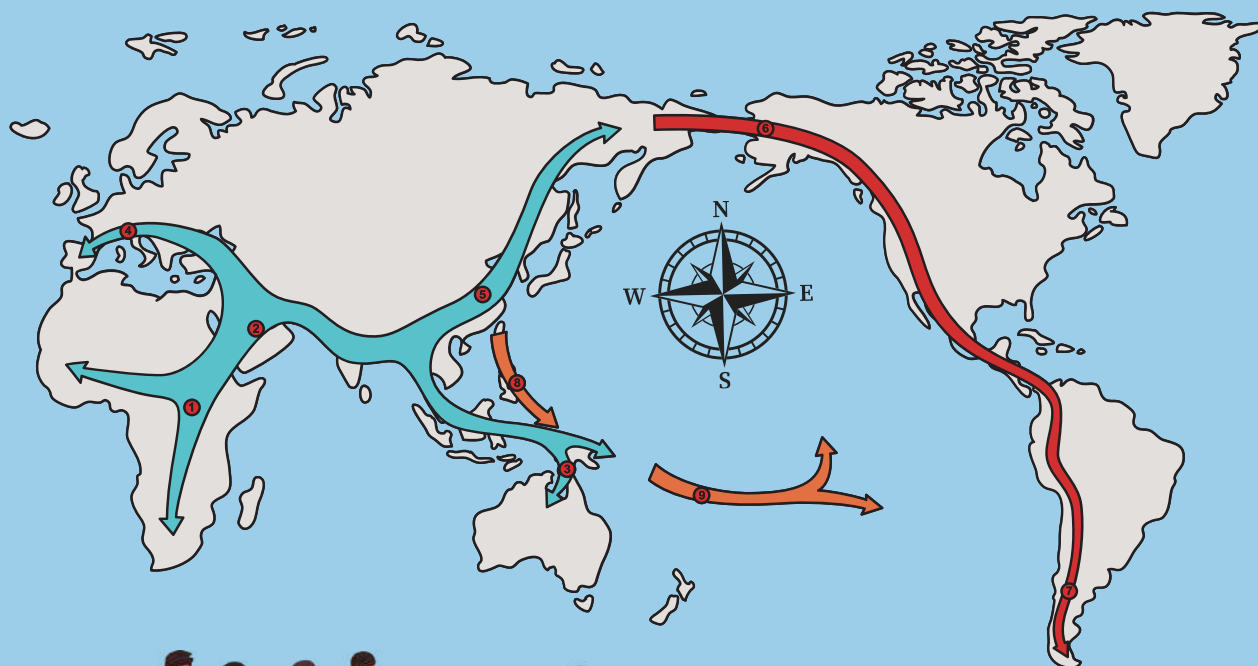


BOOKLET ON MIGRATION & SOCIAL NETWORKS



2025



Booklet on Migration & Social Networks

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Presentation

In contemporary migratory flows, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and social media play a central role in the migration experience, connecting migrants to information about opportunities, legal procedures, and support networks. Migration journeys do not begin with physical displacement; they start with intersubjective movements in cyberspace, driven by various factors that are becoming increasingly severe in today's challenging world, such as economic crises, armed conflicts, climate change, and the pursuit of better living conditions.

Migration across the continent is marked by multiple challenges, including complex bureaucratic processes, language barriers, anti-immigration policies in various regions leading to border closures, mass deportations, detentions, and setbacks in asylum application processes. These challenges are further aggravated by the violence of structural racism. Additionally, a concerning factor is the rise of human trafficking networks and smugglers who exploit migrants' vulnerabilities to facilitate border crossings, often trapping them in exploitative networks or exposing them to extreme violence.

Social media has played an ambiguous role in this context. On the one hand, platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok provide migrants with a means to communicate with family members and access information about job opportunities, housing, and support services. On the other hand, these same platforms have become fertile ground for scams and fraudulent schemes. So-called "digital coyotes" use social networks to promote false promises of safe crossings, guaranteed employment, or simplified migration processes. These schemes frequently result in financial fraud, labor exploitation, and, in more severe cases, human trafficking.

Presentation

In response to this reality, this Migration and Social Networks Guide was created to provide reliable and accessible information, helping migrants identify and avoid online scams. The material explains who coyotes are and how they operate on social media, details the main fraudulent tactics used to deceive migrants, offers a security checklist to prevent migration-related scams, provides guidance on what to do if fraud is suspected, and includes a list of trusted support services for migrants.

This initiative is the result of the master's research Digital Diaspora and Visibility: Algorithmic Xenoracism Against African Migrants, conducted by MSc. Brunno Ewerton, a member and researcher of the Transnational Migration and Intercultural Communication Research Group (DIASPOTICS), affiliated with the Postgraduate Program in Community Psychosociology and Social Ecology (EICOS - UFRJ) and the DIASPOTICS Research Group. This research was funded by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). We hope this guide will be a valuable tool for all those facing the challenges of migration and seeking to navigate the digital environment with greater security and awareness.

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PhD. Catalina Revollo Pardo

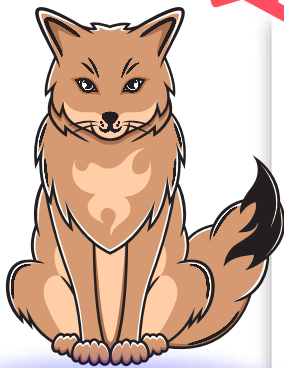
PhD. Mohammed ElHajji

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WHAT ARE COYOTES ON SOCIAL MEDIA?



