide detailed information about interpersonal discrimination that extends beyond trivial criticisms, molehills, and minor transgressions, as it has a severe negative impact on the wellbeing of immigrants. These are but one part of

SSW and our findings address more micro-level and nuanced attempts made to undertake social justice activities and transformation on a practice level. Immigrants' experiences of interpersonal discrimination result in extreme levels of stress. Our study results suggest that interpersonal discrimination has a negative impact on immigrants' wellbeing and provides a possible explanation for the effects of persistent discrimination experienced by immigrants in Australian society. Exploring the outcomes connected to interpersonal discrimination is critical, considering that social work research has not focused much previous attention on this area of study.

Additionally, we find that stress results in a higher incidence of health challenges, and the findings suggest that stress mediates the relationship between interpersonal discrimination and other health challenges (Goosby et al., 2018; Vines et al., 2017). We further find profound physical and mental health outcomes of interpersonal discrimination. The interpersonal discrimination increases when white bystanders, and colleagues do not say anything. Inaction and silence in reaction to interpersonal discrimination is a kind of complicity, supporting to sustain systemic racism, and speaking to immigrants about their lack of value and isolation (Beagan et al., 2023). Immigrants are therefore left to spend their time and energy fighting discriminatory microaggressions instead of using them for productive activities. Resisting the authority of immigrants in responsible positions is a form of interpersonal discrimination that highlights the connections among interpersonal, institutional, and structural discrimination. When white employees resist immigrants' leadership, it reinforces and perpetuates cultural ideologies that define leadership within the context of whiteness. It also perpetuates beliefs about the "natural" inferiority of racialized peoples (Blum, 2023). Immigrants are significantly underrepresented in Australia's social services and society. They are disproportionately concentrated in lower-level positions within social service professions and individual workplaces. We contend that we are to act not just on matters that affect us, but also on matters of structural discrimination in which we are possibly part of it as the oppressor. In the context of discrimination, structural social workers need to play a role in creating awareness among people about the power dynamics attached to location and of their harmful effects on discrimination. Critical structuralists are expected to deal with these personal situations (interacting with different service users as experts) (Fook, 2022).

Impact of Community Discrimination on Immigrants' Wellbeing

Community discrimination comprises common beliefs and assumptions about immigrants, usually held by the community (Grigoryev et al., 2020). This can be community-held stereotypes about immigrants being criminals, poor, lazy, passive, and lacking ambition (Torres et al., 2022). Participants in this study suggest that the stereotyping of immigrants generates a paradigm of "Us versus Them," which drives anti-immigrant and xenophobia rhetoric. The intersection of identifying as a Black African and an immigrant can further strengthen the impact of stereotypes in the community and can spread into the media (Kassa, 2017; Watson et al., 2022). Further, there is statistical discrimination and profiling which is a kind of community-

based discrimination (Vasquez Guzman et al., 2020), when people or communities apply beliefs about immigrants in making decisions about persons from immigrant populations (Zhirkov, 2021). Further, Fibbi et al. (2021) observe that individual-level discrimination remains entrenched in assumptions and norms held in the cultural structure of communities. Hence, it is critical to recognize that interpersonal discrimination can be an immediate outcome of generally held community stereotypes, prejudices, or biases about African immigrant population. Goulden (2022) points out that communities hold certain prejudices, stereotypes, and biases against immigrant communities such as immigrants do not speak English, immigrants are undereducated, immigrants are on welfare, and immigrants take jobs away from Australian citizens. Internalized discrimination compels people to believe and recognize community-held stereotypes, resulting in despair and resignation, thereby bracing the sinister cycle of discrimination (Torres et al., 2022).

The media plays a significant part in spreading prejudices, biases, and stereotypes about the immigrant community. The media appears to portray immigrants as criminals, gangs, lazy, and murderers (Banda, 2020), which result in adverse self-attitudes on their identity. Further, immigrants are more expected to get media coverage when discussing topics on criminality and immigration (Arowosola, 2020). The nature of media coverage of immigrants may impact the development of immigrants by influencing their identity development, self-esteem, and norms of beauty. Additionally, colorism is entrenched in community discrimination and may be especially harmful. Furthermore, internalized discrimination can result in immigrant communities to sustain stereotypes around their own communities, for instance, through colorism. Community-level discrimination results in discrimination on the interpersonal level and these occurrences are entrenched in the broader socio-cultural contexts. Discrimination held at the community level may be subtle; it is so entrenched in the cultural structure that many people do not detect how harmful it can be to immigrants (Torres et al., 2022). There is bidirectional interaction with the macro-level structures and policies in community discrimination, also termed structural and institutional discrimination. Social, economic, and political contexts influence beliefs in the community since these settings can be influenced and sustained by institutional practices that are discriminatory in nature. SSW may be conceptually and practically fused with the strategies (Lundy, 2004) and models (Gitterman & Heller, 2011) of community work; nevertheless, it extends beyond them. One may positively establish that since community work has been weakened and diminished by the neoliberal welfare policies, SSW as a real instrument of social work can open fresh access to macro-level viewpoints in social work in a manner that may openly interconnect and produce knowledge from social work with individuals (Islam, 2024). Currently, there is the need for critical social workers or structuralists to reflect on additional issues: the part played by social work and its responsibility in the structure of the Australian economy that causes varied social and environmental challenges at the same time (Närhi & Matthies, 2018). Primarily, it is critical for critical structuralists to be aware of the way each community's social, economic, and environmental challenges and prospects are related to the local development of the environment, the economy, and social justice.

Impact of Institutional Discrimination on Immigrants' Wellbeing

Community-level discrimination remains entrenched in institutional and structural systems considering relations with social, economic, and political settings (Rodriguez, 2022). Clearly, institutional and structural levels of discrimination are interconnected, even though there are significant differences to consider. Institutional discrimination is structures and policies that are planned to distinguish or cause damage to a particular marginalized identity (Torres et al., 2022). Institutional discrimination is entrenched in the historical legacies of colonialism, segregation, and slavery (Gill, 2021). Therefore, SSW or critical structuralists advocate for the strict application of anti-discrimination legislations and design and implementation of policies, to encourage social inclusion (Thompson, 2020). Decades of institutional discrimination that were experienced by African immigrants are types of historical trauma that continuously reinforces discrimination among immigrant communities (Henderson et al., 2021). Policies and practices around immigration are significant examples of institutional discrimination since they are structured to target immigrants (Esses, 2021). In Australia, there is restricted access to public benefits for legal immigrants and undocumented immigrants during the first 5 years of relocation (Fozdar & Banki, 2017). These policies have detrimental impacts on immigrants and lay the foundation for future restricting policies and procedures on immigration. This constitutes institutional discrimination as it is planned to target immigrants, particularly low-resourced, immigrants. Further, colorism is widespread in immigration practices and policies. Hence, it is necessary to consider intersectionality when assessing the impact of the immigration system on immigrants. There is a negative impact of anti-immigrant policies on identity among immigrants and physical and emotional health. Additionally, institutional-level discrimination can encourage stereotypes, prejudices, biases, and assumptions in communities resulting in discriminatory experiences at the individual level. In the literature on discrimination, institutional and structural discrimination are usually utilized interchangeably; nonetheless, there are significant differences as would be shown below (Fibbi et al., 2021). SSW can deal with target groups across Australia and even social reforms at the macro level (Lombard & Viviers, 2020). SSW is an effective approach particularly when provided and accepted as a rightful mandate in the hands of social workers (Berg-Weger, 2019). SSW encourages Black African immigrants come together and act on matters of structural discrimination and social injustice that affect them (Lundy, 2011; Mullally, 2013).

