

Integrative Mechanisms for Addressing Spatial Justice and Territorial Inequalities in Europe

D5.2 Synthesis report on migration, inequalities and justice

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Executive summary

Our study focuses on the spatial dimension of inequality. It seeks to find out whether and how migration matters for the increase and decrease of social and spatial inequalities between places and the normative interpretation thereof of (spatial) (in)justice. We use the concept of social inequalities to reflect the uneven distribution of resources, capacities and capabilities between social groups, and the concept of spatial inequality to reflect the uneven distribution of resources, capacities and capabilities between places.

We analyse the link between inequality, injustice and migration based on 13 case studies conducted in Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Wales¹. European countries have very specific histories of nation building, emigration and immigration, which impact on the way they perceive and receive immigrants, and in turn influence the way migrants affect the receiving and sending areas. In recent years, especially in light of the 2008-2009 economic crisis, the East-West migration movements following the 2004 and 2007 enlargement rounds and the refugee crisis of 2015, migration has become one of the most controversial topics on the European Union and member states' agenda. These developments have given rise to anti-immigrant sentiments, emphasising perceptions that migration threatens the quality of life of inhabitants in the receiving regions. Anti-emigration sentiments abound too, with supporters arguing that emigration makes sending areas worse off. It is within this context that we situate our research. We investigate the perceptions and experiences of migration for different groups, in different areas - we interview residents in sending and receiving areas, EU migrants, third country nationals, internal migrants and refugees, in urban and rural areas, in Southern, Eastern and Western European countries, in an effort to obtain a comprehensive picture of the relationship between migration and inequality. Importantly, we consider the *societal contexts* in which this relationship develops, which is essential for understanding both the effects of emigration/immigration and the perceptions and rhetoric they engender. Our findings contribute to evidence-based policymaking and to a knowledge base that can be drawn upon when faced with "fake news" and increasingly xenophobic discourses.

The main message of our report is that, although there is a strong relationship between migration and social and spatial inequality, this relationship is not clear-cut. Whether migration increases or decreases social and spatial inequalities between regions and localities, depends on a range of *fluctuating* factors, including the socio-economic context in the place of analysis, the characteristics of the migrant population, the stage of the migration process and the geographical scale of the analysis. The word *fluctuating* is particularly important, because many of these factors change over time and across space². Their permutations lead to different dynamics of the migration-inequalities relationship, in different locations, at different points in time. Importantly, the relationship between migration and inequality is often perceived and portrayed as being binary – migration either increases or decreases inequality, it is

¹ Please see Annex 1 for a comprehensive description of the case studies.

² For instance, the economic and demographic characteristics of the place fluctuate over time. The place may undergo an economic recession or boom, or go through a population ageing phase, for example. Similarly, in the beginning, a place may attract highly skilled migrants, but in time (through, for instance, network effects) also attract lower skilled immigrants.

either good or bad. Yet, our results show that this relationship is much more complex, with positive and negative outcomes being generated simultaneously. This insight can only be obtained when we consider i) the multidimensional nature of inequality, and ii) the different groups affected. These are both *innovative* contributions that this research puts forward. Concerning the former (i), when we go beyond unidimensional, economic lens of inequality, we notice idiosyncratic dynamics of its relationship to migration. Our results point to *synchronous* positive and negative effects in the place, such as improvements in infrastructure concomitant with the loosening of community relations because of emigration. Similarly, we find that immigration to a place may improve the quality of some services like healthcare, while at the same time exerting pressure on other services like housing. Concerning the latter (ii), whether migration is perceived negatively or positively depends on *who the perceiver* is. Emigration might be perceived negatively by a non-migrant household, and positively by a migrant household in the same place, because they benefit differently from the gains of migration. Or vice-versa. Thus, generalized and vague statements such as “migration increases/decreases inequality” should be considered with caution. There is usually much more going on behind the scenes. In the following paragraphs, we briefly summarize some of our findings, which are further developed in Sections 4 and 5.

Ours results indicate that the decision to migrate is motivated by perceived (spatial) inequalities between sending and receiving areas. Importantly, and in line with our previous point, these differences are not only economic in nature, but cover a range of material (income, access to services, etc) and immaterial (culture, environment, political system) dimensions. Equally important, perceptions of inequalities are not binary, that is, a place is not just better or worse. Rather, individuals may perceive a place to be better off in one dimension (e.g. wages, landscape), but to be faulty in another dimension (e.g. be dissatisfied with access to healthcare in the same place; how they are treated by residents).

We find migration to have a significant effect on spatial and social inequalities, in *various dimensions*, depending on the lens one uses to identify them. For instance, emigration can increase social inequality in sending areas, by making migrant households better off economically than non-migrant households. At the same time, migrant households may be worse off affectively than non-migrant households, because of the departure of a loved one. Social inequality between the two groups has increased because of emigration, but which group is better off depends on the dimensions one investigates.

Importantly, assessments of inequality need to consider the *complex and mutually reinforcing relationship between spatial and social inequalities*. Immigrants often have no intention of settling in receiving areas, planning to invest the resources they gained in the receiving area in improving their (and, directly or indirectly, the community's) quality of life in the sending area. Migration, hence, facilitates the circular movement of human and social capital, which affects the creation of welfare in sending and receiving regions and, in doing so, affects (social) inequalities between groups and (spatial) inequalities between regions. Whether the effects of migration are positive or negative, and in which dimension, depends on how local communities and/or governments are able to put to use the additional income, skills and social capital of the return migrants in sending areas, ensure a balanced distribution of benefits across groups, and to welcome immigrants and their social capital contribution in receiving areas.

Lastly, the recognition of inequalities does not necessarily imply the perception of injustice, and thus the need for redistributive or ameliorative action. Injustice is based on a normative judgement, and based in reference to general principles. The aim of such a judgement is to understand if the balance of inequalities is experienced as fair. This fairness concerns our treatment as members of a specific group and positioned in a specific place. It reflects, the experience of a collective identity or treatment. Thus, assessments of (in)equality and (in)justice need to be situated in space and time and grounded in contexts.

1. Introduction

Social and spatial inequalities within the European Union (EU) are arguably one of the most important issues facing the European Union today. The spatially uneven distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges across the EU is one of the key drivers of migration, a process which can, subsequently, modify settlement patterns and impact the uneven development of sending and receiving areas (King 2012).

The objective of this study is to improve our understanding of the relationship between migration and social and spatial inequalities. Specifically, we aim to provide an answer to the questions: i) what are the motivations for migrating within the EU and how do perceived social and spatial inequalities between sending and receiving areas affect these motivations?, and ii) What are the perceived effects of migration on sending and receiving areas? To this end, and employing the theoretical framework described in Section 2, a total of 13 case studies were conducted in six EU members states, namely Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Wales in the UK.

A note is warranted at this point. For a couple of decades now, migration has been one of the most controversial topics on the European Union's agenda, even more so in light of the 2008-2009 economic crisis, the significant East-West migration movements following the 2004 and 2007 enlargement rounds and, more recently, the refugee crisis of 2015. Political discourse in relation to migration across most EU member states has become increasingly critical, stressing perceptions that migration causes a threat to the quality of life of inhabitants in the receiving regions. The often-negative public discourse has led to the rise of populist, extremist parties across Europe, from Hungary to Italy and beyond. In the light of these rising anti-migration sentiments it becomes extremely important to formulate and address the issue of migration carefully.

Lastly, the interviews on which our analysis is based, were conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic. If initial reactions are an indication – the closure of the borders in the EU, the limited to no mobility between and within countries, the blaming of (return) migrants for bringing in the virus – a post-pandemic world might entail some reduced intra-EU mobility. Nevertheless, this (health) crisis has highlighted the Member States' reliance on labour migration, their governments' – in both sending and receiving countries – willingness to find ways for this migration to happen, and the individuals' themselves need and willingness to migrate. Rather, between the months of March, when most EU countries entered into lockdown, and May, when this report was finalized, we witnessed a two-tiered mobility pattern, with the essential migrant labour being mobile in times of a European-wide immobility.

The report is structured as follows. Section 2 surveys the existing literature on the determinants and effects of internal and international migration, discusses how these apply to the specific case of asylum seekers and refugees, and introduces and discusses the concepts of social and spatial inequalities and justice underpinning this study. Section 3 describes the design of this study, including its purpose, the research questions guiding it, the process of selecting the initial case studies and the structure of the interview questionnaires. Section 4 summarizes the findings resulting from the case studies. Specifically,

it explores the relationship between migration and social and spatial inequalities across all case studies, for four different groups affected, namely, immigrants, internal migrants, residents in receiving areas and residents in sending areas. Section 5 discusses our insights and draws overarching conclusions about the relationship between migration and social and spatial inequality. Lastly, Annex 1 provides a description of our case studies, the specific selection criteria applied to each location and the findings of the research.

2. Theoretical approaches to migration, social and spatial inequalities and justice

This section presents the theoretical and empirical body of work constituting the foundation on which our study builds and expands. The study attempts to provide a better understanding of the relationship between migration and social and spatial inequalities. To do so, it explores 1) whether perceived social and spatial inequalities play a role in the decision to migrate, and 2) whether emigration and immigration affect perceived social and spatial inequalities. The first question pertains to the literature on migration determinants and motivations (Sub-Section 2.1), while the second question pertains to the literature on migration effects (Sub-section 2.2). We dedicate a special section to the relationship between forced migration and social and spatial inequalities, exploring the particular aspects of this dynamic, as both the migration decision and the effects of migration will take place under a number of specific conditions (Sub-section 2.3). Lastly, Sub-section 2.4 introduces and discusses the concepts of social and spatial inequalities and justice underpinning this study.

2.1 Migration: determinants and motivations

The reasons why people move, both internally and internationally, is perhaps one of the most researched areas in the entire field of migration studies. Early theoretical endeavours and more recent empirical developments have proposed and found a number of factors affecting and mediating this decision-making process, ranging from individual, to community, all the way to structural factors. Below, we present an overview of this research.

Before presenting the overview, we would like to make the following remark. Although the distinction between internal and international migration is relevant for analytical reasons and policy-making considerations, and will be used in the case studies section, we decided against elaborating on the two types of migration separately here. We consider this distinction to have become increasingly blurred, not only because of geopolitical events and the changing nature and configuration of borders, but also because migrants' journeys are becoming increasingly multiple, complex and fragmented across time and space (King and Skeldon 2010). Migration may be a sequenced or circular process, often involving an internal move either before or after an international move, or a move from a rural area to an urban one, then to another metropolitan area in another country, and back (S. K. Brown and Bean 2016; King and Skeldon 2010). Furthermore, many of the theories presented below, on the determinants of migration, were either initially developed to explain internal rural to urban movements and then adapted to accommodate international movements as well (e.g. neoclassical theory, new economics of labour migration, world systems theory), or can be applied to both types.

We begin with perhaps the most well-known and well-defined theory of migration, the **neo-classical theory** (Harris and Todaro 1970). It was developed to explain labour migration in the process of economic development, and posits that *internal and international* migration is determined by geographical differences in the supply of labour and by extension, in the level of wages (Massey et al. 1993). According to this theory, individuals are rational, income-maximizing agents, who based on a cost-

benefit analysis, decide to migrate to the area where they expect the cost of migrating to be overcome by the expected benefits, either material or immaterial (de Haas 2011). The **new economics of labour migration** (NELM) theory appeared as a response to the neoclassical approach, which was not able to fully explain migration even in the absence of social and spatial inequalities. NELM posits that the decision to migrate, whether *internally or internationally*, is not merely a rational, income-maximizing decision made by an individual, but rather a collective household strategy to overcome market failures and spread income risks (O. Stark and Yitzhaki 1988; Oded Stark and Taylor 1989; Oded Stark and Bloom 1985; de Haas 2011). A major implication of NELM was the revealing of factors such as (financial) market access, insurance access, income inequality and relative deprivation, social security, among others, as important migration determinants (de Haas 2011). Moreover, it highlighted the important role of the family and broader social network in mediating and shaping the decision and motivation for migrating.

While both these theories considered migration decisions to be rational choices of actors with agency, whether individual or communal, the next theory took the agency out of the migration decision and attributed it to structural factors. The **dual labour market theory** (Piore 1979) posits that *international* migration stems from the intrinsic labour market demands of modern industrial societies (Massey et al. 1993). The theory argues that the segmentation of the labour market, creates a permanent demand for cheap immigrant labour in the secondary (low skilled) segment of the market, for jobs that individuals from the primary segment do not want to perform (de Haas 2011). Significantly, the theory highlighted the importance of institutions in creating demand for immigrant labour and shaping immigrant labour market outcomes.

Similarly, and building on Wallerstein's (2011; 1979) **world systems theory**, the process of *internal* and *international* migration was also viewed as a direct outcome of the process of globalization (e.g. Sassen 1991). According to this theory, the process of global capitalism induces the marginalization and the uprooting of rural populations, who see themselves forced to migrate to cities either internally or internationally (de Haas 2011). A similar embedment approach was taken by the **migration transitions theory** (de Haas 2010b) and Zelinsky's (1971) **hypothesis of the mobility transition**. The former posits that *internal and international* migration is part of a process of human and economic development and is the result of both the availability of *resources* and the emergence of *aspirations*, while the latter views migration as part of broader societal developments, embedded in social processes and an essential component of the modernization process.

While the above theories explained determinants and motivations of migration, a few theories have tried to explain the perpetuation and stability of certain *internal* and *international* migration patterns between core receiving area/s and a set of sending areas, between which there is a relatively intense exchange of people, capital, goods and services (Massey et al. 1993). For instance, **network theory** posits that migrants, return migrants and residents in sending and receiving areas are connected through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin, constituting a form of social capital that people can draw upon to gain access to foreign employment (Massey et al. 1993). Network theory assumes that the likelihood of migration increases in time, as individuals use this type of social capital to lower the risks and costs associated with migrating and increase their chances at destination. Similarly, **institutional theory** argues that once a pattern of *international* migration has taken off, the process creates an entire industry

of profit and non-profit organizations which provide various services (e.g. employment mediation, transport, legal advice, etc), which have a vested interest in perpetuating migration (Massey et al. 1993). Lastly, **cumulative causation theory** (Myrdal 1956) contends that *international* migration perpetuates itself over time, through feedback mechanisms that alter the social context within which subsequent migration decisions are made, typically in ways that make additional movement more likely (Massey et al. 1993). Remittances are an example of such a mechanism, as they can increase income inequality in origin communities, which can subsequently increase feelings of relative deprivation and generate migration aspirations among residents (Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2014).

Central to all of the above theories has been the connection between *internal* and *international* migration determinants, and economic factors. While these are helpful in explaining patterns of labour migration, they do not necessarily explain other types, including family or study migration³. Moreover, although economic forces undoubtedly play a role in the motivation to migrate, more recent empirical insights have shown that the migration decision is a much more complex process, oftentimes multidimensional and not easily quantifiable. Thus, several authors have attempted to explain the decision to migrate, whether *internally* or *internationally*, from an alternative perspective, using an **expectations** lens, and departing from the migrants and their own experiences. The concept of expectations was introduced as early as 1956 by Daniel Lerner, who found that desires and expectations introduced to society through media, return migrants and external influences, facilitate empathy and a 'mobile personality' that ultimately results in migration (Sabates-Wheeler, Taylor, and Natali 2009). He emphasised the key role that information played in shaping these expectations, and the relational and relative nature of this information. Similarly, Arthur (1991) talked about the 'bright lights of the city' and the 'frontier spirit' hypotheses as a way to explain migration expectations and the decision to migrate (idem). The concept has been picked up by a number of other researchers who have offered further insight into the role expectations plays in migration decisions. For instance, in a study about Cape Verdean migrants, Carling (2004, p116) considers migration to be a culturally defined concept, which includes "a parcel of expectations regarding the nature and consequences of migration". Utilizing longitudinal data from the 1992 and 1994 waves of the Thailand National Migration Survey, De Jong (2000) argues that expectations of future attainment together with **family norms** about migration are major predictors of the intention to migrate and subsequent migration behaviour. Sabates-Wheeler et al. (2009) further contribute to these ideas by examining how **information** influences expectations throughout the migration process and how migrants and their families adapt to these new situations.

The decision and motivation to migrate can also be shaped by culture, norm, values and lifestyles. In a study on internal migration in Peru, Lockley et al (2008) found that the decision to migrate is itself mediated by **norms, beliefs and values** which are socially determined. In their case, migration is not only motivated by economic reasons, but also a part of "a process of seeking independence from and negotiating interdependence with relatives" (Lockley, Altamirano, and Copestake 2008, p148). They concluded that material, relational and emotional effects of migration are interwoven, constantly shaping

³ We discuss humanitarian/forced migration in a separate section (2.3)

each other. Another migration determinant has been put forward by Wright and Ellis (2016), who discuss how **amenities**, a wide range of cultural, environmental, socio-economic and other factors, can impact an individual's decision of where to live. Thus, although many places might provide individuals with economic opportunities, the final choice of location would eventually depend on the availability and abundance of these amenities (Nelson and Nelson 2011; R. Wright and Ellis 2016). Migration can also be motivated by the desire for a different lifestyle. **Lifestyle migration** can be defined as the movement of relatively affluent individuals of all ages, either part- or full-time to places which are meaningful because they offer the potential of a better quality of life (Benson and O'Reilly 2009b). These types of migration can include, but are not limited to, retirement migration, leisure migration, (international) counter-urbanization, second-home ownership, amenity-seeking and seasonal migration, partner-following migration, each type seen as a route to a better quality of life (Benson and O'Reilly 2009a). For instance, for many young migrants from Central and Eastern Europe, migration is a gateway to a desired modern lifestyle (Horváth 2008). Another example is the internal migration of middle-class people to rural areas in North-West Europe, to pursue a life in the rural idyll while working in nearby urban areas (Halfacree 2001; Bijker, Haartsen, and Strijker 2013; Haartsen and Stockdale 2018), sometimes resulting in the gentrification of rural areas (Phillips 2002).

This brief assessment on the theories and empirics on the determinants and motivations for migration reveals the complexity of the migration process. The decision to migrate seldom involves the individual alone, more often than not being a household resolution, based on the available information and the associated expectations, and mediated by structures such as labour markets and institutions. Moreover, migration preferences are not constant over time and across space. Culture, education and access and exposure to information are likely to have a significant impact on individuals' awareness of opportunities elsewhere, and hence, on their perceived notions of a good quality of life and personal life aspirations, including a sense of adventure and desire for a modern/mobile lifestyle (De Haas 2011). Additionally, the aspiration to migrate can appear regardless of the level of absolute wealth, meaning that more development does not necessarily translate in less migration (de Haas 2009).

Limitations of existing theories

It is important to note at this point, that although the above body of work has significantly advanced our understanding of migration as a process, with its determinants and motivations, it also presents a number of shortcomings which must be mentioned, some of which we try to address in our study.

To begin with, most of these theories has been done in the context of the USA or of the Global South. Yet, **non-European models, theories and concepts of migration do not easily translate to the European context**. Even if we disregard for a moment the distinct histories of each European country, with their nation-building processes and attitude toward immigration and immigrants, we still have to consider the profound effect that the ever-increasing regional integration has had in Europe, and how that affects perceptions of migration. Since the early 1990s, migration patterns within Europe and the EU have changed significantly (for more information, please see our D5.1 Synthesis report on migration

flows⁴). The fall of the Iron Curtain generated a pattern of significant East-West migration, while the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 made intra-EU free mobility possible, further bolstered by the enlargement rounds of 2004 and 2007 (Van Mol and de Valk 2016). Not only do all EU citizens have the right to work and live in another country, but their reference point for a perceived good quality of life has been expanded from the local/regional/national lens to the European one. An individual might feel better off in some subjective and objective sense relative to her peers, but still feel worse off relative to another European citizen. Therefore, these intra-EU migration flows are not conventional patterns of migration but rather complex forms of transnational and circular migration/mobility conscribed to a European socio-economic and cultural system, deviating from the traditional models of migration determinants and motivations (Favell 2015).

Secondly, **studies tend to focus on rural-urban migration, whereas certainly in Europe migration into rural areas has increased considerably.** These flows of migration into rural and peripheral areas (McAreavey 2017) consist of a large deal of labour migrants who move from Central Eastern Europe to the South, West and North of Europe to work in agriculture, forestry, construction and domestic care (B. Bock, Osti, and Ventura 2016). Many work as seasonal labourers, moving in between sending and receiving countries on a regular basis (Stenning and Dawley 2009). They importantly contribute to the economy in rural areas, in particular in sectors with a high need of manual and physically demanding labour. Certainly, in thinly populated rural areas they importantly add to the quality of life, by providing badly needed services in elderly care (Greco and Zanetti 2017) and reopening shops and restaurants (Kasimis and Papadopoulos 2005). Many migrants eventually bring their families and settle down, which is welcomed also because it helps to ensure the continuity of schools (Hedberg, Forsberg, and Najib 2012). The reaction of the local population is known to differ across demographic characteristics such as gender, age and marital status as well as country of origin. Generally speaking, the arrival of young families is most appreciated. The reception of immigrants also depends on the ability of the local infrastructure to cope with an increasing population as well as the specificity of their needs. The latter plays an important role for the reception of labour migrants and, more in particular, the reception of refugees (McAreavey 2017). Rural areas often host formal and informal centres of first reception; the Greek islands present a dramatic example of how that may go beyond the capacity of rural areas. Lack of capacity may evoke unwelcoming reaction among the local population and motivate refugees to move to urban centres once legally possible (Hedberg and Haandrikman 2014). Lifestyle migration is another important driver of urban to rural migration, within and across countries. A large share concerns the migration of pensioners some of whom move into the same rural areas that many of the young locals are leaving (D. L. Brown et al. 2011). Others search for a better life turning 'back to the land' (Halfacree 2001). Both flows reflect a difference in social and spatial capital holdings too. Those who move in bring personal capitals along and are able to access resources well beyond what the place offers. Lifestyle is also among the reasons why some young residents consciously choose to stay (Stockdale and Haartsen 2018).

⁴ Available here: <http://imajine-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Deliverable-5.1-Synthesis-report-on-migration-flows.pdf>

Thirdly, many of these theories focus on receiving-area aspects and thus on pull factors (including the perspectives on amenities and lifestyle migration), oftentimes ignoring the socio-economic, cultural, political and institutional context that shape **decision-making processes in sending areas**. This “receiving-country bias” of migration research points to the importance of advancing our theoretical understanding of the structural and institutional origin-country determinants of migration processes (De Haas 2011, p13).

Lastly and importantly, **much of the literature on the reasons for migration has concentrated on what we can label objective determinants of migration**. They have attempted to explain migration patterns based on aspects of wealth, wages, functionality of infrastructure, among others. Yet, as de Haas (2011, p16) remarks, individuals do not move because of abstract concepts like spatial inequality, climate change, declining fertility, etc, but rather because they *perceive* better opportunities elsewhere and have the resources, whether material or immaterial, to migrate. They do not act, for instance, based on the real differences in wages between one country and another, but based on their perception of these differences and how much they matter to themselves. They do not act based on metrics and marginal differences regarding the infrastructure and functionality of services in a country, but because they perceive that large enough differences exist as *to make a difference in their own lives*. While much of the existing scholarship is thus of great value, it lacks a qualifying factor that translates the hard facts into reasons for migration. It lacks an explanation as to why people decide to migrate and how they motivate the choice of their destination, regardless of the objective indicators the theory provides. By exploring the perceptions of migrants on social and spatial differences between sending and receiving areas, and on their reasons for migrating and for selecting a particular destination, we aim to provide such a qualifier and contribute to our greater understanding of migration processes, particularly in the European context.

2.2 Migration: effects

What are the effects of migration, particularly in receiving areas, has been a central research question within the increasing field of migration studies. Quantitatively less emphasis has been put on the effects of migration on sending areas, and even less so on the effects on immigrants themselves. This section, which surveys the major findings from the literature on the effects of migration, is organized alongside these three distinctive dimensions.

Effects on immigrants

The linkages between mobility and human wellbeing outcomes for immigrants at destination have been explored by de Haas (2009), who argues that increased individual mobility may lead to the acquisition of new capabilities that increase collective social, political and economic freedoms. Overall, the effects of migration on immigrants themselves could be perceived from the point of view of how the individual would have done in the origin area if s/he had not migrated and how s/he actually did in the destination area relative to otherwise comparable on-going residents in the destination (Greenwood 2016). On the one hand, the act of migrating in itself can contribute to individual’s wellbeing, in addition to offering more or better employment opportunities, political rights, safety, and better access to services such as healthcare and education (de Haas 2009). For instance, White and Lindstrom (2005) conclude that

internal migrants report being better off at destination, despite apparent disadvantages perceived by observers. Generally, immigrants are believed to be better off in the receiving rather than the sending area, and to gain in well-being and social integration with the receiving society over time (M. J. White and Johnson 2016). On the other hand, immigrants might find themselves in a very weak position in the labour market, live in disadvantaged areas, have problems in accessing public and private services based on trust relations (like bank credit) and face fear from their neighbours (Bock, Osti & Ventura 2016; McAreavey 2017). For instance, in their analysis of the subjective wellbeing of temporary and permanent Romanian migrants in Spain, (Marcu 2015) found substantial differences between generations, with in particular the older generation lacking a sense of belonging in Spain and grieving the loss of their home country, whereas the youngest generations had adopted a mobile and cosmopolitan identity, at home wherever they would go.

It becomes important to note, at this point, that whether migration will have a negative or positive effect on immigrants themselves depends on a number of factors, including, but not limited to whether the person migrates on a temporary or permanent basis, their level of skills, their gender, age, and most importantly, on the socio-economic and political context and policies of the receiving area. There is significant variation in terms of personal skills, knowledge, physical abilities, age and gender across individuals, so there will also be differences in the extent to which they can expect to gain from migrating (Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2014). Nevertheless, integration policies like language classes, housing and labour market training, if needed, can go a long way in facilitating the smooth integration of immigrants and in making their migration experience a success. More broadly, local public policies can substantially shape the experience of immigrants in the place (and vice-versa), by, for instance, adjusting urban, education, public transport, health services, security and social services planning; by adapting the supporting business creation and existing business and easing access to the labour market or by investing in cultural facilities, among others (Barca 2009). Research has shown that it is easier for families with children to integrate as school and the recreation activities of children support interaction and social inclusion (B. Bock, Osti, and Ventura 2016; Haartsen and Stockdale 2018). Starting a local enterprise or working for a respected local employer paves the way to integration as well (Papadopoulos 2009).

Effects on residents in receiving areas

For receiving areas, the effects of migration on the place can include increased productivity and overall economic growth, innovation and exposure to diversity. On the other hand, a sudden increase in the immigrant population could put pressure on social and public services (housing, healthcare, schools), the infrastructure might become inadequate, and residents might feel a threat to their local identity and values (McAreavey 2012).

More recent literature has also emphasized the role of immigrants as place-makers and their material and social investment in the place (Smith and Winders 2008). Immigrants can shape and make the place by, for instance, reducing residential vacancy rates, generating transnational networks, creating new businesses, and through them, generating new spaces of social and cultural interaction (Oberle and Li 2008; Bowles and Colton 2007). Schuch and Wang (2015), for instance, show how immigrant businesses in Charlotte, North Carolina, have impacted the local community, with effects ranging from meeting the

market needs of certain neighbourhoods, to creating job opportunities and generating revenues, to revitalizing and fuelling the commercial development of potentially abandoned communities, and making immigrant groups “visible”. Moreover, the daily lives of both residents and immigrants passing by the area were shaped by the presence of the businesses, from seeing multicultural images and ads, to the specific décor and brands available in stores (idem). Similar effects have been observed in Greece (Kasimis, Papadopoulos, and Pappas 2010) and Italy (Osti and Ventura 2012), where immigrants contributed to the revitalisation of rural areas by re-opening shops and restaurants and taking care of the ageing local population. In the Calabrian villages of Riace and Camini, welcoming refugees breathed new life into the villages⁵. The role of highly educated migrants has been acknowledged for their contribution to local development, for instance, in the role of new rural entrepreneurs (Bosworth and Atterton 2012), and their facilitation of new ideas and networks (Bock 2016), which has inspired new productions and has opened access to new customers, all of which has supported the diversification of rural economies.

Importantly, the effects of migration on receiving areas depend on the temporality of migration (temporary, permanent, circular, etc), on the skills and human capital of the immigrants, on the stage of the migration process, on the spatiality of migration (i.e. whether immigrants are segregated or integrated), on the type of migration (labour, family, study, retirees, etc), and in particular on the reception conditions in receiving areas (including integration policies).

Effects on residents in sending areas

Initial research on the effects of migration in sending areas was greatly influenced by political ideologies and overarching theories like the neoclassical theory of migration and dependency theories (Geest 2010). This resulted in two opposing views on migration effects, what Taylor (1999) and later de Haas (2012) called the migration optimists and migration pessimists. The migration optimists emphasized the merits of emigration as an engine for development and growth in sending areas, while the migration pessimists stressed that out-migration from peripheral regions perpetuated underdevelopment in these areas and a cycle of dependency. More recently, however, research into the effects of migration has become more nuanced, with studies focusing more on the conditions under which migration can have negative or positive effects.

More specifically, much research has emphasised the important role of remittances in contributing to better housing conditions, better nutrition, education and health, and overall improved quality of life and life satisfaction for receiving households in the sending areas (A. White 2010; Ratha, Mohapatra, and Scheja 2011; Mckenzie 2006; Rapoport and Docquier 2006; De Jong, Chamrathirong, and Tran 2002). At the place⁶ level, remittances can potentially contribute to broader economic development and poverty reduction (Adams and Page 2005; Faist 2008), as long as appropriate political and governance institutions, capable of protecting property rights, enforcing laws and reducing

⁵ For more information, see <http://www.rfi.fr/en/20191008-italy-calabria-refugees-migrants-repopulation-villages-alive-camini-riace>

⁶ Whether the place is a village, city or region or country.

transaction costs are in place (Bettin and Zazzaro 2012). Social remittances, both individual and collective, may bring in new knowledge and experiences, expand contacts and with it social capital improving the access to external resources (Fox 2005; de Lange 2013). It may inspire new behaviours, identities, promoting entrepreneurship, community and family formation, as well as organizational management and capacity building (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011; Levitt 1998).