COYOTES ARE INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS WHO EXPLOIT MIGRANTS' VULNERABILITY BY OFFERING ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSING OR IMMIGRATION SERVICES, OFTEN CHARGING LARGE SUMS OF MONEY. THEY PROMISE TO FACILITATE THE IMMIGRATION PROCESS BY PROVIDING FAKE DOCUMENTS, SAFE ROUTES, OR QUICK PASSAGE, BUT MOST OF THE TIME, THESE PROMISES ARE DECEPTIVE.



ON SOCIAL MEDIA, COYOTES USE FAKE PROFILES, ADS, OR GROUPS TO PRESENT THEMSELVES AS TRUSTWORTHY INTERMEDIARIES, OFFERING ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING VISAS, JOBS, OR LEGALIZATION. THEY LURE MIGRANTS WITH THE PROMISE OF MAKING THE PROCESS EASIER AND LESS BUREAUCRATIC, BUT IN MANY CASES, THESE MIGRANTS END UP BEING VICTIMS OF FRAUD—LOSING MONEY OR, WORSE, FACING DANGEROUS SITUATIONS, SUCH AS BEING ABANDONED IN HAZARDOUS LOCATIONS OR EVEN FALLING VICTIM TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

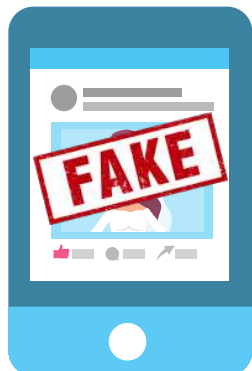




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COMMON COYOTE TACTICS

FAKE PROFILES



They use fraudulent images and information to appear trustworthy.

OFFERS UNREALISTIC

Promises of quick and guaranteed processes, ignoring legal procedures.



PRESSURE FOR QUICK PAYMENT



They ask for money up front, claiming urgency or limited opportunities.



ACTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

FAKE MIGRATION AGENCY OR CONSULTANT PROFILES



Source: freepik.com

They create fake pages and profiles that appear to be from legitimate migration agencies, embassies, or immigration consultants. They use counterfeit logos, professional images, and even fabricated testimonials to appear trustworthy.

They post ads promising quick visas, hassle-free immigration processes, or guaranteed jobs abroad.

SOCIAL MEDIA GROUPS



They use Facebook and WhatsApp groups dedicated to migrants to spread false information or lure people interested in migrating. In these groups, they offer quick and easy solutions to immigration-related issues.

They often infiltrate migrant support groups or expat communities, where they provide illegal consultancy services or make false job promises.

DIRECT CONTACT VIA WHATSAPP



After making contact on public platforms, they often move the conversation to WhatsApp to build intimacy and trust. There, they request personal data and even documents under the pretext of starting the process.

They use personalized messages containing specific information about the migrant, pressuring them to make quick decisions, such as paying service fees or sending money to secure spots or documents.



MOST COMMON TYPES OF SCAMS



FAKE MIGRATION CONSULTANCY PROFILES

Profiles posing as official agents or intermediaries.



PROMISES OF FAST, HASSLE-FREE IMMIGRATION

Offers of services that promise visas and documents quickly and easily, without going through legal procedures.



ADVANCE CHARGES OR SUSPICIOUS FEES

Scammers who ask for advance deposits to start the immigration process or “reserve places”.



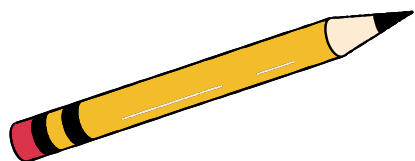
USE OF THREATS AND EMOTIONAL PRESSURE

Tactics to scare or pressure the migrant into making quick decisions.



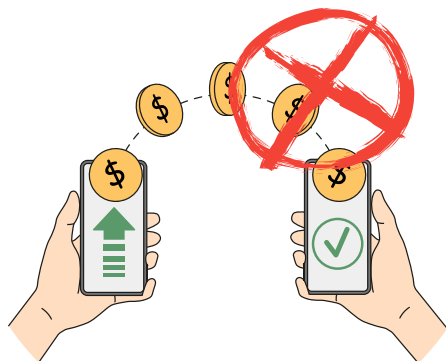
CHECK-LIST

- ☒ **Profiles with little information:** Be wary of profiles that have few photos, friends or posts, or that look new.
- ☒ **Lack of official documents and proof:** If the person or organization does not provide verifiable documents or clear information about their company.
- ☒ **Haste and urgency:** If the supposed immigration agent insists that you need to act quickly so as not to miss the opportunity.
- ☒ **Requests for personal information:** Beware of those who ask for documents or bank details by message before any formal contact.





WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT A SCAM?



DON'T SEND MONEY

If you feel something is wrong, never transfer money in advance.



REPORT THE PROFILE OR PAGE

Use the platforms' tools to report suspicious activity.



SAVE EVIDENCE

Save screenshots of conversations, emails or any proof you have in the event of a scam.



SEEK LEGAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP

Include contacts of support organizations, such as NGOs and consular services, that can help resolve the situation.



SUPPORT SERVICES



**OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
UNITED NATIONS
FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR))**

Telephone: + 55 61 3044-5744

Email: brabr@unhcr.org

Website: <https://www.acnur.org/br/>



**REFERENCE AND ASSISTANCE CENTER
FOR IMMIGRANTS (CRAI) SÃO PAULO**

CRAI Oriana Jara

Address: Rua Major Diogo, 834, Bela Vista, SP

Hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Phones: +55 (11) 2361-5069

Email: crai@sefras.org.br / crai@prefeitura.sp.gov.br

Questions and/or appointments about migration
regularization: gestao.crai@sefras.org.br

Social Services: servicosocial.crai@sefras.org.br

Legal Service: juridico.crai@sefras.org.br



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WEBSITE: [HTTPS://OESTRANGEIRO.ORG/](https://oestrangeiro.org/)



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