Impact of Structural Discrimination on Immigrants' Wellbeing

Just as institutional discrimination, structural discrimination includes structures and policies; however, unlike earlier levels, it cannot be targeted entirely at immigrants (Braveman et al., 2022). Structural forms of discrimination are constructed to be “race-neutral,” even though they impact disproportionately immigrants and structured to strengthen systemic discriminations and oppression. For example, while real estate agencies can have “race-neutral” practices to renting, there tends to be less rental approvals for immigrants (Korver-Glenn, 2021; Rosen et al., 2021). There is a

difference between structural and institutional discrimination as it has critical policy outcomes. It is harder to target structural discrimination considering these policies may not be unlawful and are not deliberately targeting immigrants. Structural discrimination is widespread in housing, employment, education, and the criminal justice system even though this is not an exclusive list. Discrimination is mostly linked to subjective experiences connected with conditions of employment, such as working under poorer conditions than the Australian-born citizens, low wages, job insecurity, lack of social benefits, and labor exploitation. Experiences of discrimination in housing have been connected with distress among immigrants, especially higher anxious and depressive symptoms, and limited access to social services (Ziersch et al., 2020). Furthermore, research finds that undocumented status aggravates the impact of structural discrimination, as immigrants who are undocumented may not be able to access tertiary education owing to the inability to qualify for financial support. Systemic discrimination has resulted in policing practices, such as racial profiling and stop-and-frisk. Additionally, certain practices by the police such as arrest and brutality are prevalent among immigrants and immigrants experience higher levels of racial discrimination carried out by the police in relation to their non-immigrant white counterparts (Anderson, 2021). Criminalization and policing are linked to psychological distress, legal skepticism, and stigma among immigrants (Jackson et al., 2020). This is especially significant for immigrants with darker skin tone (Lanuza et al., 2023; Petersen et al., 2024), showing the dangerous impact of colorism on systemic or structural policies and practices. Individual, community, and institutional discriminations are all entrenched in structural discrimination. We cannot view an individual discrimination without viewing community stereotypes, prejudices, biases, and policies clearly aiming at an immigrant identity, or practices entrenched in the structure of society. Additionally, the entrenched nature of the pattern shows that levels of discrimination are not mutually exclusive and are constantly intermingling across different levels. In transitioning from supporting the individual Black African, to working with Black African groups and raising awareness, to stimulating significant social change, structural social worker should become political and social activists. There is the need for this activism to deal with structures that are both abstract and concrete. Since critical structuralists are aimed at pulling down oppressive systems, significant part of the tangible techniques or approaches to working structurally are usually framed at the macro level. Critical structuralists' perspective is aimed at social class as the key and determining place for discrimination and oppression. It has brought to the fore consideration of the overlapping and different dimensions of discrimination, inequality, and power in the present society. From the critical structuralists' perspective, society is associated with structured conflicts of interest which are played out in several different realms and are experienced successively and concurrently by people. In having insight and practicing with this knowledge, connections need to be established between structural awareness and the narratives that service users provide about their difficulties. The kind of social work that is practice considering this analysis need to be shaped by awareness about how social, economic, and political structures influence Black Africans' lives and need to be responsive to the different voices and viewpoints of Black Africans who live those lives.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have discussed the significance of SSW framework for understanding experiences of Black Africans in Australia. The evidence of interpersonal, community, institutional, and structural discrimination are overwhelmingly present in contemporary Australian society, including the employment market. Further, there is a need for the social work profession to engage in policy reform and reposition itself as an agent of social activism and social change. Social workers need to design programs to prevent discrimination, promote multicultural training, and foster respect and inclusion. The situation has implications for the training of social workers. Further, social workers need to tailor specific skills connected to intercultural relations, needs assessment, implementation, and assessment of interventions. Moreover, the social work profession must stand against discriminatory policies, and social work educators should provide immigrants with the necessary knowledge to challenge such policies. Additionally, social workers need the relevant knowledge to effectively work with immigrants on both micro and macro levels. Furthermore, research and social justice activism can support micro-level practice by addressing anti-immigration legislation, restrictions, xenophobic policies, and law enforcement practices that significantly impact the wellbeing of immigrants. One way that social work can reconnect with its roots in social activism and bring about structural change beyond micro-level practice is through organizing to advocate for the human rights of immigrants and social justice. Failing to do so will result in complicity in the systematic criminalization of immigrants, reinforcing the status quo, and promoting discrimination, exclusion, xenophobia, and racism.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the members of the Australian Research Network for African Academics (ARNAA) who participated in this research and shared their experiences of working in Australia. This project has been supported in kind by ARNAA.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Ethics Approval Statement

We obtained ethics approval from the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee (ACU HREC), with Ethics Registration Number (2020-145H), to conduct in-depth interviews with social workers and immigrant service users. Throughout the study, we respected cultural differences and safeguarded the rights of immigrants, in accordance with the guidelines provided by our ethics approval. Prior to the interviews, participants were provided with consent forms and participant information statements, and their informed consent was obtained. We maintained the highest ethical standards throughout the entire research process. To ensure participant anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used to anonymize the data.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD

Obed Adonteng-Kissi  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9324-7138>

References

- Abdalla, S., Apramian, S. S., Cantley, L. F., & Cullen, M. R. (2018). Occupation and risk for injuries. In C. N. Mock, R. Nugent, O. Kobusingye, & K. R. Smith (Eds.), *The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development* (3rd ed.). The World Bank. PMID: 30212110.
- Adams, R. (2017). *Empowerment, participation and social work* (4th ed.). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Afiouni, F., & Karam, C. M. (2019). The formative role of contextual hardships in women's career calling. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *114*, 69–87. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2019.02.008>
- Akinlade, E. Y., Lambert, J. R., & Zhang, P. (2020). Mechanisms for hiring discrimination of immigrant applicants in the United States. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, *39*(4), 395–417. <https://doi.org/10.1108/edi-08-2019-0218>
- Anderson, J.-P. H. (2021). *Faith in violence: Race and the punitive paradigm* [PhD dissertation]. University of Washington.
- Armenta, A., & Sarabia, H. (2020). Receptionists, doctors, and social workers: Examining undocumented immigrant women's perceptions of health services. *Social Science & Medicine*, *246*, Article 112788. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2020.112788>
- Arowosola, O. (2020). *The portrayal of African immigrants: A framing analysis of newspaper coverage* [Master of Science in Communication]. Rochester Institute of Technology.
- Banda, F. (2020). *African migration, human rights and literature*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Beagan, B. L., Bizzeth, S. R., & Etowa, J. (2023). Interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism in Canadian nursing: A culture of silence. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research*, *55*(2), 195–205. <https://doi.org/10.1177/084456212211101>
- Berg-Weger, M. (2019). *Social work and social welfare: An invitation* (5th ed.). Routledge.
- Blagg, H., & Anthony, T. (2019). Decolonising criminology: Imagining justice in a postcolonial world. In R. Walters, & D. H. Drake (Eds.), *Critical criminological perspectives*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Blum, L. (2023). Cultural racism: Biology and culture in racist thought. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, *54*(3), 350–369. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josp.12370>
- Braveman, P. A., Arkin, E., Proctor, D., Kauh, T., & Holm, N. (2022). Systemic and structural racism: Definitions, examples, health damages, and approaches to dismantling: Study examines definitions, examples, health damages, and dismantling systemic and structural racism. *Health Affairs*, *41*(2), 171–178. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01394>
- Brown, M. K., Carnoy, M., Currie, E., Duster, T., Oppenheimer, D. B., Shultz, M. M., & Wellman, D. (2023). *Whitewashing race: The myth of a color-blind society*. University of California Press.

- Burchardt, T. (2000). Social exclusion: Concepts and evidence. In D. Gordon & P. Townsend (Eds.), *Breadline Europe* (pp. 385–406). Policy Press.
- Carangio, V., Farquharson, K., Bertone, S., & Rajendran, D. (2021). Racism and white privilege: Highly skilled immigrant women workers in Australia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *44*(1), 77–96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2020.1722195>
- Carrillo, A., & O'Grady, C. L. (2018). Using structural social work theory to drive anti-oppressive practice with Latino immigrants. *Advances in Social Work*, *18*(3), 704–726. <https://doi.org/10.18060/21663>
- Chiswick, B. R., & Miller, P. W. (2006). Immigration to Australia during the 1990s: Institutional and labour market influences. In A. C.-C. Deborah, & K. Siew-Ean (Eds.), *Public policy and immigrant settlement*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Chiwara, P. (2024). Structural inequalities in Namibia and South Africa: A critical social work perspective. *Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development*, *36*(2), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.25159/2708-9355/14605>
- Cunneen, C., & Tauri, J. (2016). *Indigenous criminology*. Policy Press.
- Cunneen, C., & Tauri, J. M. (2019). Indigenous peoples, criminology, and criminal justice. *Annual Review of Criminology*, *2*(1), 359–381. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurevcriminol-011518-024630>
- Curry-Stevens, A., Hawash, L., & Bradley, S. (2020). Learned lessons: Growing social workers' preparation for upstream policy practice. *Advances in Social Work*, *19*(1), 62–85. <https://doi.org/10.18060/22642>
- Daly, A., Carey, R. N., Darcey, E., Chih, H., LaMontagne, A. D., Milner, A., & Reid, A. (2018). Workplace psychosocial stressors experienced by migrant workers in Australia: A cross-sectional study. *PLoS One*, *13*(9), Article e0203998. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0203998>
- Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Tay, L. (2018). Advances in subjective wellbeing research. *Nature Human Behaviour*, *2*(4), 253–260. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-018-0307-6>
- Dovchin, S., & Dryden, S. (2022). Translingual discrimination: Skilled transnational migrants in the labour market of Australia. *Applied Linguistics*, *43*(2), 365–388. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amab041>
- Esses, V. M. (2021). Prejudice and discrimination toward immigrants. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *72*(1), 503–531. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurevpsych-080520-102803>
- Fibbi, R., Midtbøen, A. H., & Simon, P. (2021). *Migration and discrimination: IMISCOE short reader*. Springer Nature.
- Fook, J. (2022). *Social work: A critical approach to practice*. Sage Publications.
- Fozdar, F., & Banki, S. (2017). Settling refugees in Australia: Achievements and challenges. *International Journal of Migration and Border Studies*, *3*(1), 43–66. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJMBS.2017.081197>
- Gatwiri, K. (2021). Racial microaggressions at work: Reflections from Black African professionals in Australia. *The British Journal of Social Work*, *51*(2), 655–672. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcaa145>
- Gatwiri, K., Mwanri, L., & McPherson, L. (2021). Afro-diasporic experiences of highly skilled Black African immigrants in Australia. *Australian Social Work*, *74*(4), 480–491. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2020.1856393>

- Gill, S. R. (2021). Legacies of slavery and their enduring harms. *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal for Multicultural Education*, 12(3), 12–21. <https://doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.15.3.1833>
- Gitterman, A., & Heller, N. R. (2011). Integrating social work perspectives and models with concepts, methods and skills with other professions' specialized approaches. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 39, 204–211. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-011-0340-7>
- Goosby, B. J., Cheadle, J. E., & Mitchell, C. (2018). Stress-related biosocial mechanisms of discrimination and African American health inequities. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 44(1), 319–340. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-060116-053403>
- Goulden, R. R. (2022). *The “Forever Migrant”: An intersectional analysis of L/A workplace discrimination on the basis of race, African accent, and English language proficiency* [Bachelor of Arts (Honours)]. Bates College.
- Gowan, S. (2023). Multicultural Australia and the immigrant. In S. Gowan (Ed.), *The ethnically diverse workplace: Experience of immigrant Indian professionals in Australia* (pp. 9–32). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Grasser, L. R., & Jovanovic, T. (2022). Neural impacts of stigma, racism, and discrimination. *Biological Psychiatry: Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging*, 7(12), 1225–1234. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpsc.2022.06.012>
- Grigoryev, D., Batkhina, A., Van De Vijver, F., & Berry, J. W. (2020). Towards an integration of models of discrimination of immigrants: From ultimate (functional) to proximate (socio-functional) explanations. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 21, 667–691. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-019-00677-w>
- Henderson, Z. R., Stephens, T. N., Ortega-Williams, A., & Walton, Q. L. (2021). Conceptualizing healing through the African American experience of historical trauma. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 91(6), Article 763. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000578>
- Hochman, O., Stein, A., Lewin-Epstein, N., & Wöhler, T. (2018). Emotional integration across immigrant generations in Baden-Württemberg, Germany: The role of discrimination. *International Migration*, 56(3), 186–202. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12377>
- Holroyd, J. (2018). The social psychology of discrimination. In K. Lippert-Rasmussen (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of the ethics of discrimination* (1st ed., pp. 381–393). Routledge.
- Idemudia, E., & Olonisakin, T. T. (2021). The cost of looking different: Racism, mental health and human development of migrants of African descent. In L. Dutra-Thomé, D. F. Rabelo, D. Ramos, & E. F. Góes (Eds.), *Racism and human development* (pp. 113–132). Springer.
- Islam, M. R. (2024). Introduction to social work. In M. R. Islam (Ed.), *Fieldwork in social work: A practical guide* (pp. 1–26). Springer.
- Jackson, D. B., Testa, A., & Vaughn, M. G. (2020). Low self-control and legal cynicism among at-risk youth: An investigation into direct and vicarious police contact. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 57(6), 741–783. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427820929735>
- Kairuz, C. A., Casanelia, L. M., Bennett-Brook, K., Coombes, J., & Yadav, U. N. (2021). Impact of racism and discrimination on physical and mental health among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Australia: A systematic scoping review. *BMC Public Health*, 21, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11363-x>
- Kassa, A. (2017). *Dimensions of the new diaspora: African immigrant communities & organizations*. Priority Africa Network.

- Kavian, F., Mehta, K., Willis, E., Mwanri, L., Ward, P., & Booth, S. (2020). Migration, stress and the challenges of accessing food: An exploratory study of the experience of recent Afghan women refugees in Adelaide, Australia. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(4), Article 1379. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17041379>
- Kjellgren, M., Lilliehorn, S., & Markström, U. (2024). Adolescents' perspectives on SSWs' counselling practice in Swedish elementary schools: "Plumb the depths and navigate to shore". *Journal of Children's Services*, 19(1), 20–37. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCS-06-2023-0035>
- Kong, C. (2024). Disproportionate incarceration rates of Indigenous Australians: A human rights violation. *International Journal of High School Research*, 6(4), 92–98. <https://doi.org/10.36838/v6i4.15>
- Korver-Glenn, E. (2021). *Race brokers: Housing markets and segregation in 21st century urban America*. Oxford University Press.
- Kosny, A., Santos, I., & Reid, A. (2017). Employment in a "land of opportunity?" Immigrants' experiences of racism and discrimination in the Australian workplace. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 18(2), 483–497. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-016-0482-0>
- Kwansah-Aidoo, K., & Mapedzahama, V. (2018). There is really discrimination everywhere: Experiences and consequences of "Everyday racism" among the new Black African diaspora in Australia. *Australasian Review of African Studies*, 39(1), 81–109. <https://doi.org/10.3316/informit.578043425378601>
- Lanuza, Y. R., Petersen, N., & Omori, M. (2023). Colorism in punishment among Hispanics in the criminal justice system. *Social Problems*, 70(2), 275–296. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spab044>
- Layard, R., & De Neve, J.-E. (2023). *Wellbeing*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009298957>
- Levin, L., & Liberman, A. (2019). A case for critical social work action. *Families in Society*, 100(3), 248–259. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1044389419837073>
- Libal, K. (2018). Social work with migrants and refugees: Challenges, best practices, and future directions. *Advances in Social Work*, 18, Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.18060/22600>
- Lombard, A., & Viviers, A. (2020). The micro–macro nexus: Rethinking the relationship between social work, social policy and wider policy in a changing world. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 50(8), 2261–2278. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcaa180>
- Lucio, R., Shayman, E., Mitchell, B. D., & Souhrada, E. (2024). What is essential in school social work practice? *School Mental Health*, 16, 403–416. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-024-09643-z>
- Lundy, C. (2004). *Social work and social justice: A structural approach to practice*. University of Toronto Press.
- Lundy, C. (2011). *Social work, social justice & human rights: A structural approach to practice* (2nd ed.). University of Toronto Press.
- Marmo, S., & Berkman, C. (2018). Social workers' perceptions of job satisfaction, interdisciplinary collaboration, and organizational leadership. *Journal of Social Work in End-of-Life & Palliative Care*, 14(1), 8–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15524256.2018.1437590>
- Martin, J., Arunachalam, D., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2023). White Australia: Nationalism and national identity. In J. Martin, D. Arunachalam, & H. Forbes-Mewett (Eds.), *Identity and*

- belonging among Chinese Australians: Phenotype, ethnic language and cultural values* (pp. 21–46). Springer.
- Molla, T. (2021). African refugees in Australia: Social position and educational outcomes. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 19(4), 331–348. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.07.005>
- Mullally, S. (2013). Retreat from multiculturalism: Community cohesion, civic integration and the disciplinary politics of gender. *International Journal of Law in Context*, 9(3), 411–428. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1744552313000189>
- Mwanri, L., Fauk, N. K., Ziersch, A., Gesesew, H. A., Asa, G. A., & Ward, P. R. (2022). Post-migration stressors and mental health for African migrants in South Australia: A qualitative study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(13), Article 7914. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19137914>
- Närhi, K., & Matthies, A.-L. (2018). The ecosocial approach in social work as a framework for structural social work. *International Social Work*, 61(4), 490–502. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872816644663>
- Nguyen, T., & Velayutham, S. (2018). Everyday inter-ethnic tensions and discomfort in a culturally diverse Australian workplace. *Social Identities*, 24(6), 779–794. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2017.1329655>
- Nkimbeng, M., Taylor, J. L., Roberts, L., Winch, P. J., Commodore-Mensah, Y., Thorpe, R. J., Jr., Han, H.-R., & Szanton, S. L. (2021). “All I know is that there is a lot of discrimination”: Older African immigrants’ experiences of discrimination in the United States. *Geriatric Nursing*, 42(1), 196–204. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gerinurse.2020.08.002>
- O’Brien, G. (2021). Racial profiling, surveillance and over-policing: The over-incarceration of young First Nations males in Australia. *Social Sciences*, 10(2), Article 68. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10020068>
- Petersen, N., Lanuza, Y. R., & Omori, M. (2024). Cumulative colorism in criminal courts. *Social Science Research*, 117, Article 102946. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2023.102946>
- Potocky, M., & Naseh, M. (2020). *Best practices for social work with refugees and immigrants*. Columbia University Press.
- Reid, A. (2012). Under-use of migrants’ employment skills linked to poorer mental health. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 36(2), 120–125. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-6405.2012.00842.x>
- Renzaho, A. M., Woodward, K., Polonsky, M., Abood, J., & Green, J. (2024). Addressing employment barriers for humanitarian migrants: Perspectives from settlement services. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajs4.353>
- Rodriguez, S. (2022). “Immigration knocks on the door... we are stuck...”: A multilevel analysis of undocumented youth’s experiences of racism, system failure, and resistance in policy and school contexts. *Teachers College Record*, 124(6), 3–37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01614681221093286>
- Rosen, E., Garboden, P. M., & Cossyleon, J. E. (2021). Racial discrimination in housing: How landlords use algorithms and home visits to screen tenants. *American Sociological Review*, 86(5), 787–822. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224211029618>
- Saleem, R., Morrill, Z., Brodt, M., & Pagan-Ortiz, M. E. (2022). Oppression and resistance: An analysis of Muslims’ experiences of structural violence. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 50(1), 426–444. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22588>

- Spero, L., & Werkmeister Rozas, L. (2022). A structural social work approach to oral health care in Nepal. *International Social Work*, 65(6), 1249–1263. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872820967431>
- Steinheider, B., Hoffmeister, V., Brunk, K., Garrett, T., & Munoz, R. (2020). Dare to care: Exploring the relationships between socio-moral climate, perceived stress, and work engagement in a social service agency. *Journal of Social Service Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2019.1575324>
- Swannie, B. (2020). Speech acts: Is racial vilification a form of racial discrimination? *Adelaide Law Review*, 41(1), 179–216.
- Tedam, P. (2021). *Social work with minority groups*. Routledge.
- Terry, G., Hayfield, N., Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. In C. Willig & W. S. Rogers (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology* (2nd ed., Vol. 2, p. 25). Sage.
- Thompson, N. (2020). *Anti-discriminatory practice: Equality, diversity and social justice*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Torres, S. A., Sosa, S. S., Flores Toussaint, R. J., Jolie, S., & Bustos, Y. (2022). Systems of oppression: The impact of discrimination on Latinx immigrant adolescents' wellbeing and development. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 32(2), 501–517. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12751>
- Tracy, S. J. (2019). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Udah, H., Singh, P., & Chamberlain, S. (2019). Settlement and employment outcomes of Black African immigrants in Southeast Queensland, Australia. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 28(1), 53–74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0117196819830247>
- Vasquez Guzman, C. E., Hess, J. M., Casas, N., Medina, D., Galvis, M., Torres, D. A., Handal, A. J., Carreon-Fuentes, A., Hernandez-Vallant, A., & Chavez, M. J. (2020). Latinx/@ immigrant inclusion trajectories: Individual agency, structural constraints, and the role of community-based organizations in immigrant mobilities. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 90(6), Article 772. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000507>
- Vines, A. I., Ward, J. B., Cordoba, E., & Black, K. Z. (2017). Perceived racial/ethnic discrimination and mental health: A review and future directions for social epidemiology. *Current Epidemiology Reports*, 4, 156–165. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40471-017-0106-z>
- Ward, J. K., Comer, U., & Stone, S. (2018). On qualifying qualitative research: Emerging perspectives and the “deer” (descriptive, exploratory, evolutionary, repeat) paradigm. *Interchange*, 49, 133–146. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10780-018-9313-x>
- Watson, V. W., Reine Johnson, L. E., Peña-Pincheira, R. S., Berends, J. E., & Chen, S. (2022). Locating a pedagogy of love: (Re)framing pedagogies of loss in popular-media narratives of African immigrant communities. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 35(6), 588–608. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2021.1982057>
- Zhirkov, K. (2021). Who are “the immigrants”? Beliefs about immigrant populations and anti-immigration attitudes in the United States and Britain. *Social Science Quarterly*, 102(1), 228–237. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12925>
- Ziersch, A., Due, C., & Walsh, M. (2020). Discrimination: A health hazard for people from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds resettled in Australia. *BMC Public Health*, 20(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-8068-3>

Author Biographies

Obed Adonteng-Kissi is a senior lecturer in social work discipline at Edith Cowan University. A strong focus of his current work has been on human rights perspective in social work practice with immigrants in Australia; the rights of the child vis-à-vis child labour; developmental impact of rural and communal conflicts; enhancing economic, social and environmental outcomes for land-connected people impacted by mining.

Matthew Mabefam is a lecturer in Development Studies at the School of Social and Political Sciences. He completed his PhD in Anthropology and Development Studies at the University of Melbourne. He also holds an MPhil and BA(Hons) degrees, both from the University of Ghana. His research focuses on the politics of international development, inequality, religion and neoliberalism, political economy, migration, and wellbeing.

Elizabeth Archibong is a PhD student in the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Sciences, Central Queensland University, Rockhampton. Her research area is in human rights perspective in social work practice with immigrants in Australia.

Nnaemeka Meribe is currently an adjunct research fellow at the Department of Politics, Media and Philosophy at La Trobe University. His research interests cut across Media Studies, Health Promotion and Disability Studies.

Frank Darkwa Baffour is a criminal justice social worker and lecturer in the School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences at the University of Newcastle, Australia. His work has been published in high-profile peer reviewed journals such as *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *Crime & Delinquency*, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *Victims and Offenders*, *Criminal Justice Review*, and *Criminology and Criminal Justice*.