Emigration from densely populated areas can reduce the pressure on the available natural resources, for instance farmland (Bilsborrow 1987). Emigrants themselves, or return migrants can be agents of change, bringing with them not only monetary resources, but also new ideas, knowledge, cultural attitudes and entrepreneurial tendencies (de Haas 2010a).

On the other hand, emigration can trigger depopulation, at least in the beginning, before return migration or further immigration takes place (Katseli, Lucas, and Xenogiani 2006; Kurek 2011). Depopulation, if not temporary, might affect the availability of some services, which could be discontinued because of the reduction of the population, affecting the economic potential of the area, which might decline (Horváth 2008). In rural areas, outmigration is generally considered an indicator of marginality and decline (Barca 2009), with the loss of residents seen as undermining the socio-economic and demographic structure of the area and as a loss of social capital and developmental potential (B. Bock 2010). There is little recognition yet that many internal and international out-migrants keep an interest in and a vivid sense of belonging to their original home, maintain social relations, return regularly and may better be described as mobile citizens (Haartsen and Thissen 2014; Marcu 2015). Emigration could also increase inequality in the sending area; as migration is a resource-intensive process, migrants tend to come from better off families, at least at first. This would lead to increased inequality between households in the area, although in time, network effects should decrease the costs of migrating and help reduce this inequality (Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2014).

Although the social effects of migration on sending areas have been less researched than the economic ones, there are a few aspects that have come to the fore. Broadly, social effects include changes in family composition, in gender roles, in child outcomes in terms of labour, health and education, cultural effects and issues related to crime (Katseli, Lucas, and Xenogiani 2006). For instance, Zachariah, Mathew, and Rajan (2001) show how in Kerala, the emigrant's wives, so-called "Gulf wives", gained autonomy, management skills and experience with dealing with the worlds outside of their household, skills they would not have otherwise developed. The authors argue that this societal transformation will have contributed more to the development of the area than remittances or other policies. Similarly, the outmigration of men has enabled women to take over leadership position in Polish villages (Matysiak 2015).

In the same way as in the previous section, here too we note a number of issues that have been little researched in the literature investigating the effects of migration. To begin with, in this case, much research has been non-European in its focus. Yet, European countries have specific histories of nation building and migration, which impact on the way they perceive and receive immigrants and hence on the way immigrants in turn affect the receiving area. The relatively small percentages and limited diversity of the immigrants that Europe has received in recent decades, compared to global countries like the US or

Canada, have made the recent migration flows seem much more dramatic (Favell 2015) for most European countries, which oftentimes have not been prepared to receive and integrate the new incomers. That in turn, has affected the opportunities immigrants have had in the host states and the effects their arrival has had on individuals and the receiving areas. This study addresses this gap, focusing on European countries with different migration experiences (e.g. the UK, Netherlands, Ireland, Poland, etc) and on different types of migration (e.g. labour migration from Poland to Ireland, lifestyle migration from Germany to Wales).

Secondly, much of the previous research has focused either on effects on the individual or household, or has focused on macroeconomic effects, such as GDP growth or employment creation. Significantly less⁷ research has been dedicated to investigating the physical effects of migration on the place (spatial effects e.g. changes in landscape, in the surrounding environment), and effects of migration on community and social ties. Thus, not only do we explore how migration affects the life of individuals, but also how it affects their lives in each place, and how it changes from place to place.

Lastly, again filling a gap in the literature, the availability of multiple-location studies enabled us to dissociate the perceived effects of migration on different types of immigrants, including labour migrants, lifestyle migrants or refugees, and to see how the effects of migration are perceived differently depending on the type of immigration.

2.3 Asylum seekers and refugees

We dedicate a separate section to the literature exploring the migration determinants of asylum seekers and refugees and the effects their migration has on the sending and receiving places. More often than not, the emigration reasons for asylum seekers and refugees relate to push factors from the sending regions, e.g. war, environmental disaster, political oppression, etc., and not to perceived social and spatial inequalities as defined in this study. This experience shapes their perceptions of social and spatial inequalities down the road, and their choice, in so far as possible, for a final destination.

The migration of asylum seekers and refugees is generally determined by structural factors of displacement such as violent conflict, environmental degradation, natural disaster or political oppression. However, forced migrants do not represent a homogenous flow. As Lindley (2010) notes, broader structural factors interact with individuals' and families' unique configurations of capabilities and resources to move and leave home, producing variability in people's agency to respond. Some authors go even further and propose to replace dichotomous terminology like forced and voluntary, with an imagined continuum running from low to high constraints under which migration occurs, in which all migrants have agency and deal with structural constraints to highly varying degrees (de Haas 2009). De Haas (2011, p14) remarks that labels such a labour, family, refugee or student migration reflect legal categories after all, and do not help with our understanding of *migration as a social process*. Rather, he

⁷ To our knowledge, there is no study to specifically investigate the relationship between migration and physical changes in the place on the one hand and migration and community changes on the other.

contends, these labels conceal the fact that although at the macro-level migration processes are driven by a multitude of economic and non-economic factors, at the micro-level, migrants are motivated by a combination of multiple, interconnected but analytically distinct social, cultural, economic and political factors (de Haas 2011). For instance, Lubkemann (2005) illustrates how in the case of the Mozambican civil conflict (1977-1992), in which the national conflict took many local forms alongside different sociocultural and ethnic lines, forced migration was primarily a response to such micro-level political struggles, with specific local and cultural logics, rather than to the hostilities between national-level political actors. He shows how forced migration decisions within a country can vary from one location to another, responding to idiosyncratic socio-economic, political and cultural conditions. He concludes by urging researchers to not consider migration an end in itself even in the context of conflict, but rather the outcome of an endeavour whose goals and aspirations are shaped by culturally specific worldviews rather than universally uniform utility functions (Lubkemann 2005, p506).

Agreeing that migration can be determined by structural factors such as conflicts, within the confines of personal aspirations and expectations also play a role, there is nevertheless little doubt that the conditions under which this migration happens make asylum seekers and refugees a distinct group within the broader migration categories, not in the least because of their particular legal status. Forced migration oftentimes implies the loss of material, social and psychological capital. Compared with labour migrants, who are generally able to plan and prepare their migration journeys, asylum seekers often have to move quickly and to abandon assets and family in their home areas (Jacobsen 2014). The migration journey itself can incur significant emotional distress, with long-term effects on physical health (James, Iyer, and Webb 2019). Once in the receiving country, asylum seekers are often unable to utilize their human capital, such as skills and work experience acquired in their home countries, because they are denied permission to work (at least for a while), they lack or get no recognition of the appropriate credentials, or are faced with discrimination in the workplace (Jacobsen 2014). In some countries, refugee-related policies, particularly the allocation of asylum seekers and refugees across different geographical areas, oftentimes in places with few employment opportunities, can prevent their integration in the labour market even if they are skilled or highly educated. Lastly, the enduring emotional distress incurred by the migration passage, could affect their psychological ability and willingness to find employment (Pajic et al. 2017). Of course, it is important to acknowledge the heterogeneity and agency of forced migrants (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al. 2014), including differences across gender, race and ethnicity, skill levels and social status, among other characteristics. For instance, Stepputat and Nyberg Sørensen (2014) argue that as the costs of migration have multiplied with the increasingly restrictive international migration regimes, asylum seekers' socio-economic backgrounds have become ever more important in shaping the forms, patterns, and impacts of their movement. Not only can better-off individuals leave conflicted areas earlier, but they can also reach more resourceful and secure destinations (*idem*). The heterogeneity of the forced migration population, the uncertainty over their legal status at destination and over the possibility to return in the place of origin, imply thus that the socio-economic behaviour of asylum seekers and refugees might be different from that of economic migrants (Becker and Ferrara 2019), with implications for the effects of forced migration on sending and receiving areas and on the migrants themselves.

The effects of forced migration on receiving areas have been thoroughly explored, covering socio-economic, cultural and political dimensions. Generally, these effects depend on the characteristics of the migrants themselves, those of the resident population and the reception conditions in receiving areas. For instance, analysing the effect of the forced migration resulting from the Arab Spring, in Italy, Labanca (2016) finds no overall effects on the employment of local workers. He does find some variation across different sectors, with evidence of displacement effects in mining, hotels, restaurants and wholesale trade but positive effects on employment for native workers in construction and educational services. He hypothesises that the increase in employment for native workers in these sectors was due to the increase in demand for goods and services from refugees themselves. Potential impacts of the most recent refugee inflows in Europe might be the alleviation of the challenge of an ageing society.

The effects of the refugee inflows on voting behaviour are rather mixed. Analysing the impact of the 2014-2015 refugee flows in Germany on native labour market outcomes, crime rates and voting behaviour, Gehrsitz and Ungerer (2017) find that refugees have not displaced native workers but have themselves struggled to find gainful employment. They also find a very small increases in crime in particular with respect to drug offenses and fare-dodging, and no changes in support for the main anti-immigrant parties in counties which experienced a larger influx relative to counties which experienced small migrant inflows (*idem*). On the other hand, Dinas et al. (2019) found that among Greek islands that faced a massive but transient inflow of Syrian refugees passing through just before the September 2015 election, vote shares for Golden Dawn, the most extreme-right party in Europe, moderately increased by 2 percentage points (a 44 percent increase at the average). Here, however, the effects of a failing policy to organise the asylum process has in itself caused a lot of dissatisfaction and unrest, certainly in the islands and the capital hosting most of the refugees.

A recent ESPON (2019) study investigated the multidimensional effects of the 2014-2016 asylum seekers and refugee inflows into European countries. They found, among others, that the impact of the recent flows on the labour market varies from almost none, in countries with low inflows like Romania, Lithuania or Latvia, are perceived positively as a potential for filling up local labour shortages in countries such as Czechia, or do not yet have an effect in countries such as the Netherlands or Norway, where there is still a low level of participation in the labour market. The study also revealed that the recent asylum seeker inflows fuelled negative portrayals of this group in the media and the political discourse. For instance, in Czechia, the inflows gave rise to fears ranging from national and public security threats to claims of socio-economic benefit-seeking, to a sense of cultural incompatibility (especially regarding ethnic Muslims) that threatens Czech values and way of life (*idem*). In Hungary, the political discourse and refusal to accept refugees through the EU's resettlement scheme contributed to an increase in anti-immigrant attitudes, xenophobic rhetoric and prejudice against asylum seekers and refugees. On the other hand, the study found that for most European countries the inflows had a positive institutional effect, with countries either building or enhancing their institutional capacities to receive and integrate asylum seekers. Some countries increased their personnel, strengthened the training of the staff and renovated or build reception centres, which in turn contributed positively to the economic development of the area. For instance, the small town of Harmanli (pop 10,000), in Bulgaria, had to expand its asylum seekers accommodation capacities in 2014. This meant an influx of social workers, NGOs and construction

workers arriving into the town, which in turn meant that restaurants, hotels and local shops experienced a sudden increase in sales, boosting the local economy significantly, and contributing to the country's economic through sales taxes and employment contributions⁸.

The effects of forced emigration on sending areas has been less researched, as it is often difficult to disentangle the effects of out-migration from the broader effects of the structural factors (e.g. war, natural disaster, etc). The effects will depend on who are the individuals leaving. On the one hand, those staying behind may be the wealthiest who have the means to cope with the adverse conditions, or the poorest who could not afford to re-locate out of harm's way (Becker and Ferrara 2019). For instance, to the extent that many of those leaving are more highly educated, the sending area may experience negative consequences in the medium to long run because of the associated loss in human capital (idem). Testa (2018) uses the expulsion of 3 million Germans from the Czechoslovak borderlands after WWII as a natural experiment, and finds that Czech municipalities were driven away after the war, were found to have a lower population density, higher rates of unemployment, less skill-intensive industries, and lower levels of education by the year 2011. The author argues that the reason behind these effects was the lack of agglomeration economies and the erosion of property rights. In the aftermath of the German emigration, settlers competed for abandoned German houses and productive assets, while local authorities abused their power for personal gain.

Forced migration not only affects receiving and sending populations, but also migrants themselves. For instance, using the EU Labour Force Survey to examine labour market outcomes of refugees in all European countries, Dustmann et al. (2017) find that refugees have a 16.1 percentage points lower likelihood of having employment compared to the native population (and compared to 3.2 pp for EU15 migrants). For refugees originating from North Africa and the Middle East, the gap increases considerably to 32.5 pp (idem). The authors also show that in time refugees catch up in terms of employment outcomes to economic migrants; while during the first three years of arrival refugees are 50 pp less likely to be employed than natives, likely because of the restricted labour market access during the application processing period, the gap by about half 7 to 10 years after arrival and eventually approaches zero 25 years after arrival. By contrast, Bratsberg, Raaum, and Røed (2014) find clear signs of assimilation for refugees during their first decade in Norway, with employment rates and earnings levels approaching – although never fully catching up with – those of similar natives. The probability of finding employment might also depend on the relative share of co-nationals in the receiving place, as forced migrants can draw on the social capital that comes from co-national networks already in place in their destinations, which provide assistance when they first arrive and can help them find housing and employment (Jacobsen 2014).

2.4 Social and spatial inequalities and justice

Social inequality has been defined as “the condition where people have unequal access to valued resources, services, and positions in the society”(Kerbo 2003, p11). Social inequality is a multidimensional

⁸ Most of the budget for these extensions came not from the national budget, but from AMIF.

concept, encompassing much more than income and wealth differences between individuals and communities. It includes differences in access to services, opportunities for education and employment, the quality of the place where one lives and one's level of happiness, among others (Warwick-Booth 2019). **Social exclusion** is a concept adopted in the 1980s to reframe discussions about poverty stressing the importance of non-economic disadvantages as well as structural factors producing disadvantages at the level of society (Murard 2002). Social exclusion is, hence, a feature of society and not individuals. It differs from inequality by underlining that social groups differ in the risk of being excluded with gender, age, class, and race/ethnicity among the most important intermediating factors. Social exclusion, moreover, underlines that exclusion is generally experienced in multiple ways at the same time with lack of access to education leading to insufficient income while interacting with low social recognition and status, less access to good healthcare and housing, and, hence, lower longevity (Reimer 2004). Recent research points out that social exclusion interacts with spatial exclusion, *"each exacerbating the other through process of cumulative social and territorial stigmatisation"* (Bock, Kovacs, and Shucksmith 2015, p206). Living in remoted and peripheral places limits, for instance, people's access to education, healthcare, and employment for instance, while being associated with that place may blemish one's identity and status (Wacquant 2007). Being tied to places of low respect reflects another parallel process of spatial exclusion in which certain groups are kept out of other places, where they are considered as not-belonging by those in power. The refugee centres on the Greek islands may serve as a sad example of such processes. Places are no longer just bounded territories, but are made through power relations which construct the rules defining social and spatial boundaries, which in turn define who belongs to a place and who may be excluded (McDowell 1999).

Critically, the existence of social and spatial inequalities does not necessarily entail redistributive or ameliorative action. For that, we need a normative interpretation of these inequalities, thus we need to assess whether they are socially and spatially just or unjust. As our colleagues show in Deliverables D1.1 and D1.5 of the IMAJINE Work Package 1 (WP1), *Conceptual and Policy Review*, the concept of spatial inequalities has been used in a rather descriptive and neutral manner, mostly employed to illustrate and analyse the geographical heterogeneity of certain variables or societal dimensions⁹. The WP1 report proposes that the concept of spatial justice could serve as an alternative for addressing the normative and moral issues which remain rather implicit in other conceptualisations of spatial inequalities.

The concept of spatial justice has been understood as a redistribution of resources at the city level (Harvey 1973), as a right to something or the right to access something (Lefebvre 1968), and more recently, has been related to a person's capabilities and freedom (Israel and Frenkel 2018), the latter building on Sen's (1993) capabilities framework. Drawing on the concept of landscape, Mitchell (2003) has construed spatial justice as the result of a process through which the socio-economic and political landscape is reflected in the environmental landscape. More generally, spatial justice refers to an intentional and focused emphasis on the spatial aspects of justice and injustice, involving the fair and

⁹ For more information, please see D1.1 Conceptual review of the Scientific Literature, by Weckroth et al (2017). Available here: <http://imajine-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Deliverable-1.1-Conceptual-review-of-the-Scientific-Literature.pdf>

equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them (Soja 2008). Importantly, the concept of spatial justice does not replace that of social justice, rather it emphasises the importance of the context in which social processes take place.

Fraser (2009) defines social justice through the concepts of redistribution, representation, and recognition. A social system is considered just if everybody has the chance to achieve material independence, social status, and political voice. Carolan (2020) recently applied this definition in the rural context, pointing at the spatial embeddedness of social justice in case of peripheral rural areas in the US, where people are 'left behind' without access to essential services and gainful employment, looked upon in disrespect, and have no voice. Social justice and injustice are produced through social practices in places and times, and are usefully explained with reference to those practices in particular places at specific moments of time, rather than relying solely on overarching understandings (Fincher 2016). From this viewpoint, there is always a relevant spatial dimension to justice, while spatial (in)justice can be seen as both outcome and process, as "unjust geographies" or distributional patterns that are in themselves just/unjust and as the processes that produce these outcomes (Soja 2010: 24). Moreover, addressing the causes of spatial injustice implies addressing the causes of social injustice more generally, as spatial injustices cannot be isolated from the historical and social and political economic context in which they exist (Marcuse 2009).

Importantly, the social and spatial experience of inequality and justice is subjective and relational, because it involves comparisons to others in terms of, for instance, income, education levels, health outcomes, political participation, access to services or consumption patterns (Warwick-Booth 2019). For people to establish their own social position, they must compare themselves to others, who either live close by geographically (e.g. neighbours or friends) (Runciman 1966), or share some other connection (e.g. citizens of a country; EU citizens). Although judgements about levels of inequality rarely match real levels of inequality (see Gimpelson and Treisman 2018), perceptions of inequality, justice and fairness may matter more for a variety of outcomes and decision-making processes than actual levels of inequality (ISSC, IDS, and UNESCO 2016). One such decision-making process, motivated by perceptions of better opportunities for upward mobility elsewhere, is (internal and international) migration. Migration provides a different view on the construction of justice and injustice, one that includes the institutional settings that give opportunities for moving or deprive people of them (Fincher 2016). On the one hand, migration offers individuals the opportunity to leave places that are lagging or feel left behind in either social, economic, political or spatial terms, and search for a better quality of life, in some subjective sense. On the other hand, migration itself highlights differences between groups, whose varied interests need to be considered (Fincher 2016). Power relations between groups in different receiving places may or may not assess people of different characteristics as equals and may give some groups of people priority over others (*idem*) (e.g. residents over immigrants).

3. Research design

The purpose of this study is to increase our understanding of the relationship between migration and social and spatial inequalities. How do perceived differences in opportunities for social mobility and better quality of life between sending and receiving areas affect the decision to migrate? How do emigration and immigration affect the perceived and experienced quality of life of residents in sending and receiving areas?

We answer these questions by focusing on both *material* and *immaterial* aspects of social and spatial inequality and their relationship to migration. We ask individuals about their perceived¹⁰ access to and quality material resources, how this perceived access changes, but also how individuals interpret these changes. Importantly, we also ask individuals about their perceptions and evaluations of immaterial aspects such as their emotional and social capital, reflecting dimensions of everyday life that actually matter to them. Moreover, one of the innovations of our study is the combination of multiple scales of inequality. We include questions on perceptions of inequality reflecting the individual, the broader social group to whom the individual belongs, and the place. That is, our interview questions allow us to uncover perceived within-group inequalities, between-group inequalities and between places or spatial inequality. This multiscale design is important, as the social and spatial aspects affecting perceived inequality are often interwoven and self-reinforcing (Soja 2010). This complexity and multidimensionality in analysing social and spatial inequalities, prepares the ground for the future development of a comprehensive concept of spatial justice. The material and immaterial interpretation of social and spatial inequalities and exclusion, analysed at the individual, group and spatial level, constitute the basis from which the concept of social and spatial justice itself can be operationalized, and on which social and spatial inequality can be evaluated normatively according to values of justice and fairness¹¹.

3.1 Theoretical framework

Building on the existing body of knowledge, and accounting for the limitations previously discussed, our theoretical framework employs three main concepts that help us understand the perceived relationship between migration and spatial inequalities and that combine both material and immaterial aspects. These are **liveability**, **quality of life** and **wellbeing**. These concepts have the advantage of moving beyond objective economic indicators and focusing instead on individuals and their community, and their own subjective perceptions and experiences of life and place. These approaches redirect our attention to not only how individuals themselves feel, but also to what they consider to be *relevant impacts* on their life and the place (S. C. White 2008). How people themselves perceive their own lives and the place is essential to understanding wellbeing, quality of life and liveability in a society that grants importance not just to the opinions of experts or leaders, but to all people in the society (Diener, Oishi, and Lucas 2003).

¹⁰ By virtue of asking individuals about their impressions of the place and the people, we are bound to obtain information on their own understanding and interpretations, hence of their perceptions.

¹¹ We should mention at this point, that the actual operationalization of the concept of spatial justice is beyond the scope of this present study and the broader WP5. Our research only contributes to building a step in that direction.

And understanding wellbeing, quality of life and liveability is essential to be able to find out if spaces are ‘equal enough to be just enough’.

Wellbeing is a concept centred on the person and their own priorities and perspectives (S. C. White 2008). The notion encompasses how people think and feel, what they have and do, acknowledging the differences and links between personal happiness and a sense of life fulfilment, and encompassing the effect of people’s relationships to ideas, other people, money and goods (Copestake 2008). Although there are numerous definitions of wellbeing (for an overview, see White 2009; Gasper 2007; van Kamp et al. 2003), we employ here an adapted version of its conceptualization, advanced by McGregor (2007) and White (2008), seen as the interplay between *the material*, *the relational* and *the subjective* (Table 1). The material concerns practical welfare and standards of living such as income, employment, education, health; the relational concerns personal and social relations; while the subjective concerns values, perceptions and experiences. Another way of thinking about it, is to see it as a combination of what a person has (the material), how they evaluate their social relations and interactions (the relational) and how they feel about what they have and their social relations (the subjective) (McGregor 2007). Although presented separately, these are not discrete categories, as human wellbeing requires the coexistence or integration of all these dimensions, which overlap to varying degrees (K. Wright 2011).

Table 1 The three dimensions of wellbeing

The material	The relational	The emotional
Income	Networks of friends	Hopes, fears and aspirations
Employment	Family and extended family	Levels of (dis) satisfaction.
Education	Social, political and cultural involvement	Trust and confidence
Access to services and amenities	Safety	
Environment, landscape		

Source: Adapted from White (2008)

It becomes important to note at this point, that any concept of wellbeing, regardless of how it is defined, cannot exist in isolation of the place and context in which it is being estimated (Atkinson, Fuller, and Painter 2012). The process of being well in a material, emotional or relational way is also a product of, and a result of the interaction with, the place. The perceptions, meanings and understandings of wellbeing are, thus, necessarily culturally and place embedded. Since the concept of wellbeing pays relatively little attention to the importance of local environmental factors on people's wellbeing (McAllister 2005), we complement it with two other concepts that examine the relationship between individual and place, namely quality of life and liveability.

Quality of life refers to the conditions of the place in which people live (air and water pollution, poor housing, landscape, etc) or to attributes of people themselves (such as health or educational achievement) and can be defined as “the relationship between people and their everyday living environments or life spaces” (Pacione 2003, p321). The concept entails the individuals’ perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns (World Health Organization 1997). It covers a range of

dimensions, including physical health, social relationships, emotional state and relationship with the environment, among others.

As a concept, quality of life bridges the concepts of wellbeing, with its focus on individuals, and the concept of liveability and its focus on the place. *Liveability* refers to the quality of a place and can be defined as “a collection of characteristics that explain the attractive elements of a place for people to live and rest” (Tilaki et al. 2014, p.126). The concept of liveability relies on the one hand on the needs and wants of the individual population, and on the other hand, on the characteristics of the biophysical environment that shape these needs and wants (Ruth and Franklin 2014). Specifically, the former aspect relates to factors such as shelter, energy, water and food, health and public safety, education, entertainment, etc, while the latter aspect relates to, for instance, green spaces and water bodies in and around cities that generate not only amenities, and through them economic value, but also provide valuable contributions, for example, to local climate regulation, air quality, and flood control (idem).

There is, thus, an undeniable relationship between wellbeing and liveability, which together provide a holistic understanding of individuals perceptions and experiences. Subjective wellbeing effects are also about where these perceptions come from and the person’s frame of reference that causes them to feel good or bad about what is happening to them (K. Wright 2012). For instance, if the liveability of a place is high, then the needs and wants of those living in the place are satisfied and wellbeing follows (Okulicz-Kozaryn and Valente 2019)

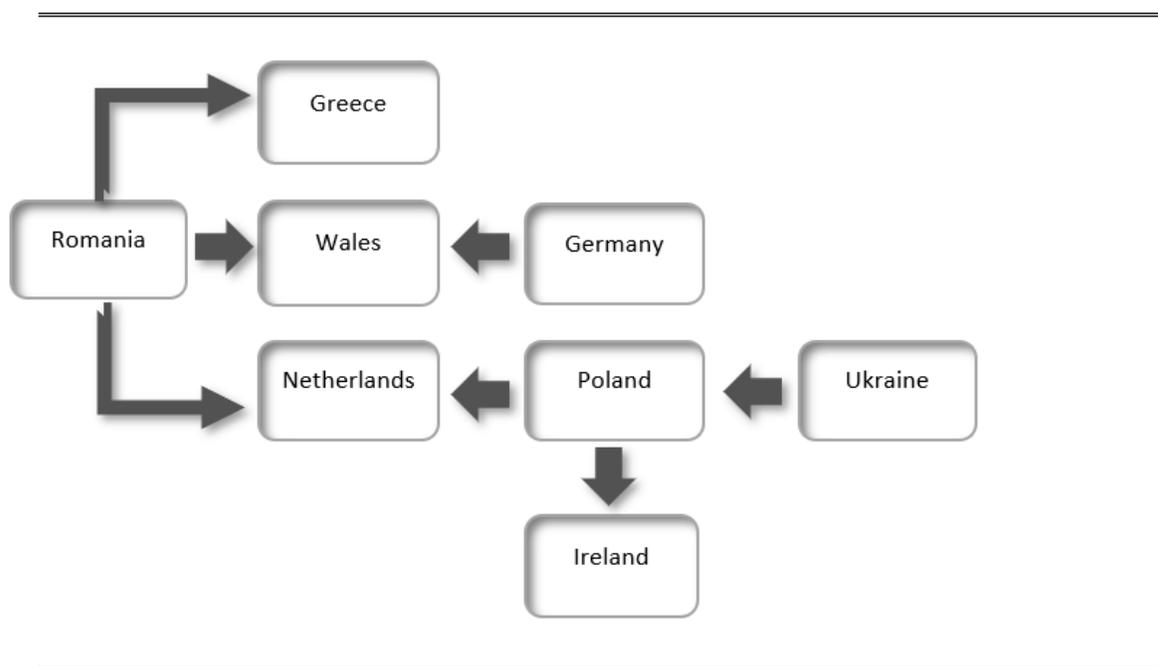
3.2 Methodology

Our research questions, which refer to perceptions about processes of migration and spatial inequality, are most appropriately answered to through in-depth interviews. Our aim is to capture information on perceptions on the effects of migration both at the individual level, and at the place level. To that end, we conducted multi-sited qualitative research and comparative cross-case analysis. This enabled the understanding of the interplay between migration and perceptions in different contexts, with different social constructs and overcoming the limitations of methodological nationalism. In all case studies, at least 15 interviews were conducted with residents and/or immigrants, and at least 2 interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders. The interviews comprised closed questions on demographic and socio-economic characteristics and open questions on the reasons for migration and the migration experience for immigrants, and questions on three dimensions of their quality of life and the quality of the place for all respondents.

The cases researched were selected in two steps. In a first step (our first deliverable D5.1), we identified the main patterns of migration relevant for each of the five countries included in the project, namely Greece, Ireland, Poland, the Netherlands and Wales. For each country, we considered immigration, emigration and internal migration flows. The final migration patterns were selected based on the magnitude of the flow and its socio-economic and/or political relevance. For instance, Polish migration was the largest and most important pattern of immigration to the Netherlands. We also attempted to include patterns of migration that have either been under researched or reflect specific reasons for migration. For instance, German middle-class, lifestyle migration to Wales represents an

example of both. Lastly, in selecting the migration patterns, we wanted to explore synergies across all case studies, in an effort to provide a more comprehensive picture of the complexity of the migration process. Figure 1 presents an overview of the interconnectedness of our case studies. Specifically, we interviewed Romanian immigrants in Greece, Wales and the Netherlands, Polish immigrants in Ireland and the Netherlands, Ukrainian immigrants in Poland and German immigrants in Wales. This way, we were able to compare migration decision across the same group in different countries, but also to explore countries such as Poland from a sending and receiving perspective. Additionally, we interviewed internal migrants in Greece, Wales, Netherlands and Poland, and asylum seekers and refugees in Greece. Lastly, we interviewed residents in Romania and Poland, from a sending country perspective, and residents in Greece, Wales, Netherlands, Ireland and Poland, from a receiving country perspective.

Figure 1 The interconnectedness of the selected case studies



In a second step, and once we selected the migration flows, we selected the areas to study, in both sending and receiving countries. These places were selected based on the magnitude of the migration phenomenon, the share of the relevant immigrant population in the area, whether it represented a specific type of destination or origin, and a number of other socio-economic or demographic relevant factors. Each case study selection is motivated in the Annex 1 of this report.

Interviews were held face-to-face and conducted in the mother tongue of the interviewee¹². All respondents were provided with a consent form, which explained the goals of the research, the interview

¹² There were a few exceptions: Polish immigrants in Ireland, and Romanian and German immigrants in Wales were interviewed in English. Romanian migrants in Greece were interviewed both in Greek and Romanian and Syrian Refugees in Greece were interviewed in English and Arabic.

structure, the insurance of anonymity and the option of, at any time, withdraw from the interview. Respondents were provided with the written contact details of the interviewer and the responsible researchers. Most interviews were recorded, with few exceptions in which respondents did not agree to be recorded.

A number of key concepts and definitions were adopted for the purposes of this study, after internal discussions with all partners involved in the research and considering the need to be able to compare results across countries. The definitions of immigrants, internal migrants and residents were especially important, given differences between countries in cultural and legal aspects of migration, and in their different histories of the phenomenon. For the purposes of this study, residents were defined as nationals who have lived in the area for 10 years or more. We considered this period of time to be sufficient for individuals to have adapted and integrated into the area, and to perceive it as their home. By extension, we considered internal migrants those nationals who have moved from another region into the region studied, in the past 10 years or less. Lastly, we considered immigrants those individuals who were born in another country and have migrated to the country of analysis, at any point in time. We decided to not limit our definition of immigrants to those individuals who have been living in the country for a minimum period of time¹³, as we wanted to include seasonal and circular migration episodes, which are common within the European Union free mobility context. As a result, our interviewees covered a fairly wide range of migration experiences and durations, enriching the insights provided by our case studies.

3.3 Interview questions

The aim of the interview questions was to unearth the perceived effects of migration on individuals and the place for residents in sending and receiving areas, and the reasons for migration and perceived differences between sending and receiving places for immigrants. In constructing the interview questions, we started from the theoretical framework explained in Section 2.1, and constructed questions that reflected important dimensions of individual's quality of life. A pilot study, comprising 4 interviews with Romanian immigrants in the Netherlands, was conducted in January 2019, testing the relevance and formulation of the questions. An important goal of the project was to make the interview questions as comparable as possible, however, each time was also allowed to include 1-2 questions of particular relevance for the context (e.g. Brexit in the case of Wales). Additionally, a question on the estimated income of the individuals, was not successful in all cases, either because respondents were reluctant to share the information, or because they did not actually know how much they would make in a year. The latter was particularly the case with seasonal immigrants in the Netherlands, with 0-hour contracts, whose salary depended on actual number of hours worked, and the availability of employment.

The interview questions for residents included 6 modules (Table 2), while for immigrants and internal migrants included 7 modules (Table 3). For all groups, the first module, on demographic and socio-

¹³ The usual 12 months period included in the European Commission's DG Migration and Home Affairs' definition of a migrant. See here: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_search/migrant_en

economic characteristics included questions on age, sex, previous work experience, educational level, current occupation, average annual income, and years of living in the country and local language ability for immigrants. In module 2, residents were asked about their (non-)migration history and the decision to stay, while immigrants were asked about their migration history and mobility behaviour.

Table 2 Topics covered in the residents' interview questions.

1	Demographic and socio-economic characteristics
2	(Non-)Migration history and decision to stay
3	Perceptions and experiences of the effect of migration on the area
4	Dimensions of wellbeing – the material
5	Dimensions of wellbeing – the relational
6	Dimensions of wellbeing – the emotional

Table 3 Topics covered in the immigrants' interview questions.

1	Demographic and socio-economic characteristics
2	Migration history and mobility behaviour
3	Reasons for migrating and for choosing the particular destination
4	Expectations vs. reality in the destination area
5	Dimensions of wellbeing – the material
6	Dimensions of wellbeing – the relational
7	Dimensions of wellbeing – the emotional

The last three modules included questions on perceived standard of living, employment and educational opportunities, housing, access and quality of services, the environment, social and community integration, safety and happiness, among others.

4. The determinants and effects of migration – insights from the case studies

This section presents the main insights of our study, and whenever applicable, relates them to the literature review presented in Sections 2.1-2.3. The case studies on which these insights are based are described and discussed in detail in Annex 1.

4.1 Immigrants

What are the main determinants and reasons for migrating? What role do perceived social and spatial inequalities play in this decision-making process and the destination selection? What are the effects of migration on immigrants themselves? This section presents the insights gathered across the five groups interviewed, namely Romanian immigrants in Greece, Netherlands and Wales, Polish immigrants in Ireland, Netherlands and Wales, German immigrants in Wales, Ukrainian immigrants in Poland and Syrian asylum seekers and refugees¹⁴ in Greece. Throughout this section, we will discuss the experiences of the Syrian refugees in relation to all other immigrant groups.

Generally, for immigrants, the determinants of and motivations to migrate included both push and pull factors. Push factors included the lack of (suitable) employment opportunities in the sending areas and low wages – in accordance with the **neoclassical theory**, the inability to support themselves and their family, as well as difficulties with covering financial debts. The political situation in the sending area also figured prominently for some groups, like the Ukrainian immigrants in Poland, or the Romanian immigrants in Wales and Greece, who emigrated immediately after the fall of the communist regime. Pull factors included higher wages, **aspirations** for a different experience, for a change, for a different and better economic, social, cultural, political system, the opportunity to develop new skills, or to experience living in different cultures and societies, as well as family reunification or formation. There were some respondents for whom the decision to migrate was not as much motivated by the material, as it was by the immaterial, a process of **gaining independence**, of learning a language, of experiencing a different culture, or simply because nothing tied them to their own area/country anymore, there was nothing to keep them back, so they moved forward. Many respondents did not initially intend to emigrate permanently, but rather to stay abroad for a couple of years, accumulate some savings, or experience or finish up a personal project like buying a house or a car or opening up a business, and then return to the country of origin. There were considerable differences among respondents concerning the reasons for migrating, along gender, age, education and country of origin lines. For instance, significantly more women than men reported having migrated for **family formation or family reunification**, younger immigrants were likelier to migrate for reasons related to aspirations, while higher educated immigrants were likelier to migrate for better career opportunities and aspirations. Lastly, German migrants were

¹⁴ Although asylum seekers and refugees are a particular type of the broader nomenclature of immigrants (which includes also labour, family or study immigrants, among others), for the purposes of this study, we proceed with referring to the Syrian group as “refugees” and the other groups as “immigrants”, in order to differentiate causes and effects of migration between the two groups.

much likelier to mention **lifestyle migration** or study-related reasons for emigrating than Eastern European migrants, who were likelier to have migrated for financial reasons. The reasons for migration for refugees, on the other hand, were often, as expected, tied to the socio-economic and political situation back in Syria, thus motivated by push factors. Many respondents left their origin areas in search of a **safe place** as they perceived their lives to be in danger there. Others decided to leave Syria because they did not want to participate in any way in the rapidly evolving political, ethnic and religious strife in their country, while others still followed the outflow in search for a **better quality of life** elsewhere.

For most immigrants, the desire or need to migrate was met by **structural factors** that aided the migration process. For instance, for most immigrant groups (excepting Ukrainian immigrants) barriers to migration were lifted after the Eastern enlargement of the EU, while for many immigrants, costs related to migration were alleviated by **network effects**, which provided **information** on local conditions and employment opportunities, shaping **expectations** of the migration experience. For refugees, too, networks and family relations played a vital role in the decision-making process, as well as in providing resources and emotional support during the migration passage out of Syria. Moreover, many respondents were counting on friends and extended family members to help them out in their destination areas in Europe, relying on their help with information or resources.

The Polish and Romanian immigrants¹⁵ working in the food production and processing sector in the Netherlands, provide a clear example of the **dual labour market theory**, in which relatively cheap immigrant labour is used in the secondary segment of the market, where most Dutch residents do not want to work. In line with the **institutional theory**, this migration pattern is perpetuated by the use of employment agencies, which minimize the costs and uncertainty of migration by providing jobs and accommodation, handling all the bureaucratic processes in both the sending and receiving areas, and providing local language translators for those who do not speak Dutch or English.

The reasons for selecting a particular location varied across the different immigrant groups and across individuals. For instance, for many respondents there was a clear **network effect**, as they followed friends or family members to the specific location and intended to facilitate the arrival of other friends or family members. That also meant, that, many times, respondents did not have much knowledge of the destination country or area, relying on **information** provided by networks and trusting that is accurate¹⁶. Immigrants in Ireland and Wales also mentioned the opportunity to learn English as a reason for choosing the specific location. German immigrants in Wales, many of whom have previously arrived as students, also motivated their choice by pointing either to what they saw as a cheaper option compared to paying the high enrolment fees for English universities, or because it allowed them to complete specific courses that were otherwise not available, such as Celtic studies. Still some German respondents were attracted to living in Wales and Ceredigion due to its rural locality, an **amenity** not found in many urban areas,

¹⁵ Romanian and Polish immigrants were covered by the case studies, but the employment agency model applies to all EU immigrants working in the agricultural and food production and processing sector in the Netherlands.

¹⁶ This seemed to be the case regardless of the country of destination, with immigrant respondents declaring to not have known much about the country prior to migrating to Greece, Ireland, Wales and the Netherlands.

indicating idyllic representations of rurality that are reported in studies of counterurbanization. Ukrainian immigrants in Poland mentioned **geographical proximity** and **cultural affinity** as reasons for selecting Poland as a country of destination, many individuals being of Polish ethnicity themselves. Lastly, for some respondents, most notably Romanians in the Netherlands, the decision to migrate specifically to the Netherlands was deliberately socio-economic, and often motivated in comparison to socio-economic and cultural conditions encountered in previous destinations. Respondents, for instance, mentioned selecting Netherlands as they perceived it to be less racist than the UK, to where they had previously migrated, or they perceived it as offering higher salaries than Italy or Germany, two other previous migration locations for another respondent. Similarly, even though most refugees were forced to leave their country, they still had some agency in terms of selecting which country to migrate to. Some respondents mentioned selecting Greece because it had a reputation of being “better” and “more tolerant” than neighbouring Turkey, while others arrived in Greece on their way to what they perceived to be better countries like Germany. Still others used Greece as steppingstone on their way to countries where they had family members or friends living, once again pointing to the importance of network effects in selecting a destination.

While different aspects of social and spatial forms of inequality are mentioned in different case studies, all of them point towards some form of perceived inequality between places, that has led to the decision to migrate. Note that this does not need to reflect actual social and spatial differences – whether migrants perceive more racist encounters in the UK than in the Netherlands may be due to individual experiences or connected to specific areas in which migrants stay in the UK. Yet, what matters is that the perception of the UK as a more racist country has spread amongst migrants, leading to the image and the perception of social and spatial inequality, and a motivation to move. *In this sense, thus, respondents not only assessed social and spatial inequalities and differences between the sending and current receiving areas, but they also social and spatially evaluated different alternative receiving areas.*

It is important to note at this point, that *the decision to migrate and the location choice is seldom governed by one single determinant or shaped by one single structural factor*. Rather, the interviews revealed the decision-making process to result from the interaction of several causes, both material and immaterial, and to be aided by a number of structural factors, from the removal of barriers to movement within the EU, to the use of networks and employment agencies.

Considering the material effects of migration on immigrants themselves, responses differed **depending on the economic circumstances and education level** of the individuals prior to migrating. Generally, most respondents agreed that migration has bettered their standard of living in a material way, many mentioning improvements in their ability to buy things without having to be aware of how expensive it is, the ability to save money *and* send remittances, to buy property or a car in the sending area, to be able to afford holidays, and generally, just be more financially comfortable. There were, however, respondents who perceived their standard of living to have decreased, because, although they can now afford more, they have less leisure time because of the long working hours. This was particularly the case of respondents in the Netherlands, who were employed in physically demanding jobs. Moreover, some respondents here perceived their quality of life to have decreased because of the housing conditions – often having to share accommodation with several other persons, pointing to **the importance of**

reception conditions mediating the effects of migration on migrants themselves. Similarly, in Ireland, Polish immigrants who were educated and economically stable prior to leaving Poland and travelled for the experience, felt their quality of life did not improve or even declined in some areas, but those who travelled for economic reasons felt they have a much better life in Ireland and did not intend to return to Poland. Generally, respondents evaluated the standard of living in the sending areas to be lower than the one in the receiving areas, an exception to this generalization being the German respondents, many of whom perceived the standard of living to be higher in Germany than in Wales. Interestingly, when reflecting upon their current standard of living, some respondents **compared it not only to their standard of living in the sending areas, but also to that in previous migration locations**. For instance, several Romanian respondents evaluated their standard of living in the Netherlands to not only be better than in Romania, but also than in Italy, Germany or the UK, where they had previously lived.

Given the peculiar situation of refugees, their assessment of their current standard of living depended on the stage of the asylum application process, which entailed differences in housing conditions and employment opportunities, among others. Incoming asylum seekers are first housed in one of the five Centres for Reception and Identification placed on the Aegean islands where they may spend some months before they are transferred to the mainland (about 97% of the Syrian asylum seekers are transferred to the mainland). On the mainland, most receive a monthly stipend of 150 euro per person, to cover for their food and primary needs, and accommodation in one of the Open Reception Centres located in Athens and other major cities, or in apartments contracted by NGOs on behalf of UNHCR. Thus, the perceptions of respondents on their living conditions differ across **space**, between those housed in centres and those housed in apartments, and across **time**, between the period spent on the islands and the period spent on the mainland. Generally, most Syrian respondents assessed their quality of life and standard of living to have improved post-migration. Respondents referred to an improvement not only in relation to their standard of living in Syria, but also to that in previous migration locations, like Turkey. However, differences did appear across the two axes, spatial and temporal. For instance, most respondents referred to their standard of living on the islands to be beneath their expectations and considered their period there to be unhappy. Similarly, the vast majority of respondents living in the Open Reception Camp in Myrsini (Western Peloponnese) mentioned that although they feel safe and have secured shelter and food, they are dissatisfied as they perceive themselves to be 'on hold' or 'in limbo', waiting too long for something to happen in their lives. On the other hand, almost all respondents judged their life in Syria pre-conflict to have been good, and themselves to have been happy.

Positive or negative evaluations of the quality of services in the receiving vs. sending area depended to a large degree on the socio-economic context of these areas. For instance, Romanian respondents, whether in Wales or the Netherlands, almost universally evaluated the quality of services in the receiving areas to be higher than in Romania. On the other hand, while Polish respondents in the Netherlands assessed the quality of services to be higher than in Poland, if not always easily accessible, Polish respondents in Ireland appraised the quality of services in Poland to have dramatically improved in recent years, while remaining stagnant in Ireland. Similarly, many German respondents assessed Wales as having a lower quality of services, including infrastructure, public cleaning, childcare, healthcare, among others, than in their origin areas in Germany. The refugees living in camps assessed their access to

services to be quite limited, due to the isolated location of the camps and the relatively high costs of travelling to larger cities. The physical distance translated in relational distance as well, as respondents mentioned limited opportunities to interact with local Greek due to their isolated location. Lastly, many respondents remarked that even if they did manage to reach larger cities like Patras or Pyrgos for services like healthcare, they encountered a language barrier and experienced difficulties explaining their symptoms and other issues to the medical personnel and/or understanding medical advice.

Similarly, evaluations of the surrounding environment in sending and receiving areas differed across all immigrant groups. For instance, while Polish immigrants in the Netherlands praised the clean streets and parks, the aesthetic of the buildings, the beautiful landscape and the quietness and little pollution of the villages in which they reside as opposed to their origin areas, Polish immigrants in Ireland felt that Poland has far surpassed Ireland when it came to designated parks and recreational areas. On the other hand, Romanian respondents positively evaluated the surrounding environment in all analysed countries, i.e. the Netherlands, Greece and Wales, in opposition to the more polluted Romania, and quite differently from the perceived opinion of German immigrants, who perceived Wales to be substantially less clean than Germany. The Syrian refugees appreciated the landscape, the geomorphology, the environmental setting, peoples' attitudes and the culture in Greece, which reminded them of Syria.

The act of migrating, however, not only affected the material aspects of individuals' lives, but also the immaterial aspects, including their emotional life. Most respondents considered themselves to be happy in the receiving area, regardless of the location, although for some the process of reaching this emotional state took longer than for others. In the Netherlands, where most respondents interviewed were short-term migrants working in the food production and processing sectors, respondents referred to an incomplete feeling of happiness in both sending and receiving areas: in sending areas because they did not have enough financial means to support themselves and their families, and in receiving areas because they missed their family. For some respondents, the migration experience brought about an emotional evolution or an **emotional transformation**. For instance, Polish respondents in the Netherlands mentioned a shift towards focusing on the self as opposed to material things, changes in their self-identification as Polish, and their perceived Polish-ness. Similarly, Ukrainian respondents mentioned an immaterial benefit of migration, that of feeling more European, like they belong in Europe and have acquired European traits.

Most Syrian respondents, too, remark an emotional transformation following their migration process. A number of respondents perceive new opportunities to have opened up to them and that by being in Greece, they are now in Europe. They also seem to realize that living in Turkey does not allow them to participate in the European domain. In a similar manner to the Ukrainian respondents, they aspire to European values, which they perceive to go beyond finding a good job, to include matters of freedom, security and liberalism. The notion of the European citizen is important, since many respondents want to be rid of the stigma of being a refugee or asylum seeker and become a 'normal' citizen who seeks to better her quality of life. For some respondents it is not easy to present the real facts to their families back in Syria, who would like to know that their children are being successful in their new destinations. Therefore, they pretend to their family back in Syria that they are fine, they portray success and become an example for the rest of the extended family and the wider community. Finally, there is a tendency among the young

and mobile Syrians to make the best of this situation, to perceive a “new brave world” opening up in front of them, and to seek the benefits of cosmopolitanism and what it stands for.

Lastly, considering the effect of migration on immigrants’ relations with friends and family, the case studies revealed different social and relational experiences for different types of immigrants. Generally, respondents did not seem to interact and socialize significantly with the local residents in all receiving areas, the nature of much interactions being friendly, but distant. Some immigrants perceived the lack of **local language skills** as a great barrier to further social integration (e.g. in the Netherlands and in Ireland), while others perceived locals to be prejudiced against them (e.g. Romanians in Wales, immigrants in the Netherlands). Some respondents in Ukraine and the Netherlands also attributed the limited social interaction to the limited amount of leisure time due to work, or because they were there for a short period of time, with little interest in forging social relations. Lastly, the case of Romanians in Greece, both orthodox countries, revealed the importance of **common cultural traits**, as many respondents credited religion as the main factor helping them integrate and feel part of the local community.

Likewise, the perceived cultural similarities between Greece and Syria, makes some Syrian respondents consider Greece as a potential home in the long-term, despite the fact that few interact with the local Greek population. A particular aspect of Syrians living in Greece is that they become acquainted with the lifestyle and standard of living in a Western and, particularly European, country, which shapes their expectations and aspirations for a (better) quality of life. On the other hand, some perceive that their newly formed aspirations cannot be fully accomplished with the opportunities afforded to them in Greece, perception that fuels their desire to further migrate to other European countries, perceived as offering better opportunities for upward mobility.

The case studies revealed, thus, great variation in the motivations to migrate and in the selection of migration locations, the latter not always reflecting the expected direction of migration (see German immigrants in Wales). Moreover, the case studies also highlighted the importance of **considering immaterial aspects in discussions of social and spatial inequality and their role in migration decisions**. German immigrants in Wales for instance, put great value on amenities like the sea, the landscape, a quieter rhythm of life, even though it came with a downgrade in terms of wages and housing conditions.

4.2 Residents in sending areas

How do residents in sending areas perceive the effects of migration on their quality of life and on the place? This section presents the insights gathered across the three sending locations, Nysa and Lukow in Poland, and Bosanci in Romania.

The perceived effects of emigration on the standard of living in sending areas depended on the socio-economic context of the location and on the socio-economic and, importantly, the migration status of the respondent. While some respondents in both Poland and Romania perceived that migration had a direct and beneficial impact on the standard of living in their countries of origin, others did not attribute these positive changes to migration, but rather to the local government policies and measures. Notably, this perception depended on whether the respondent had a family member abroad or not. Residents

without a history of migration or a family member abroad, considered that migration only affects migrant households, and does not have a broader societal effect. This assessment was made both in Nysa, in Poland, and in Bosanci, in Romania. Furthermore, in Romania, this implied that migration was perceived to make some households better off, thus, to **increase inequality within the village**. While most of the families with at least one person abroad experienced a surge in monetary resources and increased ability to consume goods and services, those who have not emigrated, and the elderly in particular, were more susceptible to poverty. The extent to which emigration has improved the standard of living of individuals seemed also to be linked to a certain degree to the educational level of the person. While most tertiary educated respondents indicated a higher standard of living for themselves and the village, lower-educated individuals were discontent with the way the village has evolved. Moreover, in Romania, some residents perceived migration to have made the village better off than nearby villages, thus **increasing social and spatial inequality between villages**, and their own standard of living to be higher than in the Western part of Romania, considered to be the richest region in the country.

Concerning the effect of migration on employment opportunities, opinions varied depending on the educational and skill level of the respondent. Generally, low-skilled individuals in all locations perceived that emigration implied less competition for jobs, thus making it easier for them to find a job. On the other hand, despite the increasing labour shortages that emigration generated in all sending locations, particularly in sectors like construction or services, many high-skilled respondents perceived that they were not able to find a job matching their qualifications. Even when suitable jobs were available, some residents in Romania argued that the low salaries were not competitive enough to keep them from considering emigration. The availability of jobs alone, thus, was not sufficient in and on itself, needing to be accompanied by good working conditions and a competitive salary.

Assessments on the quality and availability of services differed starkly between the case study locations in Poland and Romania. In Poland, respondents evaluated the quality and availability of services to have decreased substantially, on the one hand, because the departure of professionals meant there were fewer people with certain skills available in the city, and on the other hand, because the departure of individuals also implied less contributions in taxes and thus less investments from the local government in many services. In the Romanian case study location, on the other hand, respondents were extremely pleased with the quality and availability of services, which they appraised to have improved exponentially in recent years. However, few respondents in this case attributed the positive changes to emigration, attributing all improvements to the new local administration, and particularly the new mayor. A common thread in the two cases, despite their opposing contexts, was the key role that the local governments were perceived to have in managing the effects of emigration on the area, again pointing to **the importance of the local context** when assessing the social and spatial effects of migration.

Two very **visible aspects of the environment**, and their relation to emigration, were particularly prominent in the resident interviews in the Romanian case study location. Firstly, many respondents referred to traffic in the village, and how it fluctuates in the presence and absence of migrants, across seasons. The streets are almost empty of cars for much of the year, yet they become congested with traffic around Christmas and in the summertime, when people return for the holidays. Secondly, respondents

pointed to the changing architectural style in the village, with the aesthetic of the newly built houses increasingly borrowing style elements from other countries and cultures.

In addition to the material effects of emigration on sending areas mentioned above, respondents in both Romania and Poland were keen to discuss immaterial effects, emotional and relational. Respondents in Romania were emotionally affected both by the departure of individuals within the village and by their return. The emigration of close family or friends generated feelings of sadness, desolation, particularly when those left-behind were children or the elderly. However, some residents were also affected by the return of individuals abroad, perceiving them to have changed. Respondents referred to emigrants and returnees becoming more materialistic, often causing feelings of inadequacy in those not migrating or not having the resources to achieve the same status of material wellbeing, but also acquiring Western values, which were not always perceived positively. In Poland, on the other hand, respondents had a more stoic attitude towards those emigrating, oftentimes expressing feelings of understanding and acceptance of their decision to leave. At the same, and quite in opposition to perceptions in Romania, respondents in Poland perceived returnees to be more open and to bring with them “European values”, which were positively assessed in this context.

Concerning the relational aspects of emigration, respondents in both Poland and Romania mentioned the negative effects of emigration on family relations, the growing apart, the children raised without parents, or the elderly rarely seeing their children. In both locations, although more so in Romania, respondents also perceived migration to have affected social interactions within the community. Some respondents referred to a loss of communal solidarity and social cohesion, with individuals, often emigrants and returnees, being less willing to lend a helping hand. In the Romanian case study, the loss of cohesiveness was closely related to emigration, as individuals went abroad and returned with what residents perceived to be “Western” attitudes of individualism and lack of spirituality.

4.3 Residents in receiving areas

How do residents in receiving areas perceive the effects of migration on their quality of life and on the place? This section presents the insights gathered across the seven receiving locations analysed, specifically, the region of Western Peloponnese in Greece, county Galway in Ireland, a village in Steenbergen and two villages in Noordoostpolder, the Netherlands, the city of Piaseczno in Poland, and Ceredigion and Swansea in Wales.

The perceived effects of immigration on receiving areas depended significantly on the local socio-economic context. For instance, in Greece and Wales, residents assessed the standard of living in the area as having decreased significantly but attributed the worsening conditions to the economic crisis and austerity measures, respectively. In Ireland, there were differences across respondents residing in **rural vs urban areas**. While in rural areas, residents felt that immigration did not have an effect on the standard of living, in urban areas they sometimes reported negative consequences of immigration on their standard of living (e.g. on the school environment). Lastly, in Noordoostpolder, the Netherlands, somewhat echoing the perceptions of residents in sending areas in Section 4.2, some respondents perceived immigration to benefit some groups only, like the farmers who need immigrant labour, the employment agencies who

bring in immigrants or the shops who profit from increased consumption, but not the place or the broader community.

There were two main narratives that transpired from the case studies, concerning the relationship between migration and local employment. Firstly, many respondents across the different countries, emphasised that **immigrants are mostly doing the jobs local residents do not want to do**. They generally perceived immigration positively and acknowledged its need in their local area. These arguments were surprisingly similar across different countries, including Ireland, Netherlands and Poland. Secondly, some residents in Poland and the Netherlands, perceived immigrants to represent direct competition for certain jobs. Importantly, however, a clear divide appeared in terms of educational levels in this case. While low-educated residents perceived an increased competition for jobs in sector such as construction, food production and food processing, high-skilled individuals did not perceive such a threat. On the other hand, areas such as Ceredigion and Swansea in Wales, which were generally characterised by residents in terms of a lack of employment opportunities, did not perceive immigration to be related to this state of affairs.

Concerning the quality and availability of services, residents tended to have different opinions across the various case studies. Generally, residents in locations in Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, or Wales, tended to evaluate the quality of services to have decreased in their areas in recent years. However, this downgrading was not linked to immigration into the area, but rather to austerity measures (Wales), the economic crisis (Greece, Ireland) or the slow depopulation of the area (Netherlands). On the contrary, in some places like rural Galway in Ireland and Noordoostpolder in the Netherlands, where Polish immigrants have opened up shops, residents welcomed the addition and diversity of available food. In Ireland and Wales, there were also perceived differences in terms of quality of services between rural and urban areas, the former generally being less well provisioned in terms of services. In Greece and Ireland, some residents expressed also perceptions of a negative impact of immigration, particularly on the educational system, the difficulty of integrating students from different backgrounds and different languages. These latter comments point to a need for better integrative measures for immigrants and their children in the receiving societies, including language courses. Few residents discussed at length the surrounding environment and potential recent changes, and those who did, rarely attributed these changes to immigration.

In addition to material effects of immigration on the place and individuals, residents also discussed emotional and relational effects. Migration is rarely an emotion-free topic, and most residents had some sort of feelings towards it. For instance, some residents in Greece and Poland viewed migration as a necessity, something that one has to accept; in Ireland, the residents interviewed perceived migration and migrants positively, seeing them as hard-working individuals, willing to contribute to the local society; while in Wales, despite many media reports of the supposed anti-immigrant virulence of people in so-called 'left behind' places, few interviewees seemed particularly interested in immigration at an emotive level. Notably, in Poland and the Netherlands, many respondents expressed sympathy towards immigrants, some feeling that they are being used for labour and housed in inappropriate conditions.

Residents mentioned several aspects of the relationship between immigration and social interactions. Generally, residents did not interact much with immigrants in most countries (e.g. Greece,

Netherlands, Ireland), although there was some variation observed. In Ireland, for instance, there were perceived rural-urban differences, as the relatively smaller and tight-knit community in a village afforded more opportunities to interact with immigrants, enriching social interactions. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, differences were perceived in terms of where immigrants were accommodated – families in private houses or mostly single persons in immigrant accommodations – likely used as a proxy for the level of integration. The latter were generally perceived to not have integrated well into the local community and to keep more to themselves.

4.4 Internal migrants

What are the main determinants and reasons for migrating? What role do perceived social and spatial inequalities play in this decision-making process and the destination selection? What are the effects of migration on immigrants themselves? This section presents the insights gathered across the four internal migrant groups interviewed in five case study locations, namely, Friesland in the Netherlands, Ceredigion and Swansea in Wales, Piaseczno in Poland, and Ilia and Achaia in Western Greece.

The reasons for migrating differed across the different internal migrant groups interviewed. Most interviewees in Friesland moved there after retirement (retirement migration), and referred to the high-quality elderly care, the higher quality of life, the peace, quiet and safety and the affordable housing as the reasons for selecting Friesland. Many were return migrants, having grown up in the area, or spent time there during holidays or family visits. Internal migrants in Poland mentioned employment opportunities as the main reason for selecting Piaseczno, information on which was oftentimes obtained through networks of friends and family. In Wales, many internal migrants arrived for educational purposes, joining the university, while others moved because of employment or housing affordability. In Greece, internal migrants moved because of the need to cope with the impact of the economic recession, or in search for a better quality of life and/or improve their wellbeing.

Generally, most respondents assessed their standard of living to have improved post-migration. The particular dimensions of these improvements in the standard of living, however, varied across the different groups and covered both material and immaterial aspects. For instance, internal migrants in the Netherlands mentioned immaterial aspects like the joy and relief of having access to good quality healthcare facilities, the proximity of nature which invites outdoor activities, but also material aspects like cheaper housing, as aspects improving their quality of life. Internal migrants in Poland emphasised the material benefits of migration, being able to afford goods, renovate their house or travel abroad, while internal migrants in Wales experienced a raise in purchasing power because of the lower costs in the area, even though salaries were lower than in their origin areas. Interviewees in Wales also emphasised a trade-off between material and immaterial aspects of a high standard of living; they might have given up high salaries, dinners in 5-star restaurants, the theatre and opera in origin cities like London or Birmingham, but gained instead a healthier lifestyle, quality time with the family, access to nature, all of which they valued more.

In terms of employment, the interviewees revealed different experiences, resulting from different socio-economic context. Internal migrants in Piaseczno, an economically booming area in the proximity

of Warsaw, appreciated the opportunity to find a satisfying job in the area, as well as the opportunity to change it into a more interesting one. On the other hand, in Wales, where respondents did not perceive employment opportunities as being particularly good, they reflected on people leaving the area and on, oftentimes, settling for the available jobs, as a trade-off to immaterial aspects which contributed to a better quality of life. In Greece, the economic recession was frequently referred to as a 'push factor' in migrating from urban centres to rural areas. In fact, the downturn implied decreased employment opportunities, rising unemployment, and significant downward pressure on wages.

Perceptions were also quite different concerning access to services in the receiving areas. While the internal migrants in the Netherlands had immediate access to essential services or a private car to reach more distant ones, internal migrants in Poland mentioned that the city has not kept pace with the rapid increase in the local population. Respondents here mentioned overcrowding, and public transport and the necessity to build more schools, as some of the services that are still inadequately provided in Piaseczno. Education was a topic also covered by the internal migrants in Wales, who, however, praised the small, family-oriented primary school approach in Wales, as opposed to the approach of larger urban institutions. On the other hand, respondents in Wales did notice the lacking infrastructure and the limited connectivity to other places in the region. In terms of the environment, respondents in both Wales and the Netherlands were appreciative of the nature and surrounding landscape. In the latter, respondents mentioned the green environment, but also the quietness of the village as opposed to large city areas, the feeling of safety and less criminality, again, compared to larger cities. In the former, respondents appreciated the rural landscapes of Ceredigion, but evaluated negatively the environment in urban Swansea, mentioning most often its lack of cleanliness. Natural and marine environment and a less stressful living was also mentioned during the interviews in Greece. In fact, for some, the decision to migrate was initiated by a desire for a better and less stressful quality of life. In this context raising a family near nature and away from the 'fast rhythms' of the city was considered important.

Emotionally, the majority of the respondents perceived themselves as being happy in the receiving area, sometimes even happier than in the sending areas (e.g. internal migrants in Friesland). Respondents in Poland considered themselves happy in both sending and receiving areas, although they mentioned feelings of homesickness, which dented their overall levels of happiness to some extent. Relationally, most respondents referred to feeling integrated into the local community, to a sense of friendliness. For many internal migrants in Friesland, this came naturally, as they have previously lived or visited the area. Many internal migrants in Poland had made friends in the receiving area, from work or church, but also had friends from the origin area joining them in the city. An exception, here, were circular, or temporary migrants, for whom social life was focused in the origin area. In Greece, for circular or temporary migrants, social life was focused in the origin area. In addition, in the Greek case, some respondents also mentioned feeling at times as "strangers" in the place they settled. In some cases, they felt socially excluded and able to communicate only with other internal migrants with whom they share a 'communication' code.

5. Discussion

The objective of this study is to improve our understanding of the relationship between migration, spatial and social inequalities. We use the concept of social inequalities to reflect the uneven distribution of resources, capacities and capabilities between social groups, and the concept of spatial inequality to reflect the uneven distribution of resources, capacities and capabilities between places. The difference between places is partly of a material nature, and expressed, through for instance, the availability of schools and the quality of buildings and housing, or the character of the local labour market. Such material differences impact immaterial differences, for instance in social status. Social differences, too, may be of material and immaterial nature, reflected, for instance, in differences in income and societal appreciation. Although analytically distinct, the concepts of social and spatial inequality are intrinsically connected, the place constituting the background for social relations and also being constituted by them (Tickamyer 2000). Spatial differences may, for instance, produce social differences through the nature of local industries. By offering certain types of jobs and labour conditions, they affect the welfare of the local population and the social differences within places that may result from it. Our study focuses on the spatial dimension of inequality. It seeks to find out whether and how migration matters for the increase and decrease of inequalities between places and the normative interpretation thereof of (spatial) (in)justice. We analyse the link between spatial inequality, injustice and migration based on 13 case studies conducted in Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Wales¹⁷. Our main findings are highlighted and discussed below.

Firstly, our case studies reveal that the decision to migrate is motivated by perceived spatial inequalities between sending and receiving areas. These differences are of both material and immaterial nature. *Materially*, migrants perceive receiving areas to offer higher wages, a higher standard of living, better employment opportunities, more affordable housing or higher quality services than the sending areas. *Immaterially*, migrants move because of aspirations for a different culture or political system than in their sending areas, but also for the peace, quiet and natural surroundings of some of the receiving areas. While the latter lifestyle motivations may reflect more personal reasons for migrating, for instance the result of a certain stage in life, the former systemic differences (political system, corruption, culture) reflect perceived spatial inequalities between sending and receiving areas. We find significant variation in the perceived inequalities, and by extension, the reasons for migrating, among the different migrant groups. Higher educated individuals are more likely to migrate because of perceived lifestyle differences than lower skilled migrants, who are more inclined to migrate because of perceived economic differences, in order to accumulate resources and improve their lifestyle at home. Moreover, the former is associated with longer-term migration, while the latter with short-term, even seasonal migration episodes. Internal migrants are likelier to move because of perceived differences in the quality of life, including services and the natural environment as well as culture between sending and receiving areas, than international migrants. East-West migration patterns largely reflect material (economic) disparities, while West-West

¹⁷ Please see Annex 1 for a comprehensive description of the case studies.

migration patterns reflect immaterial differences between sending and receiving areas. The fact that Eastern European migrants feel the need to migrate to access material welfare, whereas Western European migrants have the liberty to search for a different lifestyle, also forcefully reflects spatial inequality in material welfare. Lastly, we observe that motivations for migration and settlement evolve over time, reflecting the importance of considering the various stages of the migration process. While initially, most individuals emigrate for economic (material) reasons, those who decide to settle, do so because of non-economic (immaterial) motivations, such as the natural or cultural environment at destination. The shifting motivations are bolstered by a process of loosening attachment to the origin area, the family formation stage and place attachment at destination.

Secondly, our findings indicate that emigration has the potential to both increase and decrease spatial and social inequality in the sending areas. Our case studies suggest that emigration may contribute to the economic growth of the place, which may contribute to alleviating *spatial* inequality between regions within the sending country and between the sending and receiving regions; it may, however, lead to increasing *spatial* inequality within the region as places with many migrants may profit from the investments of remittances¹⁸. In a similar vein, emigration may increase social inequalities within the sending regions as benefits from migration are often not distributed evenly, with migrant households experiencing a surge in economic wealth compared to non-migrant households.¹⁹ Emigration may further *spatial* inequality within and between regions in the sending country due to depopulation, and labour force shortage potentially causing economic decline. It is important to note, that, the extent to which emigration contributes to increasing or decreasing spatial and social inequalities, depends on the socio-economic context of the sending area, the sending country, as well as on the stage of the migration process. Notably, in all our cases, the local government's policies play an essential role in mediating the material effect of migration on the place, and thus in determining the relationship between migration and spatial and social inequality. Importantly, the three case studies also underscore the short-sightedness of considering spatial inequalities through the lens of material elements alone. Respondents with a migrant relative generally report a lower level of emotional wellbeing, being affected by the absence of a loved one. In this sense, we can talk about emigration increasing *social* inequality within the community, between migrant and non-migrant households, in an immaterial way. Finally, emigration is perceived to contribute to the loss of community cohesiveness and solidarity, which could similarly be considered to contribute to immaterial spatial inequality, as the quality of community relations, in social cohesion, and emotional welfare, may differ *between* communities that experience different levels of emigration, depopulation, and ageing. Communities where emigration is absent, or less pronounced, may be worse off in economic welfare but better off for what regards its immaterial dimensions.

Thirdly, our findings suggest a mixed effect of immigration on social and spatial inequalities in receiving areas. The degree to which immigration increases or decreases said inequalities depends to a great extent on the socio-economic and political context at destination and on the characteristics of the

¹⁸ The Romanian case study.

¹⁹ The Polish case studies.

immigrant population, among others. For instance, areas that were negatively impacted by external factors, such as the economic crisis or austerity measures (e.g. Ireland and Greece), tended to be more susceptible to perceived negative impacts from immigration, on select issues (e.g. access to and quality of education and schooling). In Ireland, these effects were perceived differently between rural and urban areas, the former being less likely to refer to them, thus reflecting the need for a geographical/spatial distinction when analysing the effects of migration. Certain immigrant groups (generally low-skilled) were perceived to constitute competition for jobs for correspondingly qualified local residents (e.g. in the Netherlands), thus contributing to perceived social inequality in the place.

Lastly, our results illustrate that migration provides individuals with the opportunity to move from places that are lagging behind in either social, economic, political, material or immaterial terms, to places they perceive to offer better opportunities. In many cases, this move is initially considered to be a temporary one, with the purpose of gathering the means to improve the quality of life in the place of origin – or in other words, to mitigate the spatial inequality in opportunities. At the same time, our findings indicate that the process of migration can further entrench the initial inequalities by making sending and receiving areas worse or better off in material or immaterial terms. Something similar may be said for social inequalities, which may impact the likelihood, motivation, and direction of migration. Migration may improve the situation of individual migrants yet add to inequalities between social groups within and across places.

Whether or not the above described inequalities may be defined as injustice, requiring redistributive or ameliorative action, necessitates a normative interpretation. But how to determine what is just or unjust? Such an evaluation needs to be based on objective criteria that allow for comparison, and/or shared principles of justice. Objective criteria are, for instance, provided through definitions of poverty that indicate the threshold for a decent life. Without shared principles of justice we would not know, however, if poverty alleviation is considered a societal or individual responsibility. Principles of justice are anchored in legislation, e.g. human rights, political programmes, e.g. EU cohesion policy, in religious guidelines, as well as individual ethics. When based in shared principles of justice, it is possible to arrive at an intersubjective ordeal of (in)justice, and potentially a call for collective action. In the case of spatial injustice, regional investments in infrastructure may, for instance, be justified when regions lack facilities that have been defined as a basic right for all citizens. For what regards social injustice, we may think of the living conditions in refugee camps on the Greek islands that are interpreted as inhumane/unjust in reference to human rights. The Greek island inhabitants, on their turn, may consider it unjust that the degradation of their quality of life is not considered.

Injustice is based in a normative judgement, as discussed above, and based on reference to general principles. The aim of such a judgement is to understand if the balance of inequalities is experienced as fair. This fairness concerns our treatment as members of a specific group and positioned in a specific place. It reflects, hence, the experience of a collective identity or treatment. The weighing of advantaged and disadvantages of even the same inequalities at the individual level is something completely different. Places are different, they offer different opportunities and what they may lack in material aspects they may make up in immaterial aspects (e.g. nature and landscape, community feeling in rural areas, etc), which can weigh more importantly for some individuals. The decision of highly

educated German migrants to move to Wales may serve as an example. They experience their overall quality of their life in Wales as higher despite of less material welfare. It should not be forgotten, however, that they could afford to make such a choice, and might have a rather safe fall-back position with the ability to return to their sending country in case of need.

The above discussion underlines the need to consider spatial and social injustices in interaction, when assessing the level of injustice. Similarly, people are different, with different skills and talents and preferences. Not all residents may worry or personally suffer from a lower level of opportunities offered in a given place. Still, the inequality in access to opportunities may be objectively/intersubjectively defined as unjust when considering Sen's and Nussbaum's capability approach in which the development of capabilities is seen as a basic human right to be warranted by the state (Nussbaum 1997).

We have started this study by asking whether there is a relation between migration and social and spatial inequality. We conclude it by answering with a resounding "yes". However, there is no universal law governing this relationship, no one general rule that can explain and predict its dynamics in different contexts and for different groups. Rather, as we have shown, migration often reflects perceived social and spatial inequalities between sending and receiving areas in various dimensions, and may contribute to increasing or diminishing inequalities in these or other dimensions, *under certain conditions*. Notably, these inequalities can be both of a material and immaterial nature and do not have to be absolute, i.e. it is possible to perceive an area to be better off in some dimension, but not overall.

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Annex 1: Case studies

This section presents the results of our case studies. The studies are organized by location, as we wanted to present both sides of the coin in terms of perceptions of migration, namely the perception of the immigrants and the perception of the residents. Each case study presents a brief profile of the location, including socio-economic demographic characteristics, followed by the methodology applied by each partner in selecting the location and in recruiting interviewees. The main section of each case study presents the results of the interviews, organized across the main three dimensions of wellbeing presented in Section 3.1, namely the material (standard of living, employment, housing, access to services, the environment), the emotional and the relational.

1. Greece

The Greek research focuses on two regions: the Attica Region and more particularly Athens, a predominantly urban area, where the majority of the migrant population is concentrated, and the Region of Western Greece, a rural area where different forms of mobility have emerged in recent years. In these two regions the following types of migration/ mobility flows are examined:

- Romanian migrants living in Athens and Western Greece. Romanian migrants are a rather neglected migrant group in the Greek migration research, despite their being (at 5.1 percent) among the top three (international) migrant groups after the Albanians (53 percent) and the Bulgarians (8.3 percent) (ELSTAT 2011).
- Syrian refugees/ asylum seekers living in Athens and Western Greece. According to UNCHR more than 861,630 refugees entered Greece in 2015. The post – 2015 migration/ refugee crisis has affected the country, and has risen to the top of the political agenda as well as and to the public and academic debate .
- Permanent residents in Western Greece. The aim is to examine how rural residents perceive the arrival of migrants; Western Greece was chosen as since the geographical area of Athens, which is the largest city in Greece, does not facilitates geographically stratification of the respondents; Supplementary material was drawn from recent surveys conducted in Greece regarding the perceptions of the residents on migrant/ refugee populations.
- Internal migrants from other regions of Greece (mainly from Athens) to the Region of Western Greece.

In addition, interviews were conducted with various stakeholders in both urban and rural areas (e.g. Civil society representatives, Mayors and civil servants, representatives of migrant associations, policy makers etc.). In total up to February 2020, 90 qualitative semi-structured interviews with Romanian migrants, Syrian refugees, internal migrants, residents and stakeholders and key informants were conducted in Western Greece and in Attica. Migrant and refugee respondents were identified through migrant and civil society organizations, personal contacts and snowball sampling, while particular

attention was paid to include participants with various social and demographic characteristics (e.g. gender, educational level, family status, stage in the life – cycle, length of residence in the country etc.). Interviews were carried out in Greek, Romanian, English and Arabic, and were recorded when the participants' agreed. The interviewees appear under pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity. The research among rural residents conducted in various localities within the Regional Units of Ilia and Achaia in the Region of Western Greece, such as the Municipal Unit of Valtholomio, Myrsini, Ag. Nikolaos, Lechaina and Lapa. All these areas can be considered as mostly agricultural with some of them having a 'mild' touristic profile.

The interviewers used the interview guide shared across all case studies, while incorporating additional questions where necessary to raise issues of particular importance for the Greek case. Prior to conducting the interviews in the refugee population, the HUA team developed an 'Aide Memoire', which was used during the qualitative research. The collected qualitative material was transcribed and analysed using MAXQDA qualitative analysis software. The initial coding structure was based on the interview guide, although new codes were developed following the important common themes that emerged from the material.

Attica region

Profile of the area

The Attica Region (Figure 2) includes the metropolitan area and the country's capital and largest city Athens. Attica covers about 3,808 square kilometres and its population is 3,828.434 people of which 10.6 percent are foreigners. Almost 18 percent of the migrant population is concentrated in the centre of Athens while large groups are located in the Regional Units of Eastern and Western Attica (9.9 and 9.3 percent respectively).

Figure 2. Attica region



In terms of immigration flows, Greece relatively recently became an immigration country (King, Lazaridis, and Tsardanidis 2000). The 1981 Population Census recorded 180,595 foreigners (1.9 percent of the total population), one third of whom were EU nationals. Since the late 1980s and following the fall of the socialist regimes, there was an influx of Albanians, Romanians Bulgarians and migrants from other European countries. Consequently, it received the highest proportion of immigrants compared to the size of its labour force although during the 1990s Greece was still one of the least developed countries in the EU, (Kasimis and Kassimi 2004). In 2001, there were 762,191 foreigners, accounting for 7 percent of the total population. At that time the majority of migrants came from the neighbouring countries of the Balkans (Cavounidis 2004), followed by smaller numbers of economic migrants and asylum seekers from Asia and Africa. According to the latest population census, Greece's immigrant population numbered 912,000 people, or 8.4 percent of the total population (Population Census 2011). Among the largest national groups of migrants are Albanians (52.7 percent of immigrants), Bulgarians (8.3 percent), Romanians (5.1 %), Pakistanis (3.7 percent) and Georgians (3 percent), Polish (1.6 percent), Indians (1.2 percent) and Bangladeshi (1.2 percent). Based on the latest population census, Albanians still account for over half of the non-indigenous population. More than one fifth are migrants of Asian nationalities, while almost 18 percent account EU nationals. Romanian migrants in Attica region account for almost 5 percent of the migrant population.

It is important to note that, by 2015 Greece witnessed unprecedented numbers of people crossing its borders. This movement was triggered by the conflicts and crisis in Syria. At its peak, in October 2015, over 200,000 people arrived in Greece in a single month. In 2015, 911,471 migrants and refugees arrived in Greece. Between 2014 and 2015, the number of apprehended migrants increased by an astonishing 1,080 percent. By 2016, the number of migrants and refugees arriving in the country dropped to 204,820; while in 2017 the number of irregular inflows accounted for just one third of the previous year figure. The majority of the population in Attica region belongs to the working age population while more than one quarter are between 15 and 34 years old. Comparing natives with migrant population, the vast majority of both groups is of working age population, with a very small of individuals older than 65 years (3.6 percent) among the migrant population. Over one-third of the natives and almost 40 percent of the immigrants have completed upper secondary school or post-secondary non-tertiary studies. One fifth of the native population has completed at least the first stage of tertiary education comparing to 14.2 percent of the migrant population. In general, hence, migrants have a lower education, although there are important difference by nationality.

Findings and results

The sample in the Attica region comprises 12 Romanian respondents, of which 8 women. In terms of educational attainment, 2 respondents have a tertiary education, with the remaining respondents having a secondary education. The youngest respondent is 33 years old, while the oldest is 59 years old. Occupations include a doctor, truck driver, agricultural worker, shop owner or university employee.

Migration decisions and determinants

During the interviews, it became apparent that some **Romanian** immigrants, were concerned about the economic situation in Romania during the first years following the collapse of the communist regime, the deterioration of their living conditions and the limited employment prospects. All this seemed to play an important role in their migration decision.

“it was back in 1992-1993 (...) The factories I was working in were closing down. They were firing people, they were expelling because they had no work, they had closed contracts for outsourcing, and we had nothing to work for, and... I was scared for my future, going out of work and [the idea of] returning to a village where I had nothing to do (ID 15, Female, Interviewed in Athens).

Others explained the decision to move to Greece as a temporary quest to fulfil their dreams of a better standard of living in Romania:

“I was thinking that I will come [to Greece] for 3-4-5 years, to collect some money and to buy a house. And then to be able to study. But I wanted my own house!” (ID 14, Female, Interviewed in Athens).

Standard of living

A good number of **Romanian** interviewees have managed to buy a house or a property either in Romania or in Greece. Buying a house is seen as an accomplishment, accomplish the initial 'migration dream' has been fulfilled, an investment which brings a sense of security. Usually, decisions about the place of the house, in Romania or in Greece may be seen as an indication of where the participants feel 'at home'. Yet, the relationship of buying a house and feeling at home is not straightforward. For example, as one participant describes:

"I have bought a house in Romania in 2004. I wasn't thinking that I am going to return. I said let's have something [investment] in Romania. (...) But the rent in our house in Greece increased. (...) And I started to look for a house. There was an opportunity to take a loan and I said we will sell whatever we've got in Romania and we will buy our own home here. (...) We bought the house in 2007" (ID 8, Female, Interviewed in Athens).

Assessing the general standard of living is not an easy question to answer. The vast majority of participants live in Greece for many years. As they explain, during this lifetime they encountered difficulties, hardships, employment opportunities, and different living conditions. For those with their families in the area, providing better chances to the next generation for social mobility is crucial.

Employment

The implications of the economic recession in Greece was a constant theme for the **Romanian** interviews.

[I was always working] and at one point I started working 3 days a week. Then I 'felt' that there is crisis [in Greece] (ID 91, Male, Interviewed in Athens)

How they experienced the recession differed depending on characteristics such as gender, employment sector, type of area – urban/ rural areas – and life cycle. As some argue, they would consider migrating to another country, not so severely hit by the crisis, if they could turn back time. The argument is that due to the economic recession wages and employment positions decreased compared to the 1990s and 2000s.

[Today, If I would have taken again the decision to migrate] I would have gone elsewhere (...) Because of the available jobs... Back then it was also difficult when we first came. At the beginning I couldn't find a job because I didn't know the language. But there were many jobs! I found right away. But now, migrating again in Greece where I know that [due to the crisis] there are no jobs... I wouldn't do it" (ID 7, Male, interviewed in Athens).

Environment

Some **Romanian** respondents, the natural environment and proximity of the sea contribute to a better quality of life in Greece.

You see, in one month from now [in May] you will go to the beach. I am crazy about the sea! I am telling you the climate is different. Here, I feel I can stay (...) Here I go to the gym,

I go dancing, it's a different life. I do something for myself (ID 8, Female, Interviewed in Athens)

The emotional

Similarly, **Romanian** immigrants in Attica generally recall the first years upon arrivals difficult. It was generally not easy to learn the language, find a job or handle the administrative requirements. Having the family close was important also for them and nourished a sense of belonging. This, there was a feeling of sacrifice present which made the first years hard to cope with.

"I am telling you in general it was ok because I came here to my husband (...) [At the beginning] it was very hard for me. But you must consider I had my parents with me in Romania [he was alone]. It was the 'dark ages' back then for us. Two years and eight months, this is how long the dark ages lasted for me and my husband (ID 8, Female, Interviewed in Athens).

Migration aspirations before embarking in migration and when reaching the destination area may differ. As one interviewee argues she initially migrated to Cyprus where she stayed for six years and she returned back in Romania. Her initial aspiration was to migrate for a few years to earn money and to be able to buy a house back in Romania. However, returning in the early 2000s in Romania she claimed that she couldn't find a job that paid as well as abroad. As she explains:

"I said that I wanted to settle down, I wanted to organize my life, I wanted to stay in Romania, not to be uprooted once again, to move out again. But the phone rang (...) and asked me if I wanted to come to Greece (...) I manage to take a tourist visa. I said [as an excuse to get my visa] that I am coming to Greece for vacations, vacations that lasted for 18 years. And so I am here" (ID 15, Female, Interviewed in Athens)

The relational

In Attica, too, sharing the same religion and visiting the same church supports social relations between Romanian and Greek residents. As some of the participants explain: *We have the same [religious] practices [with Greeks] it helps, we have the same religious holidays (ID 91, Male, Interviewed in Athens).* It is interesting to note, that in Attica most respondents indicate to have both Greeks and Romanians among their friends:

"During the last few years I don't hang out with Romanians so much. Because my brother has moved to other country and I hang out with co-workers. Ok I will see them [Romania friends] but not so often as I used to" (ID 6, Male, Interviewed in Athens)

Most interviewees feel that they belong to two countries, and are ambivalent about which country to call 'home'. Where their family lives, is of outmost importance here.:

You know for me, my heart is split. Half here, half in Romania. I cannot distinguish it. I don't see myself going back in Romania, I visit Romania to see my mother, my siblings. I

will stay a week or so. An then I will come back home (...) I feel a stranger in my country”
(ID 8, Female, Interviewed in Athens)

Conclusion

The case study investigated the relationship between migration and perceived social and spatial inequality for Romanian immigrants in the Attica region. The findings suggest that most Romanians left their origin country following the fall of the communist regimes, out of concern for their economic wellbeing. An important aspect of their migration to Greece, despite the difficulties encountered along the way, was the insurance of better opportunities for upward social mobility for the next generation.

Many respondents mentioned the negative effect of the crisis on their employment as well, many losing their jobs or having to work fewer hours, some regretting not to have migrated to another European country during those times.

Additionally, respondents mentioned the cultural affinity and religion as important drivers for local integration, with most respondents having both Romanian and Greek friends in their social circle.

Western Greece

Profile of the area

The study area consists of two Regional Units in the Peloponnese peninsula: Ilia and Achaia (Figure 3) that administratively are part of the Region of Western Greece. The area has an extensive coastline and borders the Ionian Sea and the Gulf of Patras. The plains of the Regional Unit of Ilia in the Western Peloponnese are the largest in the Peloponnese, but the region is also known for the coastal wetlands of Kotichi and Kaïafa, which are areas of rare natural beauty and ecological value.

Figure 3 Ilia and Achaia



The population grew between 1991 and 2001 which is mostly due to immigration during 1990s and 2000s (based on census statistics). The population of Ilia and Achaia increased from 475,206 people in 1991 to 504,625 in 2001 while migrant population as a percentage of the local increased from 0.7 percent to 5.6 respectively. Indeed, from early 1990s onwards various population movements have affected the wider area. These included the arrival of international migrants who had been living and working in different urban or rural regions of Greece and saw new employment prospects in the intensive agricultural sector, but also internal migrants who came from large urban centres and settled in the area, looking for better employment opportunities and a higher quality of life. More recently, Syrian Refugees arrived the open Myrsini refugee camp waiting for acceptance of their asylum claim and/or recognition under the refugee regime. Despite these population movements, the population declined to 468,994 people in 2011, well below the 1991 figures, while the share of migrant population increased to almost 7 percent.

Albanians constitute the majority among the migrant population, followed by Bulgarian, Romanian and Asian migrants. In 2016 a refugee camp was established in the Myrsini Village in a former holiday resort call “LM Village”. This was facilitated by the Mayor of that area who is of Syrian descent. Currently, 280-300 Syrians refugees are living in this small camp.

Historically the main economic activity in the villages and small towns, is agriculture and stock breeding, alongside tourism. Olive, grains, wine, pepper, fruit, vegetables, dairy and fish products are important for the local economy, supplying the food processing industries that operate in the area. Currently, agriculture still is an important pillar for the economy of Ilia (27.3 of employment), although the majority of the population is employed in the service sector (48.9 percent). The Regional Unit of Achaia has a fairly limited primary sector (8.1 percent) and an adequately developed tertiary sector (66.5 percent) (ELSTAT 2011). The capital of Achaia is Patras, which is the third largest city in Greece, and operates Greece’s main port to Italy. The majority of the population in Ilia and Achaia is of working age, with and one forth above 65 years of age. Most of the migrants are between 15 and 64 years old, which has lowered the average of the population considerably. The majority of the population has completed secondary education (38 percent) and about a quarter (26 percent) only primary education; a small group has either tertiary education (12.5 percent) or another post-secondary or technical education (3.4 percent). Comparing to the local population, migrants have a lower education although there are important differences by nationality. Altogether, 54 percent of the local population has any post – secondary education compared to 7.2 percent of the migrant population.²⁰

Findings and results

The sample comprises 13 residents, 7 internal migrants and 13 Romanian respondents. In terms of gender, 5 residents, 6 internal migrants and 9 Romanian respondents were female. In terms of educational attainment, 11 residents and 5 Romanians are tertiary educated. The youngest respondent among residents and internal migrants is 22 years old, while the oldest is 70 years old, while among the

²⁰ The high educational profile of the locals is also related due to the fact that the University of Patras was founded in the city of Patras in 1964 in the Region of Western Greece.

Romanian respondents, the youngest is 36 years old and the oldest is 62 years old. Occupations among residents and internal migrants include shop owner, retiree, chemist, farmer, journalist, while occupations among the Romanian respondents include bartender, construction worker, teacher, shop owner or assistant physiotherapist.

Migration decisions and determinants

For the **internal migrants**, the decision to migrate was in many cases related with the economic recession in the country. Therefore, those who moved because of economic hardship were either seeking for better employment opportunities or for coping strategies/ practices to get by in the period of recession. As one interviewee argued, she was born in Western Greece but moved to Athens for studies and stayed there for 25 years working as accountant. However, by 2015 she lost her job and considered migrating to the US or an EU member state. Moving to her village of origin was not her primary choice:

“No, I had no thoughts to return to the village. I wanted to leave Athens. This was the main idea. If I could move to the United States [it would be nice, but] with my child I had many difficulties. Having a child I couldn’t do the things I would like. Therefore, I decided to go back to my place of origin, mainly for security reasons for my daughter. Otherwise, I wouldn’t know where I would have gone” (ID 53)

Others have moved to Western Greece in search for employment opportunities. In fact, as the following quote reveals, because the participant found a permanent position as a civil servant she moved to the local village. As the economic environment was rather insecure, she decided to leave her job in Athens. In her opinion:

“Here [sic] there are professional opportunities. Only that. To say the truth, in the private sector you don’t have a clue up until when [you will have a job]. There is an expiration date. For a woman, the private sector is very hard.” (ID 45)

In the same vein, other interviewee worked for many years in Athens and abroad as a film and art director, but by 2012 she couldn’t get any new projects. Therefore, she decided to follow her husband to his village of origin, where he owned some land property with a house and a small farm. She decided to move to a rural area, where she never lived before. She had a new start as housewife, small food producer and shop owner, while she also took certain initiatives to promote culture and art in the area. The way she describes her position is that “[I] came here and became an economic migrant”. (ID 4)

On the other hand, those who decided to move to Western Greece in pursuit of a better and less stressful quality of life have been impressed by their new way of life: As one interviewee argues, she started early in her life working as a journalist and lived for many years in Athens, but decided to leave the city and follow her husband to the countryside so that her children get a better quality of life and raised in a better environment. She says:

“I wasn’t acquainted with the countryside before. I started working since I was nineteen...and didn’t stop working until I came here [sic]. I decided to come here, it was

my choice. Because I thought that - without having knowledge of the place, since I never lived here before – the quality of life was better, especially when you want to have a family. And I was fed up in the sense that I had lived my life. And my age was such... Also before, other people living in rural areas told me that the countryside is nice, but I couldn't understand. When you live in a place where everything is fast and you run all the time...When I came here I started living and distanced [from the former way of living] which is impressive.” (ID 13)

For the **Romanian** immigrants, different factors contributed to the decision to migrate and to search new, probably better opportunities elsewhere. These factors differed depending on the individual characteristics of the migrant, his/her personal and household dreams about the potential living standards in the new destination country, the available information from family or friends' networks regarding employment opportunities and living conditions and family reunification in the country of destination. When asked in which area they feel “at home” some feel that they are ‘in between places’. They left Romania with the dream to return once sufficient money was earned but after spending many years in Greece, living in Greece becomes an attractive option as well . This is what one migrant told us during the interview:

“My spouse doesn't want it but I say to her... we should buy a house here [in Greece]. Think about it, I say, (...) We will buy a house here and our son can grow up here. It's nice, there is the sea (nearby). I've been thinking about it for the last two years (...) I would like it. Because it has been 15 years now here...” (ID 19, Male, Interviewed in Western Greece)

Thus, migrants leave their areas of origin with the intention of returning, once they have accumulated sufficient funds, however, in time, they become attached to the receiving place as well. They end up being “caught in between places”, start to value the quality of life in the receiving areas and consider settling in. This also implies sending fewer remittances to the origin area and investing more in the host area.

Standard of living

To start with, all **residents** agreed with the idea that the local quality of life had severely deteriorated during the last 5 to 10 years. However, this change in local living standards was not attributed to migration and the presence of migrants, but to the unprecedented economic crisis that Greece has been experiencing since 2009/ 2010. In fact, this crisis has been the most severe economic crisis that any developed democracy has faced during the last decades. The local respondents, hence, did not perceive the worsening of local conditions as result of the presence of migrants in the area, but to the continuous economic recession. Actually, many locals argued that the severe economic crisis had affected migrants as well. According to one of the respondents:

‘before [the crisis] this place was a paradise, now things are really low, and people during the crisis do not go out much, the economic crisis has played a very big role in all of that, people are not going out [they do not have any money to go out] at all to spend any money’ (ID 42).

Although many local people considered migrants to be hit by the economic crisis as well, some of the respondents believed that the severe economic crisis had affected local people's perception of migration. They thought that the economic crisis might have created a less hospitable environment for migrants and had negatively influenced local attitudes towards migration:

'This is how it used to be, the Greeks were playing the role of the entrepreneur and they had the foreign workers working in the fields,.....the economic crisis has changed the way we see migration, especially for the middle classes that they have taken the most severe blow' (ID 81).

There were, however, also positive effects on the perceptions of migration and migrants in the area:

"Migration to the area has helped the area, it has created more of a dynamism, it has helped the area economically and demographically. It has also helped the local shops and the local economy. (ID 49)

For the **Romanian** immigrants, different narratives emerged. On the one hand there is a comparison between "here" and "there", a distinction between "then" and "now" and a comparison between "rural" areas and "urban" places. In general the majority of the interviewees consider their standard of living as improved since they have migrated.

Comparing living costs between Romania and Greece, the majority of the interviewees argue that the cost of living is less in Romania.

"In general, it is cheaper. There are restaurants which are more expensive in Romania. There are shops that are almost like in Greece. But overall, in general, life is cheaper in Romania. From the doctor to the supermarket and so on." (ID 22, Female, Interviewed in Western Greece).

A general remark is that sometimes the term "destination area" and "origin area" has a very 'local' character, as some of the interviewees compare their village in Romania with their current village in Greece in terms of infrastructure, wages, etc.

Employment

In terms of employment, some **residents** mentioned that immigration into the area meant more labour available:

The agricultural farmers can find labour, there is no problem finding agricultural workers. Because if you were expecting from Greeks to work in the fields, then nothing would be done, there not any Greeks to work in these kind of jobs (...)

Romanian migrants follow different occupational trajectories depending on the duration of their residence in the country, their educational qualifications, their Greek language proficiency and their legal status. The latter is particularly important for those Romanian migrants who arrived in Greece before the launch of migration agreements between the Romania and Greece, which legalised migration before European enlargement. In addition, the recent economic recession disrupted and challenged social and economic incorporation of Romanian migrants in Greece. In certain cases, the impact of the downturn upon the lives of Romanian migrants were devastating and empirical evidence suggests that some either returned to their country of origin or migrated to other countries of Western Europe (for example in UK, in Germany, and so on).

Initially, Romanian migrants filled in occupations particularly in the secondary labour market, however, during the years that followed some Romanian migrants experience upward occupational mobility. One participant describes how he eventually moved from agriculture to construction, which was by the collapse of the construction sector. During the crisis, however, he managed to establish a local wood processing facility. For him, the local networks he had established acted as a buffer during the economic crisis. He attributes his upward social mobility despite the economic crisis to his investment in building a *'good' reputation--a good 'name' in local society (ID 18, Male, Interviewed in Western Greece)*. Hence, Romanian migrants themselves consider social networks to play a crucial role for the success of any entrepreneurial activity.

Access to services

Although most **residents** did not believe that the local quality of life had been compromised because of the migrants' presence, some indicate that migrants were a 'strain' to the system of social services. Some local respondents argued about the alleged negative effect of migrant students in local schools. According to them, local schools are full of migrant students. As a result, people think that the educational level was getting lower and lower and that supposedly was particularly damaging for local Greek kids:

"Of course there is, there are too many of them (migrants in schools), I do not have children myself, but from what I hear, schools are getting worse and worse, the level of education that is offered is getting lower and lower, the quality of education has deteriorated (ID 42).

On the other hand, another respondent argued the exact opposite. He said that schools had remained open because of the presence of migrant students. Otherwise, the local schools would have closed, and the few Greek kids would have to be transported on a daily basis to schools further away:

'social services have not been negatively affected by the presence of migrants, especially schools, the opposite, the schools remained opened because of the presence of migrant students, the local schools would have closed, this is demographic, it has to do with demography' (ID 49).

The emotional

Most **residents** did their best to express any emotions about migration. Most of the times, they referred to migration and the presence of migrants in the areas in a detached and rational way irrespectively if their overall narratives were positive or negative. For instance, one respondent mentioned that the local co-existence with migrants was a simple necessity. It was not something that the local people either enjoyed or hated; local multicultural living was simply a necessity. According to this particular respondent:

'the locals and the migrants are doing as they are doing, either they want to live together or not, the locals and the migrants that live here permanently, they have to live together, this is how it is' (ID 44).

Others distinguish between migrants as such and the migrants they know personally. Generally, the latter are viewed more positively than the former.

'with the migrants that live here, with the migrants I know, and they live here with us, I try to help them, sometimes, I assist them with different things and I let them eat or drink for free [her family owns a local tavern], and if they need a job I will tell them, of course it depends on the person asking too, but generally, I am friendly and I help' (ID 50).

The **Romanian** immigrants themselves, generally, described 'adaptation' to the new place as 'not easy'. From difficulties in learning the language, to finding the first job, to bureaucratic obstacles in the first years and so on. Different narratives are also evident when considering their life cycle, their family situation and the location of the family. Being with their family clearly facilitates a sense of belonging with the area of residence. Nevertheless, many migrants remember the first years as a 'family' sacrifice when one of the parents migrated to Greece while the other stayed in Romania with the children. The emotional burden seemed sometimes unbearable. The economic crisis had also impacted the Romanian migrants' aspirations and migration plans in urban and rural areas.

"When I came in Greece, I was thinking it will be just for a few years to earn some money and to go back. Then truth be told I could not go back [I have organized my life here]. And now jobs are scarce. And I am thinking whether to leave or not" (ID 66, Interviewed in Western Greece).

The relational

Local levels of interaction among **residents** were narrated in different ways and represent the whole spectrum of interaction from a basic one to a closer coming together. Firstly, many respondents argued that the interaction between locals and migrants were rather basic. many respondents said that they did not really have a friend with a migrant background. For instance, one interviewee told us the following:

Friends? No, I do not have any friends (with a migrant background), any Albanian friends or whatsoever. (ID 38).

some explained that they interacted with migrants through the professional lives. For instance, ID 49, again, told us:

'of course, I am dealing with migrants, I have many of them as clients, if they have any kind of dealings with the state, with the courts, I represent them, if they want to buy a house, I can also help them out. Of course, I have dealings with them' (ID 49).

Close relationships/ friendships between the respondents and migrants were scarce. This, however, did not apply for kids with a migrant background. For instance, one respondent told us that he is the godfather of a kid with a migrant (Albanian) background.

'I am the godfather to an Albanian kid, I became 15 years ago, his parents had a small business here, they decided to go to Athens, and then they regretted it and they came back here, in the summer they took the kids back to Albania and the kids wanted to leave on the same day, the kid that is our godchild now is a student in Patras, his parents are now back in Albania, but he does not go to Albania to see his parents at all' (ID 81).

For some **Romanian** migrants, religion is considered as an important factor for their feeling of integration and being part of the community too. Again, sharing of the same facilities, accommodates a feeling of familiarity – schools for parents, and churches for believers. In fact, in both countries the vast majority of population is of Christian Orthodox religion and they share many traditions and cultural religious practices. Interestingly, the Romanian migrants tell a somewhat different story about local interactions and friendships than the local residents. Some indicate that they both Greek and Romanian family and friends. One respondent, for instance, states that the interaction with the local community facilitated him to learn the language and to feel more integrated: *"How will you ever learn Greek if you don't talk to the Greeks?"* (ID 18, Male, Interviewed in Western Greece)

Many Romanian interviewees feel that they belong to two countries and are ambivalent about which country to call 'home'. In most of the cases, family location plays an important part on which they feel more connected. The following quotes are telling:

And I go to Romania and when I go, I really like it, but after a few weeks somehow inside yourself you feel you want to come back [to Greece]. You go out in your town and - think of it – you are stranger (ID 19, Male Interviewed in Western Greece).

Conclusion

The case study investigated the relationship between migration and perceived socio-spatial inequality for three groups in the Western Greece Region, long-term residents, internal migrants and Romanian immigrants. The findings suggest that residents evaluated their areas to have worsened in terms of standard of living but attributed this negative change to the 2009/2010 crisis and not to immigration. Although some residents perceived immigrants to put a strain on social services, most respondents perceived immigration into the area to be a necessity, and not something they felt particularly strong about. Lastly, very few residents reported interactions with immigrants or having immigrant friends.

In general, two groups of internal migrants to Western Greece may be discerned. First, those who move because of the need to cope against the impact of the economic recession. Interestingly as already said some of them have prior connections to Western Greece while others don't. Second, those who move to Western Greece in search for a better quality of life and/or improve their wellbeing. Broadly, both groups perceive differently their place of residence, while they see different prospects for these places and voice different infrastructure needs.

For the Romanian immigrants, the costs of living were lower in Romania, although most agreed that their standard of living has improved since migrating. Many had migrated to Greece following the fall of the communist regimes in Romania or following spouses who moved there first. Generally, upon arrival, most respondents found jobs in the secondary market in Greece, although some experienced upward mobility in time. For many Romanian respondents, adaptation to the local area has been difficult, between learning the language, finding a job and bureaucratic hurdles, however, many felt integrated into the local society. They referred to the cultural affinity and the shared religion of the two countries, as the bridge to local integration.

Asylum seekers and refugees in Greece

Profile of the research area

The interviews were conducted in the regions of Attica and Western Greece. The latter has an extensive coastline and borders the Ionian Sea and the Gulf of Patras. The plains of the Regional Unit of Ilia in the Western Greece are the largest in the Peloponnese, but the region is also known for the coastal wetlands of Kotichi and Kaïafa, which are areas of rare natural beauty and ecological value. The demographic development of both regions has already been described in the case studies on labour migrants and it not repeated here.

Methodology

The interviews were carried out in English and Arabic. In total three persons (two males, one female) carried out interviews in English, while one female of Arab origin conducted many interviews with Syrian refugees in Arabic, which made the interviewees feel more comfortable sharing details about their lives. Many of them actually told the Arab speaking interviewer that she 'innately' understood what they are going through, in contrast to a European interviewer. Many of the questions were culturally sensitive for Arabs and particularly the questions regarding religion. In all the interviews conducted in Arabic the interviewer apologized in advance for asking them about it, because in the Arab culture, it is considered a big violation of privacy and even rude to ask such questions. All interviewers asked questions in the most objective and polite manner.

The location of the interview seldomly affected the participants' willingness to share personal details about themselves. However, when the interviews took place in a café, the participants seemed more relaxed and willing to share more information, compared to the participants who were interviewed in the camps. The participants in the camps would at first seem reserved, and eager to make a positive impression. General impressions about the camp were quite positive. In all the interviews conducted in

the camps, the refugees seemed happy to be there; or else they did not seem to be miserable. Moreover, the camp was clean in general, and the people were friendly. There were some volunteers with whom the Syrians seemed to be getting along well. However, we did not see a lot of interaction between Syrians. In the cafés where the interviews were conducted, the participants seemed very much at ease. We actually noticed that they would intentionally order the cheapest item on the menu, so that the interviewers would not pay a lot, even though we never expressed any concern over this.

In most cases, the male participants were quiet and did not provide a lot of information in the beginning of the interviews. Once they felt more relaxed, they would share a lot of information with the interviewers. On the other hand, all the female participants directly opened up, and most of them shared with the female interviewers that it felt great for them to finally share their stories. Interestingly enough, many participants told the interviewer of Arab origin that they shared things with her that they would never have shared if they were interviewed by a Greek person. Education made a lot of difference for the refugees' responses, even more so than age, gender, language proficiency or whether they were here with their families or alone. The educated respondents all stressed the importance of learning the Greek language, and that establishing themselves in the country of current residence, was very important. The less educated respondents did not prioritize learning Greek or English and were generally neutral about learning the language.

The participants' impressions of Greece revealed two opposing views: they either expressed their love for Greece, or they expressed how much they disliked Greece. Very few participants were neutral. Interestingly, all those who expressed negative feelings for Greece were interviewed in Arabic, which suggests that they felt much better to express themselves and they were not affected by the presence of the Greek interviewers.

Results and findings

Out of the 30 interviewees, 15 were interviewed in the Western Greece (rural area) and 15 in Athens (urban areas). All those interviewed in the rural area were found in the Open Reception Camp in Myrsini, while from those interviewed in Athens 7 live in various Open Reception Camps and 8 in apartments and houses. Ten of the interviewees are women representing one third of the total number of Syrians interviewed. Apart from four interviewees who are 40, 45, 54 and 57 years respectively, the rest is between 19 and 36 years old. Less than half of the respondents are married (14 people) - with the exception of two who are divorced but with children - while the rest are single and either staying in Greece with the rest of their family or alone. A significant share of the respondents (12 people) have secondary education and around the same number (11 people) have primary or no education, while the rest (7 people) have tertiary education (or some years). In terms of ethnic group, the vast majority of respondents are Arab Syrians, while a little less than one third (9 people) are Kurdish Syrians. The ethnic group component is not used in the analysis, but it is important for understanding interviewees' positioning and argumentation in favour of various issues having to do with their living in Syria, before leaving the country, the reasons for moving out of the country and their future plans.

The family relations of the respondents play a vital role in mobilizing and helping them to take decisions, supporting them during harsh times and attracting their support for securing their movement

out of Syria. There are various types of arrangements between the respondents and their nuclear and extended families. Those who have their families in Syria are thinking of how to support them and/or possibly assist their exodus to Europe. Since families also play the role of an anchor, those who have members of their extended family in Germany and other European countries are thinking of their movement to Europe more realistically.

Migration decisions and determinants

Certainly, it is not easy to describe the reasons that pushed (or enabled) Syrians to migrate and, more particularly, to select Greece as their destination. First of all, the movements of Syrians are considered complex since they do not simply move from one country to another, but they rather followed a multitude of trajectories some of which are leading them to Greece. We have seen in the previous section that the majority of the respondents just wanted to leave Syria due to the fact that they felt fear for their lives and insecurity about their personal and family future. This does not necessarily qualify for their main reasons to migrate to Greece, but as trigger mechanisms pushing them out of their country. There are at least three types of movers: first of all, we may identify those who felt that their life was threatened and decided to leave everything behind and seek for a safe place to stay and start a new life; second, there are those who decided to leave Syria because they did not want to participate in any way in the rapidly evolving political, ethnic and religious strife in their country and in searching for an alternative host country European countries loomed large; and third there is another group of people who just followed the outflow in search for better living opportunities given that their country faced various struggles and the ghosts of the past were reanimated. It is possible that there are combinations of these three types of movers depending on each respondents' rationale and/or reaction to interviewers' questions. In fact, the reasons for peoples' migration are closely related to their expectations, and it remains unclear which comes first - the main reasons or the specific expectations linked to their movement? In the following quotes the reasons for the respondents' movement are intertwined with their expectations:

"I was living in Aleppo, so I was safe before, and then the bombing started so I escaped like the others. I escaped the bombing and moved to Afrin. In Afrin it was difficult because around it all the roads were destroyed and there was no medical assistance. So, I decided to go. And then I moved to Turkey. I went to Izmir and Istanbul, I found a job, and as time passed it became more difficult, high prices for houses, for food. (...) I heard from some of my friends that Greece and Greek people is better than Turkey and Turkish people, is supporting... they are more kind, and I came for that." (#26).

All three excerpts may be considered, by and large, typical of Syrians' reasons for migration and expectations connected to their movement to Greece. In the first quote, the interviewee left his country because of the political turmoil and the harsh living conditions, but 'selected' Greece as a (temporary) destination due to other peoples' suggestions to go to Greece which they considered to be 'better' and 'more tolerant' in comparison with Turkey. Admittedly, information plays a vital role for all the respondents who make use, at all times – irrespectively of whether they mention it or not –, of their relatives' and friends' suggestions, tips, support and encouragement. Information is part and parcel of

their expectations that are continuously build up on the basis of new information and previous knowledge. The second quote proves that people, especially educated people, re-evaluate the existing circumstances, based on actual evidence. Some people become pragmatic and redefine their expectations based on their access to resources objectives. In doing so, they formulate new ambitions, and develop new plans. The third quote depicts a specific case of a female interviewee who arrived in Greece with the explicit purpose to move to Germany where her brother was at the time. The short exchange between the female and the representative of the government asylum service illustrates that the asylum system is structured in way, including formal categorisations and administrative pathway, that do not fit the migrants' self-defined identity and aspirations. Being structurally constrained to follow their own pat in life, is often perceived as unjust.

Finally, the majority of the respondents say that they feel 'at home'. in Greece, most of all because it reminds them of Syria. Various aspects such as the landscape, the geomorphology, the environmental setting, peoples' attitudes and the cultural attributes are conceived as similar between the two countries. Many respondents testify that the cultural distance between Syrians and Greeks is not unbridgeable and Greece may be 'their second home':

"I think Syrian people and Greek people are the same." (#71)

"The country that understands my value. The country that appreciates my work, my labour. The one that respects my humanity. And who helps me. This is my country. Not the country who kills me and kills my family, and throws me in jail, and tortures me. This country is not my home. You know what I mean? I mean, I am being very honest. I mean, just waking up each morning, having a coffee with my wife, going out with her to buy some stuff, and I tell her, 'how can I not love Greece?'. We talk about it, my wife and I, and we say that, if only there were more job opportunities... otherwise, I would never leave Greece." (#77)

Certainly, there are those who do not feel at home in Greece. They rather argue for the opposite. In their experience they are having a bad time and are not welcome in Greece; they are feeling miserable living in the country. A female respondent describes some of the reasons that make her feel unwelcome in Greece:

"So, the situation here [in Greece] is very bad. Like you are forced to follow a religion, and you have to follow it. Honestly, here in Greece, if you weren't Christian, they don't accept you. I used to wear a head scarf [the hijab]. I removed the head scarf I couldn't live here while wearing it. I couldn't, they didn't welcome me with it at the hotel." (#74)

Considering the previous quotes, we should underline the comparative aspect which is important to people when they are asked whether they feel 'at home' in Greece. According to what the respondents mention in the interviews, the comparison between Turkey and Greece along with Germany and Greece tend to favour Greece. This may arise from the fact that the interviewees wanted to express positive feelings about Greece as their host country.

Standard of living

The material wellbeing and the quality of life of Syrians improved in general compared to the situation that they faced at the time just before leaving their country of origin. Moreover, the improvement of the material wellbeing for Syrians should be seen in comparison with the conditions the respondents faced in Turkey. Nearly everyone says that before conflicts started in Syria, life was considered very good and people were happy. The following quotes illustrate this feeling, which is accompanied with resentment for the events that put the country in turmoil:

*“Syria before the war was like heaven. We were living in heaven. Everything, everything.”
(#78)*

“When we were still in Syria, before the events, it would never occur to any Syrian person, to leave Syria. But when the problems started happening, the people... how can I explain it... people from outside, people who were foreigners, they came and played with the people’s minds. Everyone became an enemy.” (#76)

Compared to the current situation in Syria, life outside Syria is considered better. In fact, some of our respondents, as mentioned above, found shelter and tried to (re)start their lives in Turkey. It is not clear whether their migration to Turkey was part of a wider plan to prepare for their journey to Greece and more particularly to Europe or an (spontaneous) choice that occurred to them due to their need to get a living which would allow them to return to Syria in a distant future. We have the claims of those who lived in Turkey – for some years – and their rationalisation of how they thought about leaving Turkey and going to Greece. One of the more educated respondents offers an interesting account of his actions while being in Turkey and the main material reasons for leaving Turkey and moving to Greece. Surely, at the time he was staying in Turkey he did not know the conditions in Greece in any detail, although some information passes through social media and personal networks. It is striking to see that the problems he faced in Istanbul added to a perceived lack of perspective if he chose to stay there. He also reveals that he searched other cities in Turkey, like Ankara, in order to find better living and working conditions, before starting his journey to Greece:

“Istanbul is so nice, but it’s horrible if you work and live there. It’s so stressful. You should work 10-11 hours per day and the money are few. You cannot get a high salary. Because you are foreigner and you also came from Syria and you don’t have insurance and papers. (...) Actually, [I worked there for] two years and a half. But, not in the same place. And, I stayed about six months without working (...). (#70)

“[I didn’t feel in Turkey] Like my home. Not that much, even if it’s a Muslims area. Yes, let’s say conditions. And in Turkey you can find good people, but somehow they don’t like foreigners, even if you are speaking their language. That is the opposite of what I see here [in Greece]. (...) Here I see more than there. Let’s say that the conditions and the situations

and the people, I feel much safer than in Aleppo in some areas here, because the buildings are so similar, even the people the weather, everything. (#70)

Turning now to the discussion of how Syrians feel in Greece we need to refer to three aspects: First, the initial experience of all newly arriving Syrians (as for all arriving nationalities) is from the five (5) Centres for Reception and Identification placed in the islands of the Aegean Sea where they may spend some months before they are transferred to the mainland. Compared to the other arriving populations a higher proportion of Syrians are transferred to the mainland, while also over 97% are given asylum or refugee status. Second, the vast majority of those who apply for asylum or refugee status are given by the Greek state – on the basis of the financial support provided by the European Commission – a monthly stipend (150 euro per person) to cover for their food and primary needs and, also, accommodation in numerous Open Reception Centres located Athens, major cities and the mainland as well as in a multitude of apartments contracted by NGOs on behalf of UNHCR. On the basis of the above remarks, it becomes clear that it is important to distinguish between their view concerning their first months on the islands and their attitude towards their living in Open Reception Camps and apartments at a later stage. For example, their lives on the islands is considered way beneath their expectations and they certainly felt very unhappy during their time in those facilities. The same goes for the other Camps scattered in the country. The experiences of many respondents are traumatic despite that they did not live there for really long periods of time:

“In the camp in [Mytilene] island was so difficult. So many numbers of people, you know, in a small place. In the island there are organizations that made different files for each one and his number (...) and he came here [to the Open Reception Centre in Myrsini – Western Peloponnese] early because of his small kids.” (#26)

“When I arrived at Chios, I stayed 3 or 4 days at the camp, living was so bad, horrible in camp. And also, the people scum. I went to the UN, [I said that] I have many problems (...). 3-4 days were hell. I went to Chios [city], rented a house, stayed there for 3 months, I went to UN, they said there’s a travel to Andravida [where the Open Reception Centre is located].” (#30)

The vast majority of respondents who were hosted in the Open Reception Camp in Myrsini (Western Peloponnese) argue that although they have much better housing conditions, compared to the situation in other camps in the country, they are thinking of the fact that they are just staying there and not doing anything. Most people who live there, as in other Open Reception Centres across the country, are hosted for the period starting with their application for asylum or refugee status and up until they receive their full legal documents. In the meantime, they are allowed to stay without paying any bills (i.e. for rent, water, electricity) and they are allocated a stipend (monthly allowance) for their living expenses. One of the respondents said when he was asked how he feel about staying in the specific Camp: *“Here we are living in Syria, not living in Greece.” (#30).*

The following quote offers a picture of what most of the respondents who live in this Open Reception Centre believe about their lives. Despite the positive side that they are feeling safe and have

secured shelter and food, they are dissatisfied due to the fact that they seem themselves ‘stopped’, ‘on hold’ or ‘in limbo’, like waiting too long for something to happen in their lives, while at the same time they are anxious to get their lives going:

“I think that people, humans, cannot stand living like we are in the camp. So, you know, we have long free time, we don’t know what to do. humans must do something, if it’s his job or anything else, so it is a bit boring here, yes. For me, it’s my opinion. I want to find job, to continue my life, like everybody around the world. (...) Yes, I think. For me yes. It’s a waiting period.” (#25)

Moreover, other problems that people find during their living in this Camp is that they are in the middle of nowhere. If they would like to go to a big city like Patras they have some costs to travel there. In general, they feel that they are distant from the main markets and far away from Greeks since they do not have many opportunities to meet and interact with the locals. Many respondents mention that once they tried to make use of medical services in the local hospitals (e.g. located in Pyrgos and Patras) they faced significant language problems, since they could not find qualified interpreters to explain their symptoms and other issues to the medical personnel and/or to understand what to do in terms of medical care and so on. It seems that many of the respondents had visited a hospital during their stay in Greece or the area. Surprisingly there were no complaints about the efficiency of the medical system in Greece:

“Our camp I think is okay, but in the medical services we have some problems with the interpreter. So, we talked about that, and that the interpreter couldn’t translate exactly what we want, and nothing happened. But I think the services are okay for us. Just to continue our life. (...) The food is good, we are cooking by ourselves, we are buying what we want from shops... Yes, it is easy because we have Syrian products in Athens. So, we have some people going to Athens. (...) Yes, we tell them to bring something, what we want.” (#25)

Employment

A female respondent mentioned that she had to work in Istanbul for long hours but left from Turkey because she felt there was no respect for Syrians and that there was no future for her kids. Please note that this respondent comes from a wealthy family in Syria and in Turkey was the first time in her life that she had to work for a living:

“[I worked in Istanbul] With sewing. Like a tailor. Yes [it was a good job]. But it was with the Kurdish people and the Alawi people. But it was tiring. [We worked] from 8 in the morning to 7:30 at night. But there was only 1 hour of break, at around 2 pm... (...). Well, in Turkey, there was no respect for a Syrian person, and there was no future for my children. I left for Jouan and Ervan [the two kids]” (#29).

Generally, the respondent seem to indicate s that the Syrians were considered as cheap unskilled labour force in turkey in both urban and regional labour markets. Moreover, many of those who have worked in Turkey have learnt Turkish, and share the religion of the local population; these issues are seen

as preconditions for successful integration into the host society. However, it seems from the following quote that there is a general feeling of disappointment on the side of Syrian people who lived and worked in Turkey:

“I mean, you are doing the interviews, ask any Syrian, any Syrian, and ask them how it was in Turkey. Ask them, ‘if you worked for a Turkish man, is there a possibility that they he will cheat you?’ and let them tell you the stories, of how many times the Turkish took advantage of Syrian workers and cheated them. As simple as that. You work for him for two months, and then you ask him, ‘okay, I need to be paid now’, and he tells you, ‘get out’.” (#77)

As for their integration into the labour market, there are numerous quotes stating the problems that they are facing in getting paid employment in the local labour market. We observe different attitudes on the part of respondents in relation to their integration into the local labour market, with exploitation as one of the main problems recorded (as in the case of Turkey):

“Yes, normally I would like to find a job here, but it is difficult because of language. I don’t know English, just Arabic and Kurdish, so it’s more difficult to find a job. Some of the people who were working in the fields couldn’t take their money from ... I heard about that and I said ok I not work.” (#26)

Yes, [there are some jobs] here. But not for long time. Maybe 1 or 2 days. But there is work in the farms. No [I haven’t worked up until now], because I couldn’t take part, it’s very heavy. So even if I want to find a job, the language is a heavy. (#25)

Of course, not all respondents are satisfied with the job that they have. The main reason for this dissatisfaction is connected to whether their work secures them a living in Athens, where the cost of living is high. The transition from the situation of being supported by the government to a situation where the recognised refugee or asylum seeker is left alone to face the harsh reality of the labour market is very difficult. A female Syrian who lives in Athens suddenly recognises that she will have to use her remuneration for rent and the other costs of living which is not easy at all:

“I’ll tell you about my job. I distribute clothes. And you know, it’s not a big salary, so that I can rent a room. We’re talking about 600-700 euros. I am not in Germany or Paris to rent something expensive. So, the manager told me, that I have to stick to the contract, and that’s it. I told her, ‘okay, my contract finishes, and before that, you were treating me like a human being. Now that the contract is almost done, I became an animal’. So yeah, that’s all.” (#74)

In general, respondents express their concern over the fact that even though they would like to stay in Greece, stay might be impossible because they cannot easily find a job. At the same time, when asked if they try to learn Greek the vast majority said that they are not even trying to learn the language, since they are trying to get to another EU country and more particularly to Germany. This contradiction shows that most respondents do not think about staying in Greece, but seek to where they expect to find

the best opportunities for their future life. Only a small number seem to be thinking the possibility of remaining in Greece and not trying to migrate to Western Europe.

The emotional

As one of the respondents openly admits, family plays a crucial role for Syrians in a manner similar as for Greek people. The family offers a safety nets that includes all members of Syrian families: *“We are like the Greek, and the relationship between the family members are very strong”* (#69). The main target of their lives remains connected to the life improvement of their family members, i.e. regarding their education, their food security and the wellbeing of the younger members of the family. The following excerpt shows the commitment of the older members to secure a better living for their children:

“In my life, most of it already passed. There is a little of my life left. But my children’s life is what matters now. They are the ones that have to... build their future. Build their careers, to learn, to work... and to know right from wrong.” (#78)

A number of respondents became conscious of the new opportunities arising from them, along with the misinformation about Europe. For the younger respondents there is not a big difference between Greece and Europe, since they realize that by living in Greece, they are participants in the European economy and society. They also seem to realize that living in Turkey does not allow them to participate in the European domain. Therefore, inevitably they see a divide between the Middle East and the European society and focus on the non-economic aspects of the two different geographical areas (or parts of the world). They simply mention that “it is not only about working” but other issues such as freedom, security and liberalism become more important in people’s lives:

“So, here in Europe, we found something... we discovered that we can do something. Regarding being independent in Turkey, the only thing to do there is to work, and there isn’t... like it’s only about working. All your life is just working there. You don’t see another human being, only work. And for any Syrian working in Turkey, he will not be comfortable deep down. He will not feel comfortable. Here, if he searches for a job, he will find. Europe is good regarding this, and even racism, we are not suffering from it here.” (#82)

The notion of the European citizen remains important, since the idea is to get rid of the stigma of being refugee or asylum seeker, and to become a ‘normal’ citizen who seeks for the improvement of his living and reinstating one’s own self-respect. The following quote from the interview with a female respondent illustrates that apart from caring very much for her children’s future – also mentioned above as a basic function of Syrians – she would like to regain her self-respect by denying the government allowance and fighting for her economic independence. This seems to be a matter of pride and ethics on the part of individual respondents who would like to claim back their identity and their moral code of behaviour:

“What would I like to do? I would like to get the passports, go to my parents, try to get the refugee status again in Germany, and if it didn’t work out, to come back here to Greece, and start officially establishing my life. To try to get out of the refugee status in Greece

and try to be more like a citizen here. But I mean, even if I went to Germany, I also want to be like a citizen there. I mean, personally, I like to... I mean for me personally, I don't know if others agree, but for me, I don't like to be a burden on anyone. You know? Even if it's the government giving the money, and the government... I mean the government is already paying for thousands and thousands of others like me, and even if they have the money for it, I still don't like to gain money in this way. I like to work for my money, from my own hands. I like to give my children food that I was able to provide from my hard work. (...) I don't want to be a burden on anyone. And I don't want anyone giving me money, and then owing anyone anything.” (#76)

For some respondents it is not easy to present the real facts to their families back in Syria, who would like to know that their kids are leading a successful life in their new destinations. Therefore, they pretend to their family (in their country of origin) that they are fine; in demonstrating their success they become an example for the rest of the extended family and the wider community:

What I did... but you know, despite all that, every time I talk to my parents, I make them believe that I am living in a wonderful place. I mean it. I tell them, “wow, I am so happy, you should see my life, what I'm doing, and I have a passport now, and legal papers, and I can work and send you money later, and I will do this and that for you.” I tell this to my parents. If I tell my father the truth that I am miserable, or that I didn't eat today, I know that my father wouldn't eat either. Believe me he wouldn't eat. It's very difficult. Parents are very sensitive, and I can't make them worry and break their heart. I can't do this to them, while they are in another country, and I am in another country. So, it's very difficult.” (#74)

Finally, there is a tendency among the young and mobile Syrians to take the new perspective of free mobility within Europe for granted and consider themselves as the agents of their new, mobile, future. Many of them feel that they will never go back to Syria since a 'new brave world' has opened up in front of them and they seek for the benefits of cosmopolitanism and the freedom it stands for. These new possibilities are to be exploited by those who are ready to take them, while Syrian families follow a more conventional trajectory towards the beacon of a long-established European welfare state.

The relational

Only a small number of the respondents, more frequently the younger and the single, seem to have closer relationships with the Greek population. Those who live in Greece with their families and especially the older persons do not have the capacity or the will to integrate and interact with the local population. They are more prone to move on towards a Western European country; to pursue their dreams or 'imagination' of the ideal destination country. Life in Greece may be happy or unhappy depending on each respondents' expectations and aspirations. There are those who see that they are not happy in Greece due to the fact that they had bad experiences while living in Greece:

“Well... I will not lie to you... I'm not happy, but I'm also not unhappy. I mean, of course I wish to be better. Everyone always wants to improve themselves. But there is nothing bad

here, I mean. I mean, okay, we suffered, you know, when we first came. But also, there are a lot of racist people in Greece. A lot. But there are also very good people, you feel that they have good hearts. Like, you feel that some Greeks here feel for us Syrians, like they sympathize to what we went through. You know what I mean? But also, some Greeks treat the Syrians like insects, who came to their country. You know? And there are people, who are amazing, truly amazing. So, I am not generalizing, because I would be not giving the good people enough credit. (#76)

On the other hand, a young male Syrian says that he leads a nearly normal life in Greece by participating in the host society. It appears that the younger generation of Syrians is more open to the host society compared to those who have families and, inevitably, show higher propensity to be insecure due to the numerous obligations they have against the family members. The young Syrian feels that Greece represents something important to him, which he can easily justify through the fact that he is making a living in the country:

“Yes, in Greece I felt this feeling of being home after a while. Like... I found that I am eating and drinking, I am working, I am being productive in this country; I am going out, I am living a normal life... For me, I feel like it is my home, my family, my heart... We are building our future here. I worry about Greece like I worry about Syria. I love Greece like I love my country. I feel like I owe this country so much. And the good thing here, is that when I look around me, I feel like I am the same as the Greek guys my age. I really feel like it is my home, and I am willing to protect it.” (#83)

Another aspect of Syrians living in Greece is that living in Greece helps them to understand how the Western countries and more particularly European countries operate and that they may offer a number of (material) opportunities to the people living in them along with seemingly endless freedom. They discover that they may improve their lives considerably, compared to their previous lives in Syria (before the conflicts). In this context, the following quote becomes understandable:

“When I was in Turkey, I told my mom, I told her, ‘I can’t stand it in Turkey, I am going back to Syria, I cannot stand it anymore.’ But when I arrived here, in Greece, there is no way I would consider going back to Syria.” (#76)

Conclusion

Overall, the challenge in this particular case study was to rediscover the connections between the origin and the destination countries; since there is not a direct linkage between an origin and a destination country. We rather find probabilities that illustrate movements between Syria and Turkey, Greece, Germany, Canada and so on. It was not easy to offer a clear categorization between origin and destination since many times we had to think carefully how the different countries and regions within countries are connected through peoples’ journeys, experiences, expectations and imaginaries. There are various population movements that connect different countries without, at the same time, creating a rational model of movements. Despite the overarching trends, it remains important to analyze how the different

groups prioritize the reasons for their movement. Respondents' interpretations of reality and reasons of migration in origin and destination countries vary a great deal depending upon their objectives, expectations and aspirations which seem to change considerably during their movement from country to country. There seems to be a dynamic process according to which the respondents shift their aspirations and expectations based on the imaginaries of potential and/or real destinations. There is a significant complexity of the processes and drivers that shape our respondents' migratory trajectories, but the interaction between the moving and the indigenous populations remains limited.

It should be mentioned that Syrians in Greece face a number of challenges for their living, employment and integration, which they themselves see as limiting their wellbeing in the country. For this reason, once they receive the asylum or refugee status, they make an effort to move to another European country to improve their chances of getting a better quality of life and achieving their carefully set objectives for their family members. The main target destinations in Europe are Germany, Belgium, and France and outside Europe it is mostly Canada.

Finally, there seems to be a tendency among the young educated Syrians to exploit the various rising possibilities for movement around Europe as they consider themselves as agents of this rapidly changing setting. On the other hand, older Syrians and their families follow a more conventional trajectory towards the long-established welfare states across Europe. The return to Syria is not considered at all as a future plan or it remains a distant thought for a small number of older respondents.

2. Ireland

The Irish case study was based in County Galway in the West of Ireland, largely situated in a rural settlement, but with strong mobility patterns between the urban and rural regions of the county. The town of Tuam was the main focus of both the resident and immigrant interviews, however some Polish immigrants were living in the suburbs of Galway city, in Oranmore and Knocknacarra, and two interviews with residents were carried out in east Galway in the townlands of Mountbellew and Ballygar (both considered small rural towns). A total of 15 interviews were conducted with Polish immigrants and residents, each.

County Galway

Profile of the area

The case study was based in County Galway (Figure 4) in the West of Ireland, largely situated in a rural settlement, but with strong flow patterns between the urban and rural regions of the county. As a proportion of its resident population, Galway City was the most multi-cultural within the state with 18.6% of its residents recorded as non-Irish within the 2016 Census and of these, Polish nationals were dominant. Galway County (Outside the city area) also recorded high and consistent level of non-nationals, predominantly Polish and Lithuanian residing within the county. The flow patterns between city and county provided an interesting case study with economic, social and cultural dimensions.

Figure 4 County Galway



Statistics on Polish nations at local level in Ireland is difficult to obtain. Nonetheless, one interesting statistic which provides an insight into the length of time families or individuals are residing in the county, or their commitment to staying longer term in Ireland is visible in the increase in dual Passports issued. In 2011, no Polish immigrant in Galway had dual Passports, even though 3,434 Polish immigrants were recorded as residing in the county. By 2016 however, 266 Polish immigrants were recorded as having dual passports in county Galway.

Key areas of employment in county Galway are Health, Education, Agriculture and Construction. Health includes child and elderly care and grew to a much greater extent in comparison to national figures (17.4% compared to 13.4%).

Methodology

This case study was based in county Galway in the West of Ireland and considered a rural settlement. As a proportion of its resident population, Galway City and County is considered highly multi-cultural within, with 18.6% of its residents recorded as non-Irish within the 2016 Census. Within these 2016 figures, Polish nationals were dominant within a Galway city and county perspective. Interviews with immigrants were conducted in two regions on the outskirts of Galway City, Knocknacarra and Oranmore and the largest number of immigrants located in Tuam, County Galway, but two migrants were located in small rural villages on the outskirts of Tuam (Mountbellew and Ballygar). Interviews with residents were conducted in the Tuam area.

Selecting interviewees was somewhat difficult, with some immigrants not willing to participate, largely due to language ability. Initially local knowledge was used to locate either immigrants themselves or people connected to community groups, organisations, employment and or schools. A snowballing methodology was used here, however this had limited success. Eventually, a connection was made with the Galway Polish Society who have a very active Face Book and Social Media presence and through this they allowed a Face Book advert to be placed on their website. Via this medium, several immigrants made contact through Face Book Messenger and agreed to be interviewed. In all, it was the most successful approach, particularly due to the willingness of the participants once they received the Face Book post. A gender consideration was taken, although there was more success getting females than males to agree to participate in the process.

The interviews for the residents were selected strategically using key stakeholder within communities, NGOs or individuals that may have knowledge about migrants living in Ireland. These included; employers; people from Education – (Principle of an Educate Together School); Finance, a local School Teacher, two young people, a Social Worker and an individual from the Local Action Group.

Findings and results

The sample comprises 30 individuals, 15 Polish immigrants and 15 long-term residents. In terms of gender, 53.3% among residents and 66% among the Polish respondents are female. In terms of educational attainment, 66% of the resident respondents and 40% of the immigrant respondents are highly educated. In terms of occupations, jobs among residents included social worker, teacher, a PhD student on Sociology, while jobs among the immigrants included postdoctoral students, photographer, shop owner or beautician.

Migration decisions and determinants

A variety of reasons were put forward for interviewee's decision to immigrate. These ranged from, economic reasons to following a relative or loved one, and/or improving their English language ability. All interviewees however, suggested they wanted to expand their own personal experience of travel and experience new cultures and societies. As a result of Poland becoming part of the EU this became very achievable. One interviewee suggested that;

“Economic that was the main reason and the second reason was Polish mentality - This is only my personal opinion, I think that as a nation we are quite narrow minded and that

was the reason why as well. I believe that whoever travels and explores to have just great knowledge, you're more open to things that happen to you and that was another reason as well" (I.5).

Reasons for choosing Ireland as a migration destination were varied. Some immigrants had extended family in Ireland and in Galway in particular, however, most interviewees travelled to Ireland via friend's recommendations rather than following family. Some had very high expectations of Ireland as a modern country, but others knew little or nothing about the country before travelling. Very few had a solid or well-informed image of Ireland before travelling and some made the point that they travelled very little prior to coming to Ireland so had very little expectations. One interviewee suggested;

"I knew nothing about Ireland, no, just from the songs, from books, I know quite a lot about writers and I like music so, dance. That's it and a few movies what I like. That's it. That was my whole knowledge. Of course, I Googled how big is Ireland. What are the main cities etc. That's what I Googled and that what I checked. The internet that's it" (I. 9).

Ireland as an English-speaking country held great interest for immigrants who wanted to learn the language, but also experience a new and different culture;

"When I was in school one of my priests, it was a catholic school, one of my priests had a Polish band making rock Irish music, so there were Irish words, Irish songs from Connemara, but with the hard rock style. That was my first contact with Irish culture, I liked it, I liked it very much. I remember when I was in the UK, I bought one album with Irish music and after that it was Galway so that was the contact with Ireland" (I.9).

A number of immigrants suggested they came to Ireland for personal or relationship reasons. Female immigrants in particular followed or came with a male Polish or Irish partner and although they had additional reasons for travelling, a key reason revolved around relationships. One female immigrant suggested;

"This wasn't my choice. It was chosen for my heart. In Warsaw when I was working in the government, I met... I was invited for dinner to house of my Polish friends and they told me they also expect guest from Galway which I never heard about Galway before. They told me this handsome fellow was from Galway but he was Polish. So, I met this gentleman on this dinner and exactly 6 months later, I change all my life and I move to Ireland" (I.12).

Standard of living

In the more rural settings outside of Tuam town, no **resident** felt that life changed in any way due to immigrants, but they were very aware of national changes and maybe in the major cities rather than in Galway county. One interviewee stated:

"No I don't, I don't think so. I suppose nationally I think in terms of the housing crisis piece like it's probably an increase in population. And then obviously significant numbers of immigration have fed into the increase in population as well. So I suppose that has

probably contributed nationally to the housing crisis that is there at the moment, but I don't think here locally it probably isn't as much of an issue" (R. 7).

People living in Tuam were more aware of change due to immigration and felt that as time passes and immigrants become embedded into Irish society, change is even more evident:

"It's interesting over the last few years you see young children of migrants who maybe came over in the early 2000's and they're coming of age. They're 17/18, they're playing GAA, they're friends with my younger cousins. It's definitely added an extra layer of positivity I look at it anyway. But there are certain cultural things that have changed from my childhood that I can see in my kid's childhood or my younger cousin's childhood that weren't there when I was growing up. There has been a change, definitely. But I don't see it as a negative" (R. 11).

For the **Polish respondents**, responses differed depending on the economic circumstances and education level of the migrants prior to leaving Poland. Migrants who were educated and economically stable prior to leaving Poland and travelled for the experience, felt their quality of life did not improve or even declined in some areas, but those who travelled for economic reasons felt they have a much better life in Ireland and do not intent to return to Poland. When asked if her standard of living had improved since coming to Ireland, one woman stated:

"Not really I have the same in Poland, because maybe in the future, physical jobs or I was a factory worker so maybe that's the reason, but if I improve my English skills and if I complete my course, then I can start search for better job. So maybe then they will improve" (I. 4).

Employment

Many **residents** felt that both employment and education have been impacted due to migrants residing in Galway, but the changes are mostly positively. Schools and children have gained from the diversity of culture in the education system, but a few interviewees felt that some schools in cities nationally were impacted on due to teachers having to accommodate different languages. However, some residents also felt that there were negative impacts from an increased number of immigrant students within the system, particularly relating to the teachers ability to integrate students from different background and with a different language. One suggested,

Bigger population is going to put more stress on teachers, class size. If there was a massive increase in population, there's going to be a higher teacher to student ratio" (R. 6).

Certain sector jobs have been impacted on, particularly the trade industry, as a result of an increase in tradesmen, but this was largely in the Celtic Tiger era in Ireland rather than now. Many felt that migrants were a positive factor in the jobs market with many Polish and Eastern European carrying out jobs the Irish did not want. One interviewee suggested:

“I was a foreman in my old company and the way that my boss at the time would have treated them in conversations was terrible. He'd never really appreciate them. It was weird because they were his bread and butter really. Then the other side of it was they didn't mind doing that extra bit and obviously there was a context surrounding that. I only understood now looking back, I understand. They'd work 6 hours extra in the evening whereas the Irish lads would just want to get in the van and get home because they had something to go home to. I think some of the Polish lads were living in difficult conditions and maybe trying to make as much as they can to get back home” (R. 9). Another male interviewee suggested, *“For years there would be so many people who would have done the dirty jobs, and then all of a sudden they said no, they wouldn't do it, these people came in and said, we'll do it for cheaper, we'll do it for this. And then that kind of set the tone for the next 10 years, they probably did have a big effect on peoples employment” (R. 4).*

Employment was easily accessible by all **Polish** immigrants with many finding work within days of arriving in Ireland. However, many were overqualified for the jobs they received, which initially was not an issue, but the longer they remained in Ireland the more difficult this was perceived. A primary teacher obtained work easily once she arrived, but not in her area of expertise:

“It was really strange and surprising for me because my English was nearly nothing. So, I used to work as a teacher but I knew there was no way that I will work as a teacher. I left my CV only in five or six places and they called me another day and I didn't know even I was choices. I had no idea about choices. They offered me the work and I was really surprised because how is it? Now you can imagine, my English is not very good but 10 years ago it was seriously nearly nothing and they offered me work. I was like WOW. I will never hire myself” (I. 9).

Obtaining employment was essential for all migrants travelling for economic reasons, who initially intended to earn enough money to return and buy their own home in Poland, however with the passing of time, many interviewees settled into an Irish way of life and returning became less of a priority and obtaining enhanced employment and forging a career more of a goal.

Housing

Housing was not an issue in the initial stages of coming to Ireland for the **Polish** immigrants, with many immigrants happy to share houses with a number of friends or family, but the longer immigrants stayed in Ireland or if their immediate family increased they became more inclined to want their own rented or bought accommodation. For example, one immigrant stated: *“I rent from him for about thirteen years and then last year we bought the house, so I no pay rent anymore” (I. 12).* As Ireland returns to an enhanced economy in recent years, increased rents are also an issue for many immigrants on lower incomes. The standard of houses was also identified as an issue, particularly dealing with the cold and damp conditions in some rented accommodation;

“When I come into that house, the mushrooms were everywhere like, dampness – there is a different in Poland, it’s a different building structure. You have two walls with a cavity in it. We have one big wall half a metre thick and insulation outside would not give you any dampness inside to the building like, because the winters, heavy winters” (I. 12).

Within a rural context however, many immigrants found living in single, detached or semi-detached house a welcome experience from living in a Polish city and a large apartment complex. The opinion altered somewhat when interviewing immigrants who travelled for experience, either cultural or for work experience. In particular, one Post-Doctoral researcher felt her life in Poland was of a higher standard, particularly her accommodation experience:

No, I think my standard of living has changed and the main thing is that back in Poland I have my own flat. I bought it and I’m the owner. So, I feel that I do whatever I want and I live along with my husband. Whereas here I have to share house with other people and it’s very humbling experience when you do it in your 30’s. I think it’s okay when you do it as when you’re a student but once you’re older it’s just getting more difficult” (I. 10).

Access to services

Similar to the other issues of change, **residents** living in the smaller rural villages felt there was very little impact on services and facilities due to an increased number of immigrants living in their area. All interviewees did however feel that services and facilities in larger towns and cities were impacted. Increased numbers seeking hospital and medical services appeared to be a key issue, while housing, which is a current negative topic in Ireland was alluded to by most if not all interviewees, with one suggesting:

Two years ago, a landlord had said to me rents in six months were going to go up by €1000. And we didn’t believe that that would actually happen. And it did” (R. 13). Another stated, “Same would work with the housing, kind of system. Because of the influx you would have had a lot of people maybe crammed up in one or two houses. And there would have been more demand so there would have been demand to build. (R.15).

Many, if not all interviewees, were of the opinion that considerable change is evident in accessing services, on both a national and local level. They were also of the opinion that change is evident both positively and negatively. From a positive perspective, there is a considerable increase in the level of retail options for people, with a multitude of shops, products, restaurants and food areas to choose from, however, many residents also felt that basic services were poor in rural areas. Within a rural context, many felt that the provision of such services as transport and health were poor in comparison to what is available in the larger cities. Very few attributed this however to an influx of migrants living in the area, and felt it was an increase in the general population and a lasting impact of the recent recession that was to blame rather than the migrant population. Some residents alluded to an increase in food shops as a result of Polish migrants living in Tuam in particular and all felt it was a positive addition to the services of the town. Two different Polish shops had been established in Tuam with one resident suggesting, this added to the diversity of food and services in the town;

“Yes there are two Polish stores here. There has always been a Polish store but there is one particular one that I go into on a Friday because I like to try something different every Friday. And I have a particular preference for Polish mustard! So yeah it’s and it’s very busy. It’s a very big shop and it’s always very busy and there is lots of notices on the wall in Polish and the staff there have very good English language skills, because sometimes I ask them, what is this, what do you do with this? And they’ll tell me” (R. 1).

Concerning the **Polish** respondents, there was a mixed reaction to the availability of services and facilities, with some immigrants considering Ireland as having a reasonable standard of services and facilities in the area of health care and education. The accessibility of services was also found to be easier in Ireland than in Poland. Alternatively, some interviewees were more complementary of services in Poland, particularly in more recent years and as they return to visit Poland they see enhanced and improved services. One interviewee suggested:

“It’s easier here in Ireland to find a place for your child in a pre-school setting than in Poland. A lot of my friends have problems with finding the place. Here the private places are like to be sensitive private places but the government pays the ECC house and in Poland we don’t have something like this so it’s really nice and good. I find it better that system” (I.9).

In relation to health care, another suggested:

“About the health and everything system, I have very good experience and I have very bad experience. It could happen in Poland as well but in Poland if you are ever in trouble and you are looking for that private place, private dermatologist or dentist or something it is very easy. You take a car and you drive like 10 minutes. You have plenty of places. You just open the door and ask for an appointment and they take you. They take you; they help you, you pay, you’re fine. Here even if you want to go to a specialist you need to go to the GP and you need to wait” (I. 9).

In general, however, many immigrants initially found services and facilities in Ireland were better than Poland, however many feel that in more recent years, Polish services have improved dramatically whereas Ireland remained stagnant.

Environment

Changes to the environment were noted by many **residents**, with some suggesting that streets, parks and traffic had all seen varying degrees of change, particular an increase in traffic, but again this was not attributed to an increase in immigrant numbers to Galway. One resident stated:

In my day to day life, I couldn’t say, I live a 3 minute drive from work, so, traffic to me isn’t an issue, but the traffic in Dublin and Galway is absolutely awful. But no, I couldn’t think it’s attributed to immigrants. People are aligning that with bad public transport and the lack of infrastructure there and not immigrants” (R. 6).

The rural aspect of living in Ireland was a welcome escape from city living for many **Polish** immigrants. Those living in the small rural villages were very happy with their surroundings and the environment, and those in the larger town of Tuam felt they needed to be nearer services such as public transport and shops. Buildings, parks and streets were not a key issue for many of the immigrants, with most feeling that a good standard was evident in Ireland and in Galway:

“Well the first thing, is really the areas are very clean and I really appreciate that. It’s amazing and that probably one of the experiences in Galway that I will miss a lot is the feeling of freshness. Even if it’s raining, even if it’s cold you’ll feel there is fresh, so that’s what I like. When it comes to parks, I mean you probably don’t think that many parks because the landscape itself is beautiful and those are the natural parks but like the river and the sea sights so that’s amazing. I don’t have that in Poland and I really like that here” (I. 10).

Others however, felt that Poland far surpassed Ireland when it came to designated parks and recreational areas, with one person suggesting:

“Of course, people don’t tell me anything about the parks and forest because you haven’t any idea how the forest part looks like. This was also surprise for me because it’s about the culture. In Poland we have the biggest forest and in my city, we have one in the centre of the town, we probably have a forest as big as all of Galway is” (I. 11).

The emotional

All **residents** had a positive perspective on migrants living in either the Tuam area or the two smaller villages of Mountbellew or Ballygar. Overwhelmingly, the residents interviewed felt that Polish migrants and indeed all Eastern European migrants added significantly to the area; they worked hard and were willing to contribute to local society. One resident suggested that:

Oh I’ve only ever had a positive experience. I think they have only ever brought like positivity to the community. And developed the community as a whole, you know? Makes people more kind of accepting overall” (R. 8). ‘

Some interviewees suggested that there was more of an acceptance for Eastern European migrants living in Ireland than, for instance Muslims or people of colour from African nations, with one individual suggesting:

“When the Polish first came here, I’d say they weren’t as welcomed. I’d say they were hated enough when they first came. I’d say over the last 10 or 15 years, Irish people have grown up with them. They’re more welcoming. But the refugees are in the Polish position place they were 15 years ago. Maybe people are bit more sceptical at the moment of those refugees now. And I think it’s probably worse for those refugees now because there’s so much media coverage constantly. That media scrutiny wasn’t released on Polish or eastern European migrants back in 2004/2005” (R.8).

For the **Polish immigrants**, on the other hand, a variety of responses came to the fore in many areas of the research, however when asked if the interviewees were happy in Ireland, nearly all felt they were happy and content with their lives in their destination area. Many also felt happy in Poland but lacked full contentment due to economic circumstances or the need to travel and explore different cultures. Aspirations did change for many interviewees, who initially came for economic reasons and intended to return to Poland once they had accumulated money and improved their financial circumstances. However, the longer the interviewees stayed in Ireland, the more inclined they were to stay indefinitely. Additionally, new aspirations of buying or owning their own house and forging out a career became new goals rather than previous set goals prior to travelling. For example, one interviewee gained great confidence from her Irish experience and hoped it would advance or pave a career path for her:

"I mean it sounds probably very cheeky but I know that working with Ciarán on the project we're working on, I will be very valuable member of any team and I'd say that it influenced my ambitions in a big way in the sense that in the beginning I was hoping that maybe I will stay here or maybe I will go back home and now I kind of don't want to go back to Poland. I feel that I can make career elsewhere and I think that it's the impact of being here in Ireland and working here in Galway definitely" (I. 5).

Adapting to life in Ireland was a mixed scenario for many immigrants, with those coming with a high level of English adapting much quicker and better than those with poor English skills. Language was the one area which appeared a key issue for many people, with some feeling inferior to Irish people due to their inability to express themselves sufficiently or in a way they can in Polish. When asked if language was an issue for Polish living in Ireland, one immigrant suggested:

"My goal is like stay here and just improve my English and learn more and get better qualifications and so that's my goals" (I. 7).

The relational

There were mixed feelings amongst **residents** regarding issues around immigration affecting their relationship with friends or family members, with some feeling it had no impact at all, while others felt they had to defend migrants living in the area on a number of occasions. One resident who works with marginal groups in the Tuam area suggested:

"Well maybe like as an individual I suppose I'll try to defend the underdog anyways. And I would have in the past, you know like if you have people who are just stubborn talking about stuff that they don't know a lot of the time. Saying kind of certain things about certain different migrants, or do you now but like they lack information. Do you know if they actually put the facts in front of them it usually kind of defeats any argument they have, do you know" (R. 15).

Another stated, *"Yeah it's definitely a topic of contention I think for a lot of people, and I think personal experiences probably drive people's opinion on it and that's why it can be so emotive"* (R. 11). In asking residents if immigration has changed social interactions within their communities, some felt that in rural areas, with smaller numbers of immigrants, people had a great opportunity to interact with residents and this added considerably to social interactions. However, others felt that immigrants living in groups tended to interact amongst themselves rather than with locals and therefore social interactions were rarely impacted by their presence. Others however, felt that the longer Polish families were living in the area and in particular the more their English language ability improved the more they became integrated into local societies. Increased integration was then aligned with increased or enhanced social interaction of immigrants within communities. One resident suggested:

"I think even just generally it's so much more accepted and I know good is it. It must be over twenty years ago when a family moved to the area and they were black, and it was so different, it was such a big thing. And now they are probably the most integrated family in the community that are involved in so much. They are totally immersed in the community. I suppose years ago it would have been all maybe the same families whereas now it's not like that, it's a total mixed population of people from the area and not from the area" (R. 10).

Some **Polish** interviewees interact with other migrants, but some were emphatic they wanted only to mix with Irish people to increase their language skills and become more embedded in Irish society. Many residing in Ireland for a longer period have integrated well, but are still unsure of permanently residing in Ireland, although all felt happy in the destination. Participation in local community groups or activities appeared to materialise once immigrants had school going children, but until then only a small minority involved themselves in local community life or political groups or activities. One female respondent summed up her experience by stating:

"Yes, I make friends, I cannot say a lot of friends. I know quite a lot of people because I work in the creche and I used to work eight years in the Polish schools so I met like 600 parents. Sometimes on the street some say hello, how are you. I have to think who are you I don't know you! They know me and I know them. I am quite good friends with the staff from the places where I used to work but what is quite upsetting for me is, I tried and I never made any close friends with Irish friends. I don't know what is going on but I think that Irish people you are very open at the beginning and it's easy to go to the pub, have chat and work but to make like really close friends I didn't make it. I don't know why. And I tried. I tried really but still my closest friend is one Polish girl here. So that's something that I sometimes think about it why" (I. 9).

This response was reiterated by others, particularly females, who found it difficult to make close friendships with Irish people. This observation however did not deter them from remaining in Ireland, but maybe prevented full integration into the community. Males appeared to integrate into community life better than females, particularly if females were left at home to care for children and do not have regular employment and interaction with Irish people. The language barrier also appears to be a

significant factor in integration with many alluding to their inability to communicate at a higher level intellectually than they could have done in Poland in their own native language.

Conclusion

The case study investigated the relationship between migration and perceived social and spatial inequality for two groups in county Galway in Ireland, long-term residents and Polish immigrants. The findings suggest differences in the perceived effects of migration on the place, between rural and urban areas. For instance, while residents in the rural areas did not perceive changes in their standard of living as being related to immigration, residents living in urban areas felt that as time passes and immigrants are more embedded into the local society, their presence becomes more evident. Similarly, residents in rural did not perceive immigrants to have influenced in any way the quality of services, whereas urban residents perceived more pressure in certain areas, like housing.

For the Polish respondents, some of whom migrated to Ireland for economic reasons, while others for more immaterial aspects like learning English, the effect of migration on their standard of living differed considerably. While educated migrants, who were economically stable prior to leaving Poland and travelled for the experience, felt their quality of life did not improve or even declined in some areas, those who travelled for economic reasons felt they have a much better life in Ireland and do not intent to return to Poland.

3. Netherlands

In the Netherlands, interviews were conducted with a total of 5 groups in three locations. Specifically, interviews were conducted with residents and Romanian immigrants in Welberg, a village in the municipality of Steenbergen, with residents and Polish immigrants in two village in the municipality Noordoostpolder, and with internal migrants in the province of Friesland. All areas are receiving areas of internal or international migrants.

Steenbergen

Profile of the area

Welberg is a village in the municipality of Steenbergen (Figure 5), the province of North-Brabant in the Netherlands. Steenbergen²¹ is the municipality with the 4th largest population of Romanian immigrants in the Netherlands, in absolute terms, after Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam, and the first largest population of Romanian immigrants relative to the total population. As of Jan 1st, 2019, the city numbered 1,060 Romanians registered with the municipality, the majority of which were registered in the village of Welberg (992). Romanians residing in Steenbergen are employed mostly in agricultural and horticultural occupations. By the end of 2018, the village of Welberg registered a population of 2,695 inhabitants, of which 1,615 were men, and 1,085 were between the ages of 25 to 45 years old, 565

²¹ Population in 2017: 24,815 inhabitants.

between 45-65 years old, 185 over 65 years old, 675 between 15-25 years, and 180 less than 15 years old (CBS 2019a). A total of 1,680 persons were registered with a migration background in 2018, of which 1,650 Western and 30 non-Western (idem). In December 2018, 30 persons were receiving unemployment benefits, 10 persons were receiving social assistance benefits, 180 persons were beneficiaries of the General Old Age Pensions Act (CBS 2019d). There are 2,035 households in total. These consist of 83% single-person households, 8% double-person households and 9% households with one or more children. On average a household consists of 1.3 people.

Figure 5 Steenberg



The municipal authorities seem to be quite involved in mediating a win-win situation for the both residents and immigrants, acknowledging the need for immigrant labour in the region. To that end, they are collaborating with a temporary employment agency, to build housing for about 250 immigrants in the coming years. Currently, the municipality is organizing a series of roundtable discussions with residents, where residents can voice concerns and have questions answered about the project.

Methodology

Welberg was selected because it hosts the largest population of Romanian immigrants relative to its population, and the 4th largest population of Romanian immigrants, in absolute numbers, in the Netherlands, after Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam. Additionally, the small size of the village allowed us to investigate the effects of migration on the community as well as on immigrants themselves. Lastly, and in a similar fashion to the two villages selected in the Noordoostpolder, Romanian immigrants in Welberg reside in an employment agency-managed accommodation, a so-called “Polish hotel”. The

similar setting allowed us to compare the three cases in-depth and to observe similarities and differences. The interviews with the Romanian respondents were conducted on the premises of the employment agency-managed accommodation. In order to be allowed to conduct interviews there, the team had to obtain approval from the accommodation manager, an employee of the employment agency. Interview recruitment took place by inviting individuals encountered on the hallway for an interview, or through snowballing. Residents were approached by ringing the doorbells and through snowballing. In most cases it was possible to do an interview right away and sometimes it was planned for the next day. The interviews took place in the houses of the people. Both the houses close to the accommodation of the labour migrants were approached and also the houses of people that lived a bit further away from it. Snowballing was used for some participants, at one-point alternative methods were used because a lot of people were not at home; in the local cafe it was asked if anyone wanted to participate, this resulted in one interview at the person's home later that day. On the street one person was approached and this also resulted in an interview at the person's home later that day.

Informed consent involved explaining the goals and aims of the research project and the interview with each participant, and by ensuring anonymity and withdrawal from the interview at any time. Contact details of the research team were provided, and participants acknowledged their consent through a provided consent form.

Findings and results

The sample comprises 30 individuals, 15 of which Dutch residents and 15 Romanian immigrants. In terms of gender, 9 residents and 4 immigrants are female. A total of 8 residents and 2 immigrants were tertiary educated. In terms of age, the youngest resident was 20 years old and the older was 81 years old, while among Romanian respondents, the youngest person was 23 years old and the oldest 47 years old. Occupations among residents included 7 retirees, a nurse, a receptionist and a caregiver, while among immigrants included 10 production workers, a receptionist, a construction worker and a packer.

Migration decisions and determinants

Each persons' story on the reasons for migrating, is, of course, unique. But underlying all these individual stories, were essentially three main migration determinants for the Romanians interviewed: the need for money, the want of a different, better economic, social, cultural, political system, and the want of a different experience. Three interviewees also wanted to save enough money to open a business or to invest in a current business back in Romania.

Because in Romania we did not earn enough, you work only to pay the bills. Here, you can do something, you can realize something. If we manage to achieve our goal, we will of course return home. We are currently building a house. (Welberg, Female, 32, Secondary education)

The choice of the Netherlands as a migration destination was deliberate for some, and accidental for others. Many interviewees were choosing the employment agency, the jobs and living conditions they offered, of which they found out from colleagues, friends or family members. The interviewees' stories

clearly indicate a network effect of emigration from Romania, many mentioning both coming because of someone, and bringing with them or intending to bring with them others in turn.

I found out about this place [and the company] through a friend, she has been here, and she recommended me the place. It did not matter where I would go, but she was the friend of a niece, and she had worked here during better times, I listened to her recommendation and came here. We did not look for another company, what she recommended, we took. I am here with my partner. (Welberg, Male, 47, High School Education)

For other interviewees, however, the decision to migrate to the Netherlands was deliberate, and often contrasted with other destination options of previous migration experiences, or perceptions about alternative destinations.

I don't know, I thought it is an interesting country and not as racist as other countries, like the UK. (Welberg, Male, 25, Secondary education #2)

Standard of living

Most **residents** did not feel like the standard of living in the village has changed significantly in recent times:

In all these years that I lived here, everything is the same. (Welberg, female 70 years old, primary education)

More importantly, respondents did not perceive immigration to have changed the standard of living in the village in recent times. Rather, respondents attributed the limited to no impact in the area, on the relatively strict control over migrants' behaviour of employment agencies. Moreover, the village's proximity to the municipality of Steenberg, arguably a more attractive area for migrant activities, means that very few migrants actually spend time in the village.

No, because there are not so much. It doesn't have an impact. If you get an accommodation with thousands of people then it becomes a problem. [Immigrant accommodation] had 400 and the thing is if they walk around, they are very strict. Twice they get a warning and the third time they are send back. There is a Polish general practitioner here, they arrange everything here. They arrive and they get a room, there is a restaurant, they sell bread. The bus stops at the Jumbo [supermarket] so that they can buy their stuff, their walk is more towards Jumbo then to this direction. Here there is nothing, there is a bakery but you have to know where to find it. They go towards Steenberg. I think that the people in Steenberg, they wanted the disco within [immigration accommodation] because there was trouble between Polish men and Dutch men in Steenberg. They drink too much, they flirt with someone's else's girl and then it goes wrong. That has happened in Steenberg. (Welberg, female, 62 years old, tertiary education)

On the other hand, most **Romanian** respondents felt that their standard of living has improved significantly since they have migrated.

Yes, better than in Romania, you can afford to buy some clothes, to save some money, that's the reason I'm living here. Steenberg is well located, because all grocery shops are close-by. (Welberg, Male, 37, Tertiary education)

For some, the standard of living in Welberg, was even better than the one they experienced in previous migration locations:

Yes, better than it was in Romania, better than it was in Italy and the UK. In the UK, I could not adjust, I did not feel good there at all, even though I was earning well there too, 70 pounds a day. (Welberg, Male, 25, Secondary education #2)

Employment

Considering the relationship between migration and employment opportunities within the area, some **residents** perceived that immigrants represent a direct competition for employment opportunities.

Maybe a little bit, because the 70 people that are there, they are seasonal migrants; picking apples etc. and the Dutch people are not getting the work anymore because of the money, they are cheaper. I am 75 but so to speak I would like to pick strawberries then I can't work for 9,20(?) per hour and there are also ones that do it for 5 euro. (Welberg, male, 75 years old, primary education)

Respondents, however, distinguished between sectors and educational levels when discussing this competition. Specifically, sectors such as agriculture and construction were perceived to be more difficult to accede for residents now, because of the availability of immigrant labour. Moreover, there was a clear distinction being made between low- and high-skilled jobs, with some individuals perceiving their own occupations to not have been affected by the (low-skilled) wave of immigration.

I don't think so, but that could also be because of my job. There is not going to arrive someone from Poland to take my job. If you work in construction and all of the sudden there are some Polish people that work for half the money... (Welberg, male 67 years old, tertiary education)

Moreover, there was a feeling among many respondents, that immigrants are mostly doing the work that Dutch people do not want to do, i.e. work in agriculture or construction, under difficult conditions.

It is work Dutch people don't want to do, it is very low payed work and they should equalize the payments like in a normal company. We want the strawberries to be cheap and that is why the salaries of the labour migrants are very low. (Welberg, male, 72 years old, secondary education)

When asked about employment opportunities, the **Romanian** respondents referred to both the quality and quantity of jobs in the area. Most interviewees agreed that it is fairly easy to find a job, particularly if you speak English at least at a conversational level. They perceive not only that there are many businesses in the Netherlands constantly needing labour, but also that there are many employment agencies, willing to provide that labour and to mediate the finding of a job.

Now, with the passing of the years, things are evolving very much, you can find a job easily, anyone can find a job. If you speak a bit of English, even better. Honestly, driving down the highway, for 3 km, on your left or right, you see factories, greenhouses, and many other businesses, you continuously see things [and implicitly, job opportunities]. In [city in RO], if you drive 3 km on a national road, you see only... [trails off]. (Welberg, Male, 25, High School education)

One (highly educated) interviewee, qualified his answer, specifying that indeed, there are many jobs available for low-skilled individuals. The implication here is that finding a suitable, matching job as a high skilled might not be as easy.

It's fairly easy to find a job where it pays about 1,300-1,400 euro a month. In Romania, too, is easy to find a job as a low skilled worker, with the minimum wage. (Welberg, Male, 29, Tertiary education)

Housing

Some residents perceived that their chances of finding affordable housing have decreased in recent times, because the employment agencies are purchasing these houses to accommodate immigrants:

[...] it is difficult for young people to get a house because the houses under 200.000 euros are being bought up by investors or employment agencies for labour migrants. (Welberg, female, 62 years old, tertiary education)

Most **residents** did not perceive the values of the houses to have decreased because of the presence of immigrants in the village.

I don't think the value of my house is dropped, maybe for people that are from outside because we were also a bit sceptical but if they ask around then no. (Welberg, female 55 years old, tertiary education)

The **Romanian** respondents, on the other hand, in addition to expressing their appreciation for the aesthetic of Dutch architecture, discussed at length the differences between Romania and the Netherlands in terms of being able to buy a house. While everyone agreed that houses are much expensive in the Netherlands than in Romania, some interviewees assessed their chances of purchasing a house to be nevertheless higher in the Netherlands. The reason for that is the relatively less bureaucratic process of accessing a ban loan in the Netherlands, which requires far less conditions to fulfil and little upfront savings.

It would be cheaper to buy a house in Romania but is a much more bureaucratic process than here, where you only need the fast contract. (Welberg, Male, 27, High School Education)

Access to services

When asked about the quality and availability of services in the area, many **residents** perceived the area to have become worse off in terms of services. Many times, respondents pointed that they have to go to Steenberg for basic services, like shopping.

There are no services here, before our time there were some things like a butcher. (Welberg, male 67 years old, tertiary education)

The presence of immigrants has become quite visible for some residents, reflected through changes like the availability of new products in the supermarkets, or the opening of immigrant small businesses like shops and hairdressers.

In the shops you also see it, we now have three Polish supermarkets in Steenberg, that is quite a lot in such a small place. Also, if you go to the Jumbo there are shelves with Polish or East European products. (Welberg, male 55 years old, tertiary education)

On the other hand, the **Romanian** respondents overwhelmingly agreed that services are more accessible and of a higher quality in the Netherlands compared to Romania. They referred to the efficiency of the system, of the availability of shops, clinics nearby, public services, among others. One thing in particular stood out, specifically, not only that services are of a better quality in the Netherlands, but they are not significantly more expensive than in Romania. Considering that wages in Romania are substantially lower than in the Netherlands, for many individuals, it becomes cheaper than to acquire them in the latter than in the former.

The quality is a 10 out of 10, because in every village you find a fire unit, a bakery, grocery shops, a medical office, and from my experience, the doctors never turn away anyone, if they do not have insurance. The public transport is on time, they have wifi, they announce each stop, it's very good. In Romania, we have access to services, but their quality is lacking. For instance, hospitals in Romania, infrastructure, they are all lacking. (Welberg, Male, 27, High School Education)

Environment

Residents in Welberg did not perceive immigrants to have a negative effect on the surrounding environment. Some respondents mentioned beer cans left behind and littering, but these were considered small nuisances by the majority.

Only positive, I don't have anything negative to say about it. A small thing is the beer cans that are thrown away. (Welberg, male, 81 years old, tertiary education)

Moreover, there were some respondents who perceived the presence of immigrants in the village positively, making the atmosphere in the village livelier.

There is a bit more liveliness, it had always been a very quiet city and they walk around and now we have lighter evenings so that plays a role and you are also a bit longer active so you notice it more. I think that is positive, you can talk and a talk is not always possible but you see hello and you greet. (Welberg, female, 49 years old, tertiary education)

Romanian respondents, on the other hand, evaluate the surrounding environment in the Netherlands as being nicer than the one in Romania. Respondents mentioned the clean streets and parks, and building uniformity, with emphasis on the brick facades on houses. A particularly important aspect of this preference is the quietness of the village, which was opposed to the loud, dirty and polluted cities in Romania.

Yeah ... is... I don't even know how to say this... I lived 22 years in Romania, I got used to the system there, I grew up in the city, with apartment buildings... The first time I came here, I experienced a shock. Even in the largest cities you have sidewalks, bike lanes, green spaces and streets, in this order. And I was very impressed that in these small cities, you have the canals, these water streams, and animals are protected – I waited in a roundabout with my car for 15 min for a swan to cross the street. (Welberg, Male, 24, High School education)

The emotional

Considering the emotional aspects related to immigration to the area, **residents** tended to have mixed feelings. There was a general feeling of happiness for living in the area:

I feel lucky that I am living in this place, because you have the city close and this is countryside. We don't have problems with big companies or whatsoever. (Welberg, female, 75 years old, Secondary education)

Many respondents seemed to express feelings of pity or sympathy for immigrants coming into the area, some suggesting that they are used for cheap labour and they have to live in inhumane or uncomfortable conditions.

On itself it is not a problem, but I feel bad for them, that they are here without their wife and children. I can imagine that they want to be part of something, you arrive somewhere in a strange country and without being asked you are put together with 10 other men [...] I don't feel good about it, because it all has to be cheap and they are cheap labour forces and exploitation is there and I find that really terrible. (Welberg, female, 62 years old, tertiary education)

On the other hand, asked whether they considered themselves happy in the Netherlands, most **Romanians** said yes, even though many of them miss their families back in Romania. They all perceived

themselves to have been happy in Romania too, particularly since they were close to family members, despite not being able to earn and save enough money.

I would be happy here, if my family would be here. I cannot help them from [hometown] as much as I can help them from here. (Welberg, Male, 24, High School education)

The relational

Many residents perceived that the immigrants living in the village have integrated into the local community quite well:

If I look at the football club in the village then they are also integrated and very welcome. They are in teams, quite a lot. (Welberg, female 55 years old, tertiary education)

Romanian respondents, on the other hand, had a more varied experience with integration into the village. Some felt that they are not integrated into the social life of the village, and perceived the lack of Dutch language skills as a barrier to that:

No, it's too early. Unless you learn the language, you cannot be integrated. Yes, there's no doubt [integrated in hometown] (Welberg, Male, 24, High School education)

Others perceive themselves to be integrated in the local society, as for instance, one interviewee who volunteers with local organizations and interacts with residents:

Yes [I feel integrated]. I volunteer at a gym here, we have organized marathons, that's where I also found friends, I'm involved in all kind of volunteering activities. (Welberg, Male, 29, Tertiary education)

Conclusion

The case study investigated the relationship between migration and perceived social and spatial inequalities for two groups in Welberg, Steenberg. The findings suggest that most residents do not perceive migration to have affected the standard of living in the village, nor to do they perceive effects of migration on the surrounding environment. There is, however, a feeling that immigrants are direct competitors to residents in certain sectors (i.e. agriculture and construction) and for certain skill levels. Low-skilled individuals perceive themselves in direct competition with migrants, whereas middle and high-skilled individuals do not perceive them as a threat. Many respondents feel that they are disadvantaged when it comes to access to housing and find that employment agencies sweep in and buy the most affordable ones as soon as they become available. These houses are in turn rented out to immigrants. On the other hand, residents perceived the new Polish businesses to contribute to the local economy and more diversity to the village.

The majority of the Romanian immigrants, on the other hand, considered having a higher standard of living post-migration, with significantly better employment conditions. Most considered the quality of services to be higher in the Netherlands than in Romania, and the surrounding environment to be prettier and more aesthetically pleasing than in Romania. Although many respondents reported feelings of

happiness in the Netherlands, many felt homesick, and missing their family members back home. @and they feel that the employment agency plays a 'double' role: on the one hand arranging everything in a smooth way (finding work, accommodation, etc) and on the other hand asking/taking money for that. So the/some migrants 'fate' is in the hands of the employment agency.

Noordoostpolder

Profile of the area

In Noordoostpolder (Figure 6), we conducted interview in two separate villages, 8 interviews in the village of Kraggenburg and 7 interviews in the village of Bant.

In 2018, Bant had a total population of 1,415 inhabitants, of which 695 women (CBS 2019a). A total of 290 persons were less than 15 years old, 155 between 15-25 years of age, 355 between 25-45, 420 between 45-65 and 186 over the age of 65 (idem). In terms of facilities, the residential core of the village is 7.8 km away from a hospital, 0.3 km away from a large supermarket, 7.8 km away from a department store, 0.4 km away from a café, 6.9 km away from a cafeteria, 6.8 km away from a restaurant, 24.7 km away from the nearest train station, 6.5 km away from a swimming pool, 29.6 km away from the nearest cinema, and 7.0 km away from a fire station (CBS 2019b). According to the estimates from stakeholders, at the time of the interview, there were about 35 (Polish) immigrants living in Bant. In 2018, Kraggenburg registered a total population of 1,430 inhabitants, of which 725 women (CBS 2019a). A total of 230 persons were less than 15 years old, 170 between 15-25 years of age, 320 between 25-45, 445 between 45-65 and 260 were older than 65 (idem). In terms of facilities, the residential core of the village 14.4 km away from a hospital, 6.0 km away from a large supermarket, 13.6 km away from a department store, 0.3 km away from a café, 6.0 km away from a cafeteria, 1.8 km away from a restaurant, 17.7 km away from the nearest train station, 5.6 km away from a swimming pool, 18.0 km away from the nearest cinema, and 6.2 km away from a fire station (CBS 2019b). In December 2018, the village of Kraggenburg registered a total number of 20 persons receiving unemployment benefits, 10 persons receiving social assistance benefits, 250 beneficiaries of the General Old Age Pensions Act (CBS 2019c). According to the estimates from stakeholders, at the time of the interview, there were about 200 (Polish) immigrants living in Kraggenburg.

Figure 6 Noordoostpolder



Methodology

The interviews were conducted in the villages of Bant and Kraggenburg the Netherlands, between April and May 2019. A total of 15 semi-structured interviews with long-term residents and 15 interviews with Polish immigrants were conducted between the two villages. All interviews comprised open questions on demographic and socio-economic characteristics, on reasons for staying or migrating, and on the three dimensions of quality of life. An interview guide shared across all case regions in IMAJINE WP5 was used. Interviews were held face-to-face, in Dutch. Interviews were recorded with the participant's consent and later professionally transcribed in English.

It was important, in order to be able to compare across locations, that both villages had a so-called "polish hotel", that is, a housing accommodation for immigrants, and some immigrant families living in private accommodation in the village. The village of Bant has such a 'Polish hotel' located in the former café-restaurant in the village centre with around 35 Polish labour migrants. News articles indicated that the existence of the hotel created a lot of discordance within the village. At the time of the data collection,

Kraggenburg was hosting about 200²² labour migrants, about 150 of which were located in the “hotel” 7 km outside of the village, with some families living in the village. The village has implemented a local initiative, led by the “multi culti” committee, which creates events and initiatives meant to foster the integration of labour migrants in Kraggenburg. Kraggenburg is seen as the pioneer when it comes to involving labour migrants in activities of the village.

Firstly, an attempt was made to engage with potential residents via social media groups on facebook, however, this method was not very successful. A second strategy was going door to door in the village and interview respondents who agreed to be interviewed, in their homes. The Polish respondents were interviewed in the two accommodation locations, after permission was obtained from the employment agencies managing each location.

Findings and results

The sample comprises 31 individuals, 15 of which are Dutch residents and 16 are Polish immigrants. In terms of gender, 11 residents and 6 immigrants are female. A total of 5 residents and no immigrants were tertiary educated. In terms of age, the youngest resident was 24 years old and the older was 79 years old, while among Polish respondents, the youngest person was 23 years old and the oldest 51 years old. Occupations among residents included 6 retirees, an arborist, a teacher and a caregiver, while among immigrants included 10 a hairdresser, a miner, a car refinisher and a technician.

Migration decisions and determinants

The decision to emigrate is complex and there is always more than one factor at play. Nevertheless, from the interviews, a few key reasons emerged concerning the decision to leave Poland, which can be roughly divided between pull and push factors. Push factors include the lack of (suitable) job opportunities in Poland and low wages and difficulties to make ends meet, while pull factors included higher wages, family, and aspirations for a different experience, for a change.

In terms of push factors, some respondents mentioned the inability to support themselves and their family, as well as their difficulties with covering financial debts.

I was unable to support my family all by myself. (Bant, Female, 51, Secondary education)

There were some respondents for whom the decision to migrate was not as much motivated by the material, as it was by the immaterial. Some respondents mentioned migration as a process of gaining independence, of learning a language, of experiencing a different culture (freedom to smoke weed was mentioned by one respondent), or simply because nothing tied them to Poland anymore, there was nothing to keep them back, so they moved forward.

²² Researcher estimation based on estimations from stakeholders.

For what reason? There were a couple of reasons. First reason was my willingness to break the fear of being independent because I always lived at my parents' house. [...]. I was interested in the English language, thanks to music that I love. My friend, the one who worked at the London Eye, told me "go there, this is where you're going to learn English most efficiently; you're going to meet different people; you're going to see this social breakthrough; you'll see this huge threshold of the human behaviour and the social contacts; outlook on life; of course everything depends on how you prepare yourself with the English, because if you don't you will get none of those things". (Bant, Male, 34, Secondary education)

Standard of living

The perceived impact of migration on the standard of living in the village, varied across the **residents** interviewed. Some found that immigration has had a positive impact on the local economy, by, for instance, contributing to sales and consumption in the village, while others felt that migration bring benefits to some but not all.

The supermarket guy is happy that the Polish people are living here, it brings in some extra money. It has been said that if the Polish people would not have been here then his life would not be that good. (Bant, female, 77 years old, primary education)

For the majority of the **Polish** respondents, on the other hand, the migration experience has improved their standard of living considerably. What is interesting, is that different aspects of their lives have improved, or rather, respondents focused on different things they can now afford to do, including the ability to buy things without having to be aware of how expensive is, the ability to save money and send remittances to Poland, being able to buy property or a car in Poland, being able to afford holidays, and generally, just being more financially comfortable.

Oh my God, to what extent! I'm sorry that I cut in your sentence, but my standard of living has definitely increased. Okay, one stupid example from everyday life: I walk into a store, I don't have to count, I see something, I like it, I take it and I don't have any problems with counting money for bills, to get for this or that. (Bant, Male, 32, Primary education)

There were a few Polish respondents who evaluated their quality of life to have decreased post-migration, mostly in relation to housing conditions:

Increased? No. I would rather say that the other way around, it got worse. In Poland I didn't live with four other people on a couple of meters squared and on a bunk bed. I had my own apartment. (Kraggenburg, Male, 25, Vocational education)

Employment

Considering the relationship between migration and employment opportunities within the area, some **residents** perceived immigrants to represent a direct competition for employment opportunities:

I don't have any diplomas, so they do take the jobs that I also am suitable for. I have to support my family alone and I can't work for 700 euros per month, on that point yes. For right now that is something far away. (Bant, Female, 37 years old, secondary education)

Moreover, in a similar way to the residents interviewed in Welberg, residents in Bant and Kraggenburg too seemed to acknowledge the need for immigrant labour in the Dutch economy. Many respondents agreed that, particularly in agriculture, there is a need for labour, but especially for cheap and flexible labour.

Not for me personally [competition] but indeed you see that there have are many foreign labour migrants arrived. It is economically necessarily because it is work that Dutch people don't want to do and they want to. It is necessarily, I am sure about that. You have to be realistic about that. (Bant, male, 35 years old, tertiary education)

Generally, the **Polish** respondents evaluated the working conditions in their job in the Netherlands as much better than in Poland. Some mentioned the management style, which is helpful and not as intrusive as in their previous jobs, others mentioned that it is less physically demanding, and others yet mentioned the possibility to work many hours as a big plus.

I'm really happy with my work! I never come home exhausted, I never come back home crying like sometimes would happen in Poland. How does it compare to Poland? Everyone will tell you to do this, that and that but no one will actually explain it to you and then they will just leave you. Here, it's never the case. (Bant, Female, 24, Vocational education)

An important aspect mentioned by a Polish respondent, was the fact that qualifications and courses related to employment in the Netherlands, could then be used in Poland as well. For instance, he obtained a licence to operate a forklift, licence needed for his job in the Netherlands, but this qualification might improve his chances of being employed in Poland, in a similar job.

Coming here, you know, you have to get a license to operate the forklift. In my current job I also have to get some extra licenses So here you will get these papers done and then when you go back to Poland you still have them. It's not like they will be invalid. I got one of those license done here and then... you just do it, you know. (Kraggenburg, Male, 35, Primary education)

Housing

Like the residents in Welberg, residents in Bant and Kraggenburg too perceived their chances of being able to buy housing to decrease because of the employment agencies who purchase accommodation to house immigrants. Several respondents point out that it is increasingly difficult to buy a house in the village, as all affordable and available housing tends to be claimed by employment agencies, which then offer it to migrants²³.

[...] sometimes I feel that they [immigrants] are in front of the line when it comes to houses and those kinds of things. [...] In these 4 houses two are Poles and two are Dutch. And I think that if I would leave this house Polish people would be put into this house as well. (Bant, Female, 37 years old, secondary education)

Concerning the **Polish** respondents, there two major dimensions of housing emerging from the interviews, namely, housing conditions, and the possibility of acquiring housing, whether to rent or to buy. Opinions were split on where it is easier to rent or buy accommodation, with respondents having different experiences in each country. Concerning housing conditions, one respondent from Kraggenburg, felt that better accommodation conditions are needed:

For now, I'm not going to lie, better accommodation would be necessary. Other than that, it's okay. (Kraggenburg, Male, 25, Vocational education)

When it comes to the possibility of acquiring a house, some respondents referred to state-provided accommodation, while others discussed buying a house through a real estate agency. One respondent perceived that it is difficult to afford buying a house in Poland, with Polish earnings. He was able to buy an apartment in Poland only because of the higher salaries in the Netherlands.

Being here, we were here together for 5 years at one company with my wife. Then we went back to Poland. We didn't used to go back too often and we saved up some money so we bought an apartment in Poland, we bought furniture and we have our own apartment now. [...] But what's yours, is yours. With the Polish earnings that would only be possible if I took a loan from the bank but I'm really prejudiced about it. (Kraggenburg, Male, 35, Primary education)

Access to services

When asked about the quality and availability of services in the area, the majority of the **residents** perceived the area to have become worse off in terms of services. Many times, respondents pointed out that they have to go to nearby towns or villages for basic services, like shopping.

The facilities are very bad here, no supermarket. Nothing. We have a hairdresser and a beauty salon. We have nothing, for every grocery I have to take the car to go to Marknesse. Without a car I don't know how I should do the groceries, luckily, I have it. If

²³ Particularly in agriculture, the employment agency provides housing (at a cost) for their immigrant employees.

you forget something you have go again in the car. It is also very expensive. In the past we had two shops, also a bakery. (Kraggenburg, female, 79 years old, secondary education)

Generally, the **Polish** respondents perceived the quality of services, particularly healthcare, to be higher in the Netherlands than in Poland. This was the case even when the respondent has not interacted with or benefitted from services from the healthcare system, the same positive perception prevailed. For some respondents, particularly those from Kraggenburg, where the immigrant accommodation is located 7 km outside of the village, the access and availability of services was worse than in Poland.

We live in seclusion; everything is far from here. In Poland everything was close. All in all, worse streets, worse roads. There is not even a bus stop in the vicinity. Well it's definitely worse than in Poland. (Kraggenburg, Male, 25, Vocational education)

Environment

Residents in the two villages perceived differently the impact of immigration on the surrounding, natural environment. In the village of Bant, where the immigrant accommodation is located in the village centre, making it thus more prominent, the presence of immigrants was visible, either because they were littering or gathering together to smoke and drink in public areas.

The people that lived over there, they were really disturbed. They moved, out of frustration, because over there people smoked hashish all the time in their alley. And also, a lot of fights. My daughter is still annoyed, their view is towards the garden of the Polish hotel, where they sit in the summer at nights. Behind the buses there they also smoke, but my grandchildren see this. (Bant, Male, 65 years old, primary education)

In the village of Kraggenburg, where the immigrant accommodation is located 7 km outside of the village, the presence of immigrants was not as visible. The residents did perceive, however, the migrants' behaviour to be different in terms of alcohol consumption.

They are drinking a lot [...] That is something Polish. I don't have problems with it, I sometimes help a farm and I guide Polish and Bulgarians, they all smoke and they all drink. (Kraggenburg, male, 72 years old, secondary education)

The **Polish** respondents, on the other hand, generally perceived their surrounding environment to be significantly cleaner than in their areas in Poland. Many also mentioned green areas, the water, the landscape as being nicer in the Netherlands compared to Poland, including less littering.

How do I rate it? I really like it, in the Netherlands there is a lot of green areas, a lot of water, the landscapes are beautiful, you can go for a walk with the kids, there is no pollution whatsoever. [...] Here, it's really pretty, I really do like it, here. (Kraggenburg, Female, 33, Secondary education)

There were a couple of Polish respondents, who seemed to find positives and negatives in both countries, when it comes to the surrounding environment. They are different countries, of different sized, with different cultures and history, which are all reflected in the conditions and type of environment.

How does it compare? You can't compare, because Poland is also much bigger, if you could take all the high-quality roads in Poland it would also be good. It's a much bigger country so... and it's also getting better. But it's nice here, it's really pretty. (Bant, Female, 28, Secondary education)

The emotional

Like in the village of Welberg, here too many **residents** seemed to express feelings of pity or sympathy for immigrants, some suggesting that they are used for cheap labour and they have to live in inhumane or uncomfortable conditions.

I really feel that they are taking advantage of [immigrants], they earn very little money and are living in a sort of chicken coop. In Emmeloord when I worked their in the street I sometimes went to Polish people but it is not humane how they live and they get a payment but a lot of things are deducted from this payment so I wonder what is left [...] I feel ashamed that we are doing negative about this. (Kraggenburg, female, 59 years old, tertiary education)

For several **Polish** respondents, on the other hand, the experience of migrating has brought about an emotional evolution, an emotional transformation. Respondents mentioned a shift towards focusing on the self as opposed to material things, or changes in their self-identification as a Polish, of their perceived Polish-ness.

Before I was only motivated by the money. I didn't care what sort of job I'll have to do, I just wanted to have a lot of hours because the more hours, the more I get paid. And now it's changing a little, after some time you just start appreciating yourself a little more. (Bant, Male, 28, Secondary education)

The relational

The interviews did not paint a clear image of the degree of social cohesion within the villages. Some residents felt that their communities are not particularly cohesive, and not very open to newcomers:

I find it difficult to say something about the social interactions/cohesions in this village, because after living here for 9 years I still don't have any social contacts. There is hi and bye, but if you talk about real contacts it is difficult to make them. (Kraggenburg, female, 35 years old, tertiary education)

In the village of Kraggenburg, formed through the relocation of families uprooted from Zeeland because of the floods of decades ago, there seems to be an inner group of the first settlers in the village, and their descendants, perceived as being more united than the other villagers.

The original residents are all people that moved from their home (uprooted), like the flood in Zeeland. All the farmers arrived here with such reasons and a new village was then build, so there is a group of people that are all uprooted. At that point it has given a huge sense of cohesion. It also has created a society. It is difficult to enter the social life of this village. People have their own coven and it is closed. (Kraggenburg, female, 59 years old, tertiary education)

Concerning the **Polish** respondents, every respondent had a different experience of forming social ties in their place of residence in the Netherlands. Many did not interact much with native Dutch residents, and spend most of their time with other immigrants, and Polish immigrants especially. For some, language was a barrier to integrate in the local society, while for others, language was a binder within the small Polish community in each village. Lastly, there were those who were not interested in making friendships, who have come to work only and considered their best friends and family to be back in Poland.

I have friends, here, and at work. It's good. In Poland I had more friends and I spent more time with them. (Bant, Male, 26, Vocational education)

Conclusion

The case study investigated the relationship between migration and perceived social and spatial inequality for two groups in two villages in Noordoostpolder, Bant and Kraggenburg. The findings suggest that residents perceived the effect of migration on the standard of living in the village differently, depending on their skill level and economic situation. As in Steenbergen, in Noordoostpolder too, some residents perceived immigrants to represent competition for jobs, although this applied mostly to low-skilled individuals.

For most Polish respondents, the reasons for migration includes push factors like the lack of (suitable) jobs available in Poland, low wages, the inability to make ends meet, and pull factors like higher wages, family formation and/or unification, and aspirations of a different experience and culture. Most of the respondents made use of networks when deciding to migrate and when choosing a location, while the destination choice within the Netherlands often depending on employer and job/housing availability. Many perceived themselves to not be integrated into the local community, citing language as a barrier to communication, the interaction with Dutch nationals happening only in the context of work. Most respondents perceive their standard of living to have increased substantially since migrating; the ones who are worse off blame poor housing conditions. Lastly, the phenomenon of transnationalism transpires when respondents are asked about their home-feeling – most interviewees consider both the Netherlands and Poland as home, missing one when living in the other.

Friesland

Profile of the area

The research area is the province of Friesland (Figure 7), situated in the North of the Netherlands. Its population numbers some 650,000 and the largest city is the provincial capital of Leeuwarden, which has around 107,800 inhabitants. Friesland is considered one of the most rural and peripheral provinces of

the Netherlands (Haartsen, Huigen, and Groote 2003) and within the Netherlands, it is known for its strong regional identity (Betten 2013).

Figure 7 Friesland



Methodology

This case study report discusses the results of a pilot study into motives of relatively lower income people who moved from relatively central parts of the Netherlands to the ‘peripheral’ province of Frisia. Via the social housing corporation Elkien, we invited 95 households who moved to Fryslan in 2017 and 2018 to participate in the research. People who were interested to participate in the research by giving an interview, were asked to get in touch (via phone or email) with the researchers. This resulted in 12 reactions of people/households who wanted to be interviewed. Interviews were held in the last two weeks of July 2019. They were done in the homes of the respondents, or in a public place nearby, such as a community centre or local café. The interviewees were given a small gift (25 euros) to show our appreciation for their participation. The interviewer was female, in her 20s. All interviews were conducted in Dutch and subsequently translated into English.

Findings and results

In total we held interviews with 14 respondents in 12 households; in two cases we spoke with both partners. Most of our respondents are older, on average 65 years, with almost three quarters (71%) at or very near retirement age (64 and higher). Only 5 respondents (36%) are still actively working (employed or self-employed) and only two (14%) are below 40 years. Our sample is, hence, not representative for the population in the area: our respondents are older and among others due to their age less actively engaged in work or other activities.

Most of the respondents are married (64%), two divorced, two widowed and two unmarried. Many respondents have some (sometimes distant) family in Frisia but not necessarily in the same place or in close. Only few explicitly refer to assistance either been given to or receive from relatives close by. For quite some respondents the desire to live closer to family and relatives was, however, one of the motives to move (see box 3.1). The level of education varies from primary to tertiary; with most respondents at high school level (MBO: 5), tertiary level (uni/HBO: 2), one primary and one secondary. For 5 respondents we have no information on their education, based on their professional we may expect most of them to be at high school/mbo level. We have no information on average income but based on education and occupation we may expect higher than average income for one respondent, with most respondents (8) rather low income at max average income level.

Migration decisions and determinants

Based on the respondents, the primary reason to move to Frisia is retirement (#7: 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12), representing about two thirds of our sample. Two respondents (3, 7) explicitly refer to the availability of high-quality elderly care as the primary reason for moving to Frisia (e.g. instead of Drenthe). Generally speaking, it regards respondents who are Frisian by origin (classic return migrants # 5: 1, 2, 4, 11, 12) or respondents who have spent lots of time in Frisia during holidays, family visits or during the war (#3: 3, 5, 9). Moving to Frisia felt like moving back home: familiar, quieter than elsewhere, socially more friendly, safer and/or closer to nature. Three return migrants refer to bad personal experiences/loneliness as a reason to move back (1, 2, 11). Five respondents stress the (higher) quality of life in Frisia – peace, quiet, and safety – as a reason to move to Frisia (#5: 5, 6, 8, 10, 11). Peace, quiet and safety was also mentioned by (#3: 6, 7, 8) respondents who moved to Frisia in order to get away from bad experience; they choose Frisia also because suitable/affordable housing could be found easily/rapidly.

For the return migrants – they were born in Frisia but left for work and now return as part of their (pre) retirement, the reasons to return include missing Frisia and the Frisian way of life and their family.

I wanted to go to Friesland, I missed Friesland. The People are very different, much more social, much more helpful, much friendlier. I didn't like Appeldoorn, I didn't have a very good time there.

Another group consists of people who are not Frisian by origin who know Frisia very well from earlier visits – they consciously choose for the high quality of life in Frisia. Some were looking for a quiet life as retirees in the countryside and choose Frisia above Drenthe because of its social infrastructure (high elderly care). For others the most important reason to migrate was to move away from a place where life was disagreeable for various reasons or because they wanted to move away from a place with bad experiences. Frisia was chosen because it was easy to find housing at short notice and/or for a convenient price but was also valued because it promised a quieter life, less stress and more (social) safety.

The crowds, the hectic pace. Sometimes you like that. In the long term, you will find Friesland's tranquillity better. The beauty here, it's cleaner here. Calmer of course and fewer people; there are parts where you don't meet any people. You don't have that in The Hague.

Standard of living

For many respondents moving to Fryslan coincided with retirement and older age. In that sense their lifestyle changed – no work to go to on a daily basis or physical limitations that resulted from ill health or the obligation to care for their disabled partners. The respondents who moved to Fryslan because of the health care facilities, do refer to the joy and relief that generates. Others mention the proximity of nature which invites outdoor activities; or the opportunities the house offers for having a garden, keeping (more) pets. For two of the respondents, moving to Fryslan had also economic consequences with lower costs of living because of cheaper housing. Three respondents indicate that the material standard of living has been affected through loss of income, a higher rent and/or more expenses.

It is a bit cheaper here, the houses are cheaper, taxes are too. Supermarket prices are the same, that doesn't change anything. We are no longer close to Germany, which is a shame. I always went shopping in Germany, that was cheaper. Every 14 days, also refuelling gasoline is much cheaper there.

I had my own house in Almere. Then my wife died, a year later we met and we are now together since 2014 and married in 2015. Compared with the rent of the previous house we save 250 euros (...) We knew that we would pay 350 euros less on gas and rent, and, hence, have more to spend. (...): We now live a little easier. Before we had to turn each dime triple. The situation has improved.

Employment

As most of the respondents are already retired, finding employment was not relevant to them.

I do have a job with the municipality. I work at mindup, administration. I don't have a hobby really, I would like to do more sports again, but I am also in debt restructuring so that is a bit tricky at the moment. They are now looking if there is a fund or something (to cover the costs for sports) at the municipality.

Housing

All of the respondents rent a house or apartment, which is a result of our sampling method. They found it through the housing cooperatives and sometimes with the help of family or friends. The houses differ from apartments to service flats for seniors and houses with a little garden. In general, the respondents are happy about their new home.

I think the houses there were much more expensive. Yes. Rental houses are not available there, and they happen to be here. This house had been vacant for more than half a year, and they were happy that they could rent it to us. This is still a tough rent. Generally, the standard of living is lower than in the west.

Especially since I have a house with a garden now. There, I lived in a two-storey flat on a busy main road; so sitting outside was never really pleasant because of constant sirens and lots of traffic. It was just really not pleasant so I think this is wonderful.

Access to services

Services were generally at greater distance than in their previous place of residence but invoked hardly any complaints – either because essential services are in reach or because access to a private car made it easy to accommodate the distance. Some do refer to the lack of frequent public transport.

You had a few stores in Erica, but you don't have that here. So you always have to go to Gorredijk, Heerenveen, Drachten or Beetsterzwaag. So that was a downside, but I have a car. So we can go anywhere.

There are fewer facilities here than in Almere, and without a car it is difficult. We have to get the groceries by public transport. But there are a lot of activities organized in the village which are easy to attend.

Environment

The attractiveness of the environment, close to nature, has been one of the attractions which motivated moving to Frisia. For others it was one of the pleasant experiences once they had moved. What is often mentioned is the green environment, nature and landscape of Frisia as well as the quietness of the village without constant traffic noise or stress of crowded spaces. Also the safety and lack of criminality is mentioned as well as the pleasant mentality and calm friendliness of the Frisian people is often referred to and positively compared to the outspoken, agitated mentality of the city people in the west. Some of the newcomers indicate that it can be difficult to get access to the people in the first instance because they are less outspoken and more reserved, for instance compared to people in Rotterdam.

We find it beautiful If you are on the bus you can look very far. Pastures and green (nature). And you are close to the sea. There was nothing in Apeldoorn, you lived in your apartment there and I did not feel well.

The emotional

Most of the respondents feel well and at home where they are now. For quite some, it is actually a return to what they always perceived as home – Frisia. Others found a new home in an environment which offers a higher quality of life with more quietness and safety, away from their prior stressful place, better or cheaper housing, and friendly people. All of the respondents describe themselves as happy, and quite a large group also as more happy compared to their previous place of residence – again because they are now back home in Fryslan, close to family and friends, and in a quieter, safer, less stressful place, sometimes better material conditions and altogether, hence, a higher quality of life. Even though their lifestyle might have changed as also discussed above, none of the respondents indicates that their aspirations might have changed as a result of the migration.

The relational

All but one respondent feel integrated in their new place of residence. For the return migrants this is directly related to the idea of returning home. As Frisians in Frisia they are integrated. But the others, too, feel at home because the neighbours and the community received them well. For some it is also related to their participation in social activities or social talks. Friends and regular engagement in (voluntary) work is not a necessary prerequisite for feeling at home and integrated. For some the feeling of integration and homeliness has also to do with the lack of conflicts with neighbours they experienced in their previous place of residence and the overall more agreeable social sphere. Some of those who do not speak Frisian, however, indicate, that they do experience language barriers.

We have been positively surprised by the people and the help they offer here; the municipality is very helpful and has also ensured that I could take a language course. This would not have been possible in Almere.

When you are invited they talk Dutch, but that takes 3 seconds and then they switch to Frisian. I understand that, because it is in the nature and two Frisians talk Frisian and whether or not you are there now does not matter. I can also follow it reasonably well.

For quite some (7) respondents volunteering is or has been an important activity. Some have been involved in volunteering before but are not anymore for health reasons or need to care for a sick partner. One respondent indicates her intention to get involved also for the sake of social contacts (10). Some (5) indicate that they have little active involvement, either because they rather keep to themselves or because they have to care for a sick partner. As most of the respondents are elderly and retired work is of less importance

Yes I do a lot of volunteer work, I give sports training; volleyball training. I first wanted to meet you in the tour boat that is located here. A cruise boat for people with disabilities, we sail on Frisian waters and we do everything voluntarily. I have done for 12 years now.

Conclusion

The case study investigated the relationship between migration and perceived social and spatial inequality for internal migrants in Friesland, the Netherlands. The findings suggest that most respondents moved to Friesland after retirement, in search for good quality of elderly services and affordable housing, many times returning to a place in which they have grown up or have spent time in the past. Most appreciated the nature and landscape, the less stressful, safer and less polluted area. Many respondents felt at home in the new place, experiencing a higher quality of life in the quieter Friesland, not as stressful as previous locations, and closer to friendly people. Partly because of a return to friends and family, and partly because of participation in volunteering activities, few respondents felt lonely or alone.

4. Poland

In Poland, interviews were conducted with a total of five groups in three locations. Specifically, interviews were conducted with residents in the sending areas of Nysa and Lukow, and with residents, internal migrants and Ukrainian immigrants in the receiving area of Piaseczno.

Nysa

Profile of the area

Nysa County (Figure 8) is located in the south-western part of the Opolskie Voivodeship (Province), in the Polish-Czech borderland zone. The capital of the county is Nysa, which is located 57 km away from the capital of the province - Opole. Nysa has convenient transport connections with the cities of the region, as well as with Czech cities. The Nysa district is experiencing a significant depopulation phenomenon, its population decreasing by 5% between 2007-2017, a trend that is expected to continue in the future. It is estimated that by 2050 the county of Nysa will have only 96,932 inhabitants, about 29% less inhabitants than currently.

Figure 8 Nysa County



The share of elderly people (65+) among the total population is steadily growing. Starting from 2011, their number has been growing by about 4% every year. Emigration from the area has been mainly associated with the high unemployment rate. Concomitantly, emigrants often had relatively high

qualifications. The main countries of emigration are Ireland and the United Kingdom. Nysa is one of the few regions in the Opole region where there is no German minority and therefore there are no contacts with Germany as there are in other districts. Some departures were officially organized (involving intermediary companies as well as the town's labour office). Currently, however, an estimated 400-500 people return annually, mostly because of the new factories built in the city. Emigration combined with new businesses had led to labour shortages which are being filled from return migration and immigration from nearby Ukraine and other Eastern European countries.

Internal migrations started to be noticeable only from 2013, mainly in the direction of Lower Silesia, Wrocław and the surrounding area. These are migrations to low-skilled jobs - there are even bus transfers to companies in these areas. Some people work outside the county because their salaries are higher than in Nysa. Now it is changing, but the differences in salaries, even for the same work, are still observed - average salaries are about PLN 600 lower than in the voivodeship. Many people from the border areas also work in the Czech Republic.

Methodology

The case study area was selected because it represents one of the three areas in the country with the highest share of emigrants relative to the total population (the other two were big cities of Łódź and Wrocław). A total of 15 interviews were conducted with the residents of Nysa county, including both the city of Nysa and neighbouring communes. All interviews were held face-to-face in Polish on the basis of interview guide shared across all case studies. All interviews were recorded.

Findings and results

The sample comprises 15 individuals, of which, 60% are women. A total of 11 respondents were tertiary educated, and 4 respondents had a secondary education. The average age in the sample is 47.3 years old, the youngest person being 30 years old and the oldest 65 years old. In terms of occupations, the respondent's jobs included four office clerks, one IT worker and one social worker, among others.

Standard of living

Whether migration has affected the standard of living in the area and the quality of life of individuals themselves, was a debated aspect among the residents of Nysa. Their perceptions ranged from positive, to no impact, to negative impact. Some respondents perceived emigration to generate negative consequences for the standard of living in the area, most often referring to the emigration of professionals and the subsequent lack of services in Nysa as a result:

Sometimes you have to wait two years for a specialist, or a builder.” (N_RES_F_B_14).

Other respondents perceived emigration to positively affect the standard of living in Nysa. They often referred to emigration making people more worldly, more open and understanding, and bringing back “European values”:

"Thanks to emigration we have become worldly, we know more and we expect more. Returning or planning to return from emigration, we return to people, not places. Therefore, it is worthwhile and necessary to maintain social contacts." (N_RES_F_A_01).

Employment

One aspect of emigration noticed by some respondents, was the shortage of professionals, and the subsequent lack of some services:

I needed to repair the roof, I needed a roofer and I couldn't find a professional. A person who has a professional in his hand will always find a job. People go to Germany, Holland, Great Britain, Ireland. And if they only have friends or family, they go and work there and earn more. Most people went to the place where they paid the most. And we are visited by the citizens of Ukraine. The migration influx mitigates the effects a little, but it does not eliminate them. (N_RES_M_B_13).

As in Lukow, in Nysa too some residents perceived that emigration implies less competition for jobs and more employment options for those left behind:

If some people left, there was less competition for jobs". (N_RES_F_B_05).

Access to services

In Nysa, emigration was very much perceived as being connected to a lack of services. On the one hand, the emigration of some professionals, it means that fewer people with certain skills are available in the city (e.g. the roofer mentioned above). On the other hand, however, the departure of individuals also implied less contributions in taxes and thus less investments from the local government in many services.

The lack of young people meant that Nysa did not develop socially or culturally. There were no swimming pools, no events. Young people are the driving force behind development. (N_RES_F_A_01).

There were, of course, also residents who did not perceive any connection between emigration and the access to services or the broader development of the city:

The impact of migration on Nysa was rather neutral. I do not see a link between migration and the level of development of Nysa. If there were no migration, it would have been the same in Nysa. It did not affect the development of infrastructure, services, quality of life, institutions. I do not see a link between these elements. If there were no emigration, Nysa would have developed in the same way." (N_RES_F_B_05).

The emotional

The vast majority of people stressed that they neither envied nor assessed other people's decision to emigrate. It was the choice of each individual and there were some individual premises and family

stories behind each such decision. Everyone chooses their own path. People who wanted to achieve something emigrated. It was emphasized that most people went abroad to earn money, but there were also those who treated such a trip as an opportunity for development.

"People who were not afraid of challenges left. It was not only those who had financial problems who left. The willingness to know the world could also have been the reason for the trips." (N_RES_M_B_02)

Although a neutral, even empathic attitude prevailed in the majority of cases:

"As long as we are in the EU, everything is possible. Where we find a job and start a family, where we should be, where we should live. It is not a banner that we are supposed to be here and now. Europe has opened its doors and you can be where you want to be. We have to adapt to the conditions." (N_RES_M_B_11).

The relational

The vast majority of respondents stressed that they maintain contact and relations with people who emigrated, whether with family or friends. Social media and cheap flights to the UK, Ireland and the Netherlands make it much easier to do so.

"Now there are no problems with maintaining contacts with family - phone, Skype, Messenger, WhatsApp. There are also cheap airlines. Social media alleviate emigration. There are also financial transfers." (N_RES_M_B_13).

On the other hand, attention was also drawn to the negative aspect of family breakdown, the disintegration of such real, deep family ties and loss in a foreign world.

"These relations are formed very differently. Some families leave together because they cannot imagine life from a distance. And part of them can't agree on moving or returning and the families are falling apart. Unfortunately, these relations cannot be rebuilt". (N_RES_F_A_09).

Conclusion

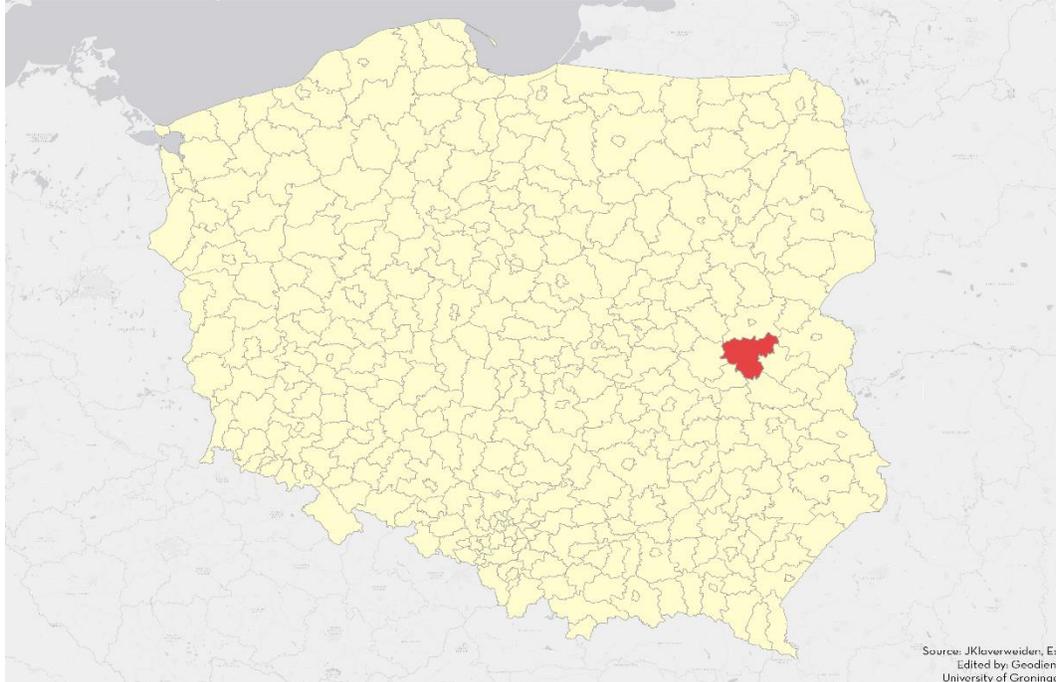
The case study investigated the relationship between migration and perceived social and spatial inequality for long-term residents in the sending city of Nysa. The findings suggest that resident opinions were split on the relationship between emigration and the standard of living in the area, between those perceiving positive effects, those perceiving negative effects and those perceiving no effects. However, emigration was very much perceived as being connected to a lack of services. On the one hand, the emigration of some professionals, it means that fewer people with certain skills are available in the city (e.g. the roofer mentioned above). On the other hand, however, the departure of individuals also implied less contributions in taxes and thus less investments from the local government in many services. Some respondents perceived less competition for jobs and more employment options for those left behind. Emotionally, most respondents were understanding of the necessity to emigrate, of the reasons for many people to do so, although some did mention the negative effects it had on interactions within the family.

Lukow

Profile of the area

Łuków County (Figure 9) is located in the northern part of the Lubelskie Voivodeship (Province), in the Eastern Poland. The capital of the county is Łuków, which is located 90 km away from the capital of the province – Lublin and 100 km from capital of the country - Warsaw.

Figure 9 Lukow County



Łuków has moderate transport connections with the cities of the region, as well as with Warsaw. In addition, Łuków is the seat of the county authorities. The Łuków district is experiencing a significant depopulation phenomenon, its population decreasing by 3% between 1995-2018, from 111,187 to 107,637 inhabitants, a trend that is expected to accelerate in the future. It is estimated that by 2050 the county of Łuków will have only 88,221 inhabitants. The share of elderly people (65+), currently constituting 20% of the county's population. Within the economic age groups of the population of the Łuków county, there is a noticeable decrease in the share of the population in the pre-working age bracket. According to a stakeholder, the county experiences significant out-migration towards academic centres like Warsaw and Lublin, where most students remain post-graduation, but also labour emigration towards countries like the UK, Germany or the Netherlands.

According to the stakeholder, individuals who emigrate for labour do so either through networks, or through employment agencies who mediate the emigration process. On the other hand, the labour shortages triggered by emigration are filled in by immigrants from countries such as Ukraine, Belarus, Russia or Nepal. Moreover, the effects of emigration, according to the stakeholder, can be observed through the transfer of funds, decrease of unemployment, and business creation by return migrants,

inspired by businesses seen abroad. Often, someone from the family looks at something abroad and transfers the business to the land of Lukow.

Methodology

The county of Łuków was selected as, based on data from the Central Statistical Office in Poland and existing literature, it constitutes an important area for emigration to the Netherlands and out-migration to the Warsaw metropolitan area. A total of 17 interviews were conducted with inhabitants of the Łuków county, both citizens of the city of Łuków and of the surrounded communes. All interviews were held face-to-face in Polish on the basis of the interview guide shared with all partners within the project. Almost all interviews were recorded (except 2 of them, where there was no permission for recording, but the interviewer took notes).

Findings and results

The sample comprises 17 individuals, of which, 47% are females. A total of five respondents were tertiary educated, eight had a secondary education and two primary education. The average age in the sample is 47.0 years old, the youngest person being 18 years old and the oldest 79 years old. In terms of occupations, the respondent's jobs included a fireman, a cook, four office clerks, two construction workers, two hotel workers, and an IT worker among others.

Standard of living

"In my opinion, nothing has changed." (L_RES_F_A_01). This is the most frequent answer given by respondents in Łuków and its surroundings to questions concerning the impact that emigration has had on their quality of life and on the place. Another respondent further elaborates:

Migration had no influence on the level of salaries, quality of life, employment opportunities. It also did not affect in any way the access to public services. These elements and migrations are completely unrelated." (L_RES_F_B_17).

Therefore, the aspect of a certain rootedness, connected with the everyday life of a given area certainly does not make it easier to conduct observations and formulate more general conclusions and opinions. For example, some people notice some changes, but do not connect them completely with the aspects of emigration. *"The investment has improved a little after the election of the new mayor."* (L_RES_F_C_02). Still others assess the investment and entrepreneurial opportunities of people who have left and send money to their families, or those who have already returned.

"From what I know, some have invested and others have forgiven money. They came, bought a BMW and smashed it." (L_RES_M_B_05).

Many people indicated that Łuków and its immediate surroundings are changing for the better, you can see development, currently there is a shortage of people to work and in the cultural sphere there is also an improvement. These opinions are also dependent on the material and life situation of the respondents and their personality type and character.

I do not feel any radical change in Łuków as a result of migration from here. You can always find a job here. It is known that the earnings of the game are better. I believe that if someone goes abroad to work, it means that they cannot find a job here, cannot make a living and partly runs away from here, and secondly they have greater needs and want to earn more. On the other hand, there are also people from abroad who come to us - especially Ukrainians, Belarusians, Georgians, Kazakhs, but there are also Chinese or a group of Nepalese who work in meat processing plants.” (L_RES_M_B_15).

Therefore, it is extremely difficult to attempt to indicate some general perceptions, that most interlocutors do not see the impact of emigration on their broadly understood living conditions. On the other hand, the spectrum of detailed opinions is very broad and depends more on the subjective characteristics of the respondent than on the objective character of the socio-economic situation of the city and its surroundings.

Employment

Some residents found the process of emigration to be beneficial for themselves, as there were more jobs available to choose from:

I'll say yes, I'm just in such a situation that they are looking for a worker, there are very few workers, and as they are already, they are rather people who jump from flower to flower. (L_RES_F_B_03).

While others do perceive a lack of employment opportunities within the area, different from the „better” times of 30 years ago, in socialist times.

If more people lived here, as it was 30 years ago, it would be completely different than it is now. Now there is such a vegetation, there used to be more jobs, the whole local population of Stoczek worked in Stoczek, Łuków, there was much more industry in this area and now what is happening? The prospects for employment are small, there are some private establishments for a dozen or so people each. (L_RES_M_B_10).

Access to services

One respondent mentioned the lack of infrastructure for the increasingly aging population of the city:

The social structure of Łuków is changing. Young people are leaving. There are many elderly and retired people, as well as children of school age. Either we are building a gym for the elderly or playgrounds for children. There is no infrastructure for middle-aged people. The economic consequences are there, because this is, after all, an outflow of people in old age. (L_RES_M_B_14).

The emotional

For most residents, there was an underlying understanding, acceptance and even empathy towards the people emigrating, and a reluctance to evaluate their decision to leave. This approach was characterised by both younger and older people with different experiences in the field of emigration.

"I believe that everyone is the master of their own destiny. Everyone has a different idea for their lives when they want to leave. (L_RES_M_A_07).

"People choose their own path, I don't blame them. How many people have so many characters. Some will go and come back, others will not." (L_RES_M_A_13).

The relational

The impact of emigration on the scope of relations can be divided into two groups: individual, family and local, neighbourly. In the first group, the respondents emphasized several aspects. First of all, they did not fully agree whether emigrations has a positive or negative impact on family and social ties. Some were positive about this:

"There are many possibilities for communication and people are still sitting on smartphones. Keeping in touch depends more on the strength of the relationship than on distance. If you want to, distance does not matter. You can live in a neighbouring cage and not see each other, and you can have two words with someone every evening who lives in England." (L_RES_F_A_16).

The second group of respondents, on the other hand, looked at the issue from a greater distance and saw more threats. *"Yes, contact is difficult at most by phone, if you see someone it's a couple of times a year." (L_RES_M_A_09).* Additionally, the aspect of broken families, children raised by one of the parents or grandparents and breaking the continuity of relations in general were emphasized.

"My family was beginning to break up and my husband and I came to the conclusion that it wasn't worth more money and we came back to Poland". (L_RES_F_B_03).

However, when it comes to the impact of emigration on neighbourly, local, village and social relations, the majority of people did not have an opinion in this respect. Most respondents said, *"I don't know", "I didