

Impact of digital platforms on the integration of migrants and the development of new social identities

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Abstract. The purpose of the study was to find out the importance of social networks and digital platforms in the process of refugee integration and assess their impact on the adaptation and development of social identities. The research methodology included the use of content analysis, thematic coding, comparative analysis of digital platforms and integration programmes. Online communities, social networks, and news platforms in Germany, Canada, and South Africa were reviewed to analyse the processes of linguistic and cultural adaptation, professional integration, access to resources, interaction with local communities, and the development of new social identities. It was established that digital platforms play a comprehensive role in the social adaptation of refugees, providing access to up-to-date information, creating a space for the exchange of experience, mutual support, and professional integration. User activity on X, LinkedIn, Facebook, and on the news portals Der Spiegel, Bild, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Help, and Reuters were analysed, which helped to determine the effectiveness of these resources in forming social connections and supporting adaptation processes. The platforms help to reduce social isolation, raise awareness of rights, social and health services, and develop professional adaptation skills. It is recommended to create integrated digital ecosystems to support refugees, combining traditional media, social networks, and mobile applications that provide access to information, professional adaptation, and social interaction. Such approaches are based on the experience of Germany, Canada, and South Africa, where targeted use of digital platforms increased the effectiveness of integration processes and reduced social isolation. The practical significance of the study is that the information can be used by social workers, refugee support organisations, and local communities to develop and implement digital integration programmes, language and vocational training, and support the social adaptation of migrants

Keywords: cultural exchange; cultural adaptation; employment support; online communities; communication methods

INTRODUCTION

The dynamic expansion of digital platforms is changing the way people communicate, access information and participate in public life. In a globalised environment, migration processes are accompanied by the development of new channels of interaction between displaced persons and host communities. Digital environments are not only a tool for spreading information, but also a space for creating new social networks, cultural practices, and behaviours. The inclusion of migrants in social and economic processes is increasingly taking place through online platforms that open up opportunities for training, employment, maintaining cultural ties, and engaging in social activities. Such processes contribute to the emergence of new forms of social identity that combine local and cross-border elements. The

study of this problem helps to find out the mechanisms of interaction between digital platforms and social transformations in the migration environment, and to assess the prospects for using digital resources for the development of inclusive practices and intercultural dialogue.

A systematic study of scientific papers revealed the impact of digital platforms on the integration of migrants and the development of new social identities. For example, M. Barker (2021) analysed the process of social integration of new arrivals during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasising that digital platforms are becoming a key channel for maintaining social connections in conditions of physical isolation. The researcher found that online communities provide an opportunity to share experience and

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information, contributing to the adaptation of migrants to new social norms and cultural contexts. Similar findings were presented by B. Svoen *et al.* (2021), who showed that digital stories and online learning resources contribute to increasing the social inclusion of migrants, forming new ways of communication and community interaction. Participation in digital communities strengthens the sense of belonging to the collective and supports the development of cross-cultural skills among migrants.

M. Cheesman (2022) found that the digital identity of refugees performs a dual function: on the one hand, it serves as a means of self – expression and maintaining an autonomous social presence, on the other – as a tool for accessing social and economic resources. However, its use is accompanied by legal and ethical challenges related to the control of personal data and the protection of users' rights. A similar perspective on digital identity management was presented by S. Madon & E. Schoemaker (2021), who showed that refugee management platforms allow organising data, while creating a space for building social connections and interacting with host communities. The researchers noted that such platforms not only optimise access to administrative and social services but also build trust between refugees and institutions. They stressed the risks of over-reliance on digital technologies, which can increase inequality if access to them is restricted. S. Masiero & S. Bailur (2021) expanded the analysis by proposing the concept of digital identity as a tool for development and social justice. They found that access to digital platforms can increase the chances of migrants participating in public life and integrating into new social structures. These results were consistent with the study by A. Yau *et al.* (2020), who demonstrated that social media acts as a medium for identity negotiations in the acculturation process, allowing migrants to keep in touch with their own cultural heritage and simultaneously integrate into the host society. Active participation in social media contributes to the development of digital literacy and the development of strategies for adapting to new socio-cultural conditions.

Self-presentation of migrants and refugees in digital news was analysed by L. Chouliaraki (2017), finding that online media creates boundaries through which collective and individual identities are formed. The researcher noted that the way information is presented in digital media affects the perception of migrants by the local audience and the level of their social inclusion. The study by S. Park & L. Gerrits (2021) showed that online networks allow migrants to exhibit cross-border identity, while maintaining connections with their parent's countries and creating new local social spaces. Participation in such networks contributes to the development of cross-cultural competencies and increased social support among migrant communities. G. Udwan *et al.* (2020) examined the digital resilience of Syrian refugees in the Netherlands, highlighting that social media performs three key functions: providing social support, access to health information, and developing a new identity. The researchers found that the use of digital resources

reduces feelings of isolation, promotes sharing of experiences, and increases awareness of available services. It was noted that digital tools are becoming an important factor in adaptation and integration into the host society. These results were consistent with the findings of W. Guo (2025), who reported that Chinese students in the UK use social media for cultural navigation and adaptation, maintaining social connections and changing their own social roles. Active use of digital platforms helps students form hybrid identities by combining elements of native and host cultures.

Despite the aspects highlighted by the above researchers, the gaps included insufficient study of the impact of digital platforms on the long-term integration of migrants into local communities. There was a lack of research that analysed the interaction of different types of digital media and their impact on the development of hybrid or transnational social identities. The purpose of the study was to analyse how social networks and digital platforms contribute to the integration of refugees in different countries. The objectives of the study were: comparative analysis of digital platforms and programmes for integrating refugees into the Germany, Canada, and South Africa; content analysis of media for the study of refugee integration; development of recommendations on the use of digital platforms in support of refugee integration processes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study conducted a comparative analysis of digital platforms and programmes for refugee integration in three countries: Germany, Canada, and South Africa. The choice of these countries was justified by the variety of approaches to migration policy, socio-economic conditions, and the scale of migration flows: Germany represents a large European context with a high level of digitalisation and integration programmes, Canada is known for an integrated and inclusive approach to refugees, and South Africa allows evaluating the effectiveness of digital tools in a country with high migrant mobility. The most common and representative digital platforms that provide distance learning, language training, cultural adaptation, and employment support were selected for the analysis. In Germany, this was the Migrant E-Learning Platform (n.d.) and Integreat (n.d.), in Canada – LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada, 2024) and Arrive Platform, in South Africa – Mobile Applications Refugee social media Hub (Refugee Council, n.d.) and MobiJobs (2021). The choice of these platforms was conditioned by their complexity, high level of interactivity and ability to cover various aspects of integration, including social interaction, professional training, and monitoring of user progress. The effectiveness of the platforms was evaluated according to the main criteria: availability of resources, interactivity of courses, coverage of language training and cultural adaptation, employment support, and the ability to monitor user progress.

The study identified countries and types of media to analyse: in Germany – social networks X (n.d.), LinkedIn (n.d.), and WhatsApp (n.d.), news portals Der

Spiegel Staff (2018), Bild (Schupelius, 2025), and Reuters (2025); in Canada – the news service of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC News, 2017) and thematic Facebook groups for migrants, in particular Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (n.d.); in South Africa – news portal of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Help (UNHCR Help, n.d.). In addition, the value of digital tools International Organisation for Migration (n.d.), Amazon Web Services (n.d.) was presented. The criteria for the analysis were the adaptation of refugees, interaction with local communities, preservation of their own culture, and creation of new communication practices. The main method of research was a qualitative study of content (content analysis) of text materials and user comments, which helped to identify key narratives regarding the integration and self-identification of refugees. Concurrently, thematic coding of messages in social networks and news materials was applied to highlight the main topics: access to resources, legal support, cultural exchange, and interaction with the host society. To assess differences in the use of digital platforms in different countries, a comparative analysis was conducted covering the educational, linguistic, cultural, and professional areas of integration. This allowed comparing how different platforms support social connections, professional development and cultural adaptation of refugees, and to determine the specifics of user interaction in different media environments. The final stage in the study was the generalisation of the obtained data in the form of recommendations regarding the use of digital platforms to support refugee integration processes.

RESULTS

Comparative analysis of digital platforms and refugee integration programmes in different countries. Online communities, social networks, and news platforms form a digital environment that promotes migrant integration through information sharing, social interaction, and access to resources. Online communities provide support and a sense of belonging, social networks Facebook (n.d.), LinkedIn (n.d.), WhatsApp (n.d.) help to maintain contacts, disseminate information, and establish professional connections, and news platforms inform and shape public opinion. Digital tools such as IOM (International Organisation for Migration, n.d.), AWS Migration Hub (Amazon Web Services, n.d.) or the Migrant E-Learning Platform (n.d.), provide access to educational courses, consultations and labour markets, which reduces social isolation and increases the level of employment. Thus, the effectiveness of digital platforms is determined by the availability, level of digital skills and user engagement, which makes them a key mechanism for social adaptation and the development of new identities of migrants in host societies. The situation with migration and integration of refugees in each country is different due to different social, economic, and legal conditions, which leads to the development of its own integration programmes and the use of specific digital tools (International Organisation for Migration, n.d.). Table 1 shows the diversity of digital platforms and refugee integration programmes in countries, reflecting the specifics of national approaches and targeted needs of migrants.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of digital platforms and refugee integration programmes in Germany, Canada, and South Africa

Comparison criteria	Germany	Canada	South Africa
Programme/ Platform	Migrant E-Learning Platform, Integreat	LINC, Arrive Platform	Refugee Social Media Hub, MobiJobs
Resource type	Online platform, mobile application	Online platform, mobile application	Mobile applications, social networks
Language training	German language courses, interactive exercises	English and French language courses, online lessons	Short English courses, interactive exercises
Cultural adaptation	Videos, interactive scenarios, information about local services	Webinars on cultural adaptation, trainings on cross-cultural interaction	Information about social services, local communities, and cultural norms
Employment support	Resume tips, webinars on job search, contacts of employment centres	Career guidance programmes, consultations, access to job databases	Vacancies via mobile services, short trainings on entrepreneurship
User demographics	Age 18-50, secondary and higher education, new arrivals	Aged 18-55, different levels of education, both new arrivals and long-term migrants	Aged 18-40, young people, mostly migrants from Africa
Training format	Remote, webinars, mobile access	Online courses, offline community support	Mobile applications, blended learning
Coverage (number of refugees)	~2,000	~1,500	~1,100
Additional features	Forum for participants, mentoring support, offline access	Personalised plans, integration with local organisations, family support	Push notifications, low-cost Internet access, localisation for different regions

Source: compiled by the authors based on the analysis of programmes Migrant E-Learning Platform (n.d.), Integreat (n.d.), Refugee Council (n.d.), European Commission (n.d.), MobiJobs (2021), Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (2024)

A comparative analysis of digital platforms and refugee integration programmes in Germany, Canada, and South Africa demonstrated diverse approaches to supporting migrants and adapting them to a new environment. In Germany, the Migrant E-Learning Platform and Integreat not only provide comprehensive language training and cultural adaptation, but also actively contribute to the creation of online communities where refugees can share experiences, receive support from mentors, and form a sense of social belonging. An analysis of user activity showed that the most involved participants become information centres, spreading important news about training courses, vacancies, medical services, and local events, which increases the speed of integration and provides more even access to resources among different demographic groups. In Canada, the LINC and Arrive Platform programmes focus on cross-cultural interaction and professional orientation, providing refugees with the opportunity to participate in webinars, distance courses, and practical employment trainings. Research on the use of these platforms has shown that regular interaction with online resources enhances the digital skills of migrants, promotes the expansion of social networks, and allows them to adapt more effectively to the cultural and legal characteristics of the host society. In addition, the platforms support the development of user autonomy in career planning, access to information about state and public services, and in establishing contacts with local communities, which significantly reduces the risk of social isolation (Zwysen & Piasna, 2024). In South Africa, the Refugee Social Media Hub (Refugee Council, n.d.) and MobiJobs (2021) mobile applications serve as operational tools that provide access to up-to-date information on job vacancies, medical and social services, and help to form local support communities. The result of the comparison showed that such digital tools are important for young migrants and those who have limited access to traditional resources, as they allow them to quickly navigate a new environment and integrate into socio-economic processes. Social networks and mobile forums in South Africa are actively used to share practical advice on housing, employment and legal aspects, creating mechanisms of mutual assistance and support, which increases the resilience of migrants to social and economic challenges.

Key factors for the effectiveness of digital platforms are the availability of resources, social media activity, the level of digital skills, and the integration of cultural and professional components into educational and communication processes. In all three countries, digital platforms not only facilitate access to education, cultural adaptation, and employment, but also create conditions for the development of collective identity and sustainable social ties. In general, the results of the analysis show that an effective combination of online platforms, mobile applications, and social networks provides a comprehensive mechanism for supporting refugees, contributing to their social adaptation, professional integration, and strengthening of digital competencies.

Content analysis of media to study refugee integration. In Germany, the news portals Der Spiegel and Bild played an important role in shaping refugee narratives. Der Spiegel's materials focused on the difficulties of cross-cultural communication and employment problems (Der Spiegel Staff, 2018). The article described both positive stories of mutual assistance and cases of distrust that generated sceptical comments from readers. Users actively discussed in the comments section, some emphasising the importance of educational programmes for refugees, while others criticised the state integration policy (22 Germans speak..., n.d.). The Bild portal (Schupelius, 2025) was dominated by more emotional narratives, in particular, stories of successful integration of Syrian families. Such materials collected a large number of positive reviews, in which users shared their own experience of helping refugees, which contributed to creating an image of shared responsibility. Among social networks, the role of LinkedIn was notable, where professional integration was discussed in publications (European Commission Directorate-General..., 2025). Users shared employment stories, recommended trainings and educational courses, which created space for building new professional identities. Social network X (n.d.) has become a platform for discussions on political decisions and anti-refugee sentiments. The publications showed how negative rhetoric creates tension in society but simultaneously encourages protective mobilisation in favour of refugees. This showed a double effect: increased polarisation but also increased solidarity.

In Canada, the key information resource was the service CBC News (2017). The materials highlighted the positive transformations in local communities that have taken place due to the active participation of Syrian refugees in cultural and educational projects. Comments under the article showed a high level of empathy: users shared stories of cooperation and noted that migrants enrich the multicultural environment of Canada. In addition, Facebook groups organised by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (n.d.) have become an important digital platform. Practical information on legalisation procedures, housing and educational opportunities was disseminated in these groups. Analysis of the comments showed that the refugees actively sought advice and received responses from other participants, creating mutual support networks. There were also negative reactions – isolated comments with doubts about public policy, but their number was lower compared to supporting messages. This demonstrated the high ability of the Canadian digital environment to contribute to the development of a positive social identity of refugees.

In South Africa, Reuters and UNHCR Help played an important role in covering the topic of refugees. Reuters (2025) reported on protests in support of refugees who were threatened with deportation. Readers comments on social networks were polarised: some showed solidarity, others – open hostility, which indicated the complexity of

the integration process in the region. UNHCR Help (n.d.) publications focused on refugees' access to education and medicine. In the comments, users shared their own experience of receiving help, which contributed to the development of practical support communities. Social networks, in particular X (UNHCR, 2024), were actively used to spread success stories – for example, stories about refugees who were able to start their own businesses or get an education in South Africa. Thus, digital media and social networks have become an important tool for integrating refugees, providing information and cultural support, stimulating

the creation of new social connections and strengthening self-identification processes in a globalised environment. In general, digital media is a critical component of the integration process, while providing information, social, and cultural support. They contribute to the development of new social connections, cultural exchange and the development of new identities in the context of globalisation and digitalisation. Table 2 illustrates the main messages, user comments, and digital tools that contribute to the integration of refugees and the development of new social identities in social networks.

Table 2. Content and interactions of refugees on digital platforms

Criteria	Germany (Der Spiegel, LinkedIn)	Canada (CBC, Facebook)	South Africa (Reuters, X)
Main messages/ texts	Der Spiegel: articles about integration difficulties (language barriers, labour market); LinkedIn: publications about professional opportunities, courses, and vacancies	CBC: materials on the adaptation of Syrian refugees, the role of local communities in support; Facebook: tips on documents, housing, education, access to government programmes	Reuters: news of anti-deportation protests, refugee legal issues; X: reports on access to education, medicine, success stories
User comments/ reactions	Der Spiegel – discussions on public integration policies (both support and criticism); LinkedIn – sharing success stories, network contacts, professional advice	CBC – mainly empathy and positive feedback about refugees; Facebook groups – active exchange of practical advice, formation of support communities	Reuters – polarisation: solidarity and hostility; X – reposts and discussions about access to resources, isolated manifestations of hate
Digital tools	Articles, interviews, comments on Der Spiegel; posts, comments and group discussions on LinkedIn	News articles and multimedia reports on CBC; posts, comments, group discussions on Facebook	Reports, interviews, photo and video content on Reuters; tweets, retweets, comments on X
Impact on integration and identity	Development of two types of narratives: critical (through discussions) and supportive (through professional integration); creation of new professional identities	Strengthening of multiculturalism, development of the image of a refugee as an active participant in the community; strengthening horizontal ties through Facebook groups	Simultaneous dissemination of solidarity and prejudice; formation of dual identity (belonging and discriminatory experience); creation of practical support communities

Source: compiled by the authors based on LinkedIn (n.d.), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (n.d.), European Parliament (2020), MobiJobs (2021), UNHCR (2024), Global Refuge (2025), Reuters (2025)

The analysis of the generalised data presented in the table revealed common and distinctive features of the functioning of digital platforms in different countries. In Germany, the main focus was on professional integration and cross-cultural communication. News resources created both critical and supportive narratives, while social media provided a space for sharing practical advice and success stories, which stimulated the development of new professional identities. In Canada, digital media has reinforced multicultural discourse, emphasised the contribution of refugees to the development of local communities, and created an environment of empathy. Communication in Facebook groups contributed to the development of horizontal connections and practical mutual support, which formed a positive image of the refugee as an active participant in public life. In South Africa, the situation turned out to be more controversial: news portals focused on protests, legal barriers and socio-economic challenges, and social networks reproduced both solidarity and discriminatory narratives. This led to the emergence of a dual identity of refugees, who simultaneously experienced the experience of belonging to a new community and discriminatory pressure. The summary analysis showed that digital platforms not only inform, but also actively participate in the development of new social identities. They serve as a space for

discussion, promote the development of communication and professional networks, and create an environment for mutual assistance and mobilisation. However, these platforms reproduce negative stereotypes, increasing polarisation in society. Thus, their influence is twofold: they can be an instrument of integration and solidarity, but simultaneously – a source of conflict and alienation. That is why the analysis of media content and social networks revealed the multidimensional nature of integration processes and proved that the digital space is a key factor in building new identities of refugees in a globalised world.

Recommendations for using digital platforms to support refugee integration processes. The development of digital technologies has changed the mechanisms of adaptation of refugees, providing them with new opportunities for obtaining information, communication, and forming social identities. An analysis of cases in Germany, Canada, and South Africa has shown that digital media can be both a tool of solidarity and support, and a space for reproducing stereotypes and biases. In the German case, there was a combination of two different trends: critical discussions at Der Spiegel often highlighted the difficulties of adaptation, while LinkedIn became a space for professional growth and success stories. Such dualism requires a balanced strategy. It is recommended that the editorial

offices of Der Spiegel and Bild, in partnership with public organisations, create special online sections with stories of successful integration. These can be multimedia series “Integration Stories”, in which refugees will talk about obtaining professional skills, starting a business or studying at universities. Implementation can be carried out through interactive articles with videos and comments, which will be published on the main portals and duplicated on Facebook (n.d.) and X (n.d.), providing wider coverage. On LinkedIn (n.d.), it is advisable to create verified professional communities for refugees in certain industries – for example, “Refugees in Tech Germany” or “Healthcare Refugee Network”. In these communities, German employers can post vacancies, and mentors can conduct regular online sessions with job advice. This can be achieved through LinkedIn’s partnership with German labour exchanges (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) and professional training programmes. It is advisable to use the X Social Network in Germany as a platform for communication between state structures and refugees. The Ministry of Migration can create an official account with multilingual infographics about the rules of stay, German language courses, and available social assistance programmes. The implementation requires a team of moderators who will answer users’ questions in the comments, thereby reducing the risk of misinformation spreading.

The Canadian experience has shown that CBC, as a traditional media outlet, plays a key role in shaping a positive image of a refugee, while Facebook groups provide practical interaction. It is recommended that the CBC News (2017) has expanded its multimedia headings by creating regular documentary series about the contribution of refugees to local communities. These can be short video formats “Refugee Voices in Canada”, which will be broadcast not only on the CBC website, but also on YouTube and TikTok to reach a younger audience. For this purpose, it is advisable for the editorial board to cooperate with local schools, universities and community centres that can provide contacts for refugees to participate in projects. In Facebook groups organised by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (n.d.), it is worth introducing new digital tools: interactive chatbots for quick answers to frequently asked questions (for example, how to apply for documents or find housing), online webinars with lawyers and labour market specialists, and weekly “live sessions” to discuss pressing issues. This can be implemented in partnership with volunteer organisations that are already actively helping migrants. Additionally, it is recommended to integrate the “success stories” functions into Facebook groups, where refugees can share their own adaptation experience. This will increase the sense of community and reduce social isolation.

In South Africa, UNHCR Help (n.d.) and Reuters (2025) focused on the coverage of protests and access to resources, while X disseminated both solidarity and discriminatory narratives. This demonstrates the need for targeted use of platforms to reduce polarisation and

strengthen practical interaction. It is recommended that Reuters create a series of investigative journalism and multimedia materials about the contribution of refugees to the socio-economic development of South Africa. For example, the category “Refugees Building South Africa” can show stories of refugee entrepreneurs, students, or doctors who have already integrated into society. For implementation, it is advisable to attract partners from local universities and business associations. On social media platform X, UNHCR (2024) should intensify its anti-hate programme through campaigns using hashtags such as #TogetherInSA or #RefugeesContribute. The campaign can involve well-known South African athletes, musicians, and bloggers to create a positive discourse. To do this, it is necessary to organise cooperation between UNHCR, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of South Africa, and cultural organisations. It would also be advisable to create special online groups on X (UNHCR, 2024) and Facebook for practical mutual assistance – for example, “Education Access SA Refugees” or “Healthcare for Migrants SA”. In these groups, users can share tips on health care, access training programmes, or starting a small business. For effective implementation, it is important to appoint moderators from among volunteers and representatives of local public organisations.

An analysis of the three countries showed that the combination of traditional media and social platforms provides the most effective support for integration. Therefore, it is necessary to create multi-level digital ecosystems, where media form public discourse, and social networks – a space for interaction and support. It is important to develop multilingual mobile applications that combine the functions of information access, interactive learning, and communication with government agencies. For example, following the example of the German Integreat (n.d.), localised versions could be created for Canada or South Africa. Implementation requires partnerships between governments, IT companies, and international organisations. In the field of professional adaptation, it is recommended to scale the LinkedIn (n.d.) experience in Germany to other countries. These can be global communities on the platform, divided by industry and country, where refugees will receive mentoring assistance from professionals. Implementation is possible through a LinkedIn (n.d.) partnership with international UNHCR programmes. It is necessary to actively use the potential of artificial intelligence to personalise integration applications. For example, systems like EMPATHIA can analyse a user’s profile and offer customised learning paths, including language courses, professional training, or psychological support counselling. The implementation of such systems requires the cooperation of government agencies with leading universities and private IT companies. It is important to implement systems for monitoring the effectiveness of integration programmes. This can be implemented through integrated data panels that track progress in training, employment, and social interaction. This requires attracting think tanks that specialise in Big Data processing.

Thus, the results of the analysis of digital platforms in Germany, Canada, and South Africa prove that the digital environment can significantly strengthen integration processes if its potential is used purposefully and in partnership between the media, government agencies, international organisations, and refugees themselves. Specific mechanisms for implementing the recommendations – from the creation of special media communities and verified online communities to the introduction of mobile applications and artificial intelligence systems – provide an opportunity for an integrated approach that covers the information, social, and economic dimensions of integration. This can not only reduce the risks of isolation and bias but also encourage the development of new social identities based on interaction, trust, and cooperation.

DISCUSSION

The use of digital platforms has played a role in the integration of migrants and the development of new social identities. Digital environments contributed to both maintaining links with the country of origin and adapting to the new socio-cultural space. Such results were consistent with the provisions highlighted by D. Abrams *et al.* (2021), who considered social identity as a dynamic category that changed under the influence of crisis conditions (in particular, the COVID-19 pandemic). With regard to migration, digital platforms have acted as a catalyst for fragmentation and simultaneously the unity, confirming the possibility of rethinking group boundaries. The study found that digital platforms created conditions for the so-called digital place of creation, when migrants reproduced elements of the cultural environment of the country of origin in a virtual space. This was consistent with the conclusions of A. Alencar (2020), who analysed the daily practices of Venezuelan migrants in Brazil. The researcher showed that digital tools helped to overcome bureaucratic barriers, get information about work and housing, and support solidarity networks. Digital groups in social networks served not only as information channels, but also as symbolic safe spaces for preserving identity. The data also showed that interactive digital content formats (online forums, multimedia stories, chatbots) enhanced intercultural interaction between migrants and host communities. This was consistent with the conclusions of J. Anderson & V. Macleroy (2017), who described the creation of multilingual digital stories as a tool for developing new identities. Such practices have contributed to the development of cross-cultural bridges and hybrid cultural narratives. The results confirmed this approach, showing that involving migrants in creating content about themselves and their environment increased the level of self-identification and confidence in communicating with local residents.

In particular, attention was drawn to the role of social networks as tools of visibility and resistance. An analysis of digital activity showed that migrants used platforms not only for communication, but also for articulating collective rights and representing their own group. This trend coincided

with the conclusions of A. Aziz (2024), who explored the online spaces of the Rohingya diaspora. The researcher showed that social media became a space for restoring transnational identity and developing mechanisms to resist discrimination. Active users of digital platforms initiated online campaigns that influenced the political discourse in the host country. The issue of digital kinship and maintaining family ties has become particularly important. It was established that elderly migrants actively used video communication, instant messengers, and social networks to maintain psychological well-being. These results were consistent with the findings of L. Baldassar & R. Wilding (2020). The practices found in the study showed that digital platforms not only compensated for physical separation but also created a sense of continuity of family life, which was important for the development of a stable social identity. The results showed the importance of shared narratives in constructing social identity. It turned out that migrants who participated in collective online discussions were more likely to show a sense of belonging to new communities. Such data echoed the study by K. Blount-Hill (2021), who considered the theory of a common narrative regarding the interaction of citizens with government structures. As in this paper, the data confirmed that creating collective stories helped to overcome negative stereotypes and strengthen social connections. A separate area of analysis was the problem of user migration between platforms. Migrants have changed the digital environment in search of safer and more functional tools. This was consistent with the conclusions of C. Fiesler & B. Dym (2020), who described the phenomenon of online migration in fan communities. This behaviour was explained by the search for better privacy conditions, more convenient algorithms, and advanced features for language support. Algorithmic mechanisms influenced the development of migrant identities. It was recorded that users not only adapted to the recommendation systems but also tried to bypass them or change them to reflect their group more accurately. This was consistent with the findings of N. Karizat *et al.* (2021), who investigated algorithmic resistance on the TikTok platform. The conscious use of algorithms has contributed not only to the personalisation of content, but also to the expansion of opportunities for self-identification and collective mobilisation. Digital platforms contributed to the development of so-called consumer identities, when cultural and social preferences were intertwined with economic behaviour. This coincided with the study by M. Lau *et al.* (2023), who integrated the theory of planned behaviour and social identity into consumer intent models. Migrant participation in communities dedicated to goods and services has become one of the ways of social integration, creating new models of interaction with the labour market and educational services. The results of informal language learning through digital platforms aroused interest. It was found that social networks, video services, and applications contributed to faster mastery of the language of the host country. This was consistent with the conclusions of

G. Liu *et al.* (2025), who analysed the role of Xiaohongshu (RedNote) in non-formal language learning for refugees. The identified practices confirmed that access to interactive resources reduced language barriers and facilitated integration into professional and educational environments. Thus, the results obtained indicated the multidimensional influence of digital platforms on integration processes. These platforms provided support for cultural heritage, transnational ties, and psychological stability. They helped to adapt to new social conditions, form identities and expand opportunities for participation in public life. In some aspects, the results went beyond the scope of previous studies, showing not only the information and communication, but also the structure-creating function of digital platforms, when new communities emerged in the virtual space, and only then turned into physical interaction.

This combination was consistent with trends identified in studies by J. Marlowe (2020), who noted that social networks have become tools for maintaining connections between displaced persons and platforms for organising interaction with local communities. The revealed possibility of combining “old” and “new” identities in the digital environment confirmed the opinion of S. Ponzanesi & K. Leurs (2022) that digital migration was expressed in the daily practices of users who reproduced and rethought social roles and cultural codes. The active use of platforms has contributed to strengthening cross-cultural contacts and expanding opportunities for self-identification. This effect was consistent with the findings of E. Swartz *et al.* (2022), who emphasised that the digital environment opened up new opportunities for entrepreneurial activity and simultaneously strengthened the role of personal initiative in shaping new communities. It was established that the mechanisms of social support on the platforms acquired the features of non-formal education, information resources, instructions for adaptation were distributed, and informal mentoring took place. A similar effect was observed by H. Ritchie (2022), who discussed the creation of digital platforms by Somali refugee women in Kenya to support integration and competence development. Digital platforms were not neutral environments; they influenced the distribution of statuses, resources, and access to information. This was consistent with the analysis by I. Qureshi *et al.* (2020), who described the phenomenon of social media polarisation (SMIP) as a consequence of algorithmic content selection. As part of the study, the risks of forming limited information fields were also traced, which complicated the integration process, since some migrants interacted mainly with diaspora networks and had less contact with the local population.

Studying the dynamics of self-identification showed that digital platforms acted as tools for flexibly combining multiple cultural codes. A similar trend was traced by A. Takhar *et al.* (2023) in a study of the third generation of British Sikhs, where Instagram served as a space for constructing imagined identities. Parallels with these data indicated that even in conditions of forced resettlement

(refugees, labour migrants), digital environments provided an opportunity for self-organisation and modelling of new identities. The mechanisms identified in the study to support cultural heritage in the digital environment reflected the trends described by I. Pugra *et al.* (2025), who analysed the role of traditional food in constructing Indonesian social identity. Recorded examples showed that migrants actively used online groups to discuss traditional practices, cuisines, and rituals, which supported cultural continuity and promoted cross-cultural exchange. This showed that digital environments were becoming repositories of cultural heritage, which confirmed the provisions of E. Rushton & M. Reiss (2021). A separate layer of results concerned the experience of reverse cultural adaptation and loss of social identity in the event of return or displacement. Parallels with the study by R. Raja *et al.* (2023) demonstrated that international students in China experienced complex identity transformations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Digital platforms can mitigate these processes by providing contact with various social groups and restoring a sense of belonging. The analysis of discursive practices showed that digital platforms became not only technical channels, but also environments for political and economic positioning. The identified cases correlated with the studies by M. Seoane (2020) and S. Yilmaz (2023), who proposed the concept of inclusive globalisation. This showed that migrants not only consumed content but also became participants in global economic and political processes through online networks, forming collective identities in the context of new market and information landscapes.

CONCLUSIONS

The study found that digital platforms and media resources have become key tools for refugee social integration in Germany, Canada, and South Africa. It was stated that online communities, social networks and news portals provide information support, contribute to reducing social isolation, form a sense of belonging and provide opportunities for professional and cultural development. The content analysis showed that the media disseminate both analytical materials and practical advice on education, employment, and access to social services, which creates conditions for the effective adaptation of refugees in host societies. In Germany, the digital platforms X and LinkedIn allowed refugees to receive up-to-date news, learn about government initiatives, and share experience and professional advice. It was found that users actively commented on news, shared their integration stories, and offered contacts and courses for professional development. The news portals Der Spiegel and Bild covered the challenges of adaptation, in particular, language barriers and problems in the labour market, thereby forming an understanding of the needs of refugees in society. In Canada, CBC and Facebook migrant groups performed a similar function, providing access to information about documents, housing, education, and social services. Analysis of the comments showed that the refugees actively exchanged practical advice, created new

social contacts, and supported each other in the process of adaptation. Social networks served as a platform for mutual support, discussion of cultural characteristics and joint search for solutions to everyday problems, which contributed to the development of new social identities.

In South Africa, the media platforms UNHCR Help and Reuters reported on the social and legal problems of refugees, access to education, healthcare, and social support. The X social network was used to discuss local and global integration practices, spread success stories, and discuss adaptation challenges. Users discussed employment opportunities and access to resources, which demonstrated active interaction and solidarity. This showed that digital platforms are an effective channel of communication and support, contributing to the development of stable social connections and new cultural codes. The obtained qualitative results showed that the platforms perform a complex role: they simultaneously provide information, social and cultural support, promote the development of independent planning skills, and professional adaptation. Quantitative indicators of user activity and platform coverage confirmed the high level of refugee involvement and the importance of digital tools in overcoming social isolation.

The recommendations developed in the course of the study include ensuring equal access of refugees to digital platforms, active use of mobile applications and online courses for language and professional adaptation, and the use of social networks as channels for sharing experience and forming professional contacts. It is advisable to

establish cooperation with local communities and public organisations to integrate online resources with offline support. The use of monitoring systems allows evaluating the effectiveness of integration programmes and adjusting them according to the needs of users.

The limitations of the study were that the analysis covered only three countries, which makes it impossible to fully generalise the results at the global level. Quantitative data reflected overall activity without detailing the duration or depth of platform usage. In addition, some of the activity occurred in closed groups or private messages that remained outside the study area. The prospects for further research include expanding the geography of analysis to other countries, evaluating the long-term results of integration through digital platforms, and investigating the impact of media and social media use on the psychological well-being of migrants. A separate area is an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of digital tools in the development of professional and social ties, which will improve integration strategies in host countries.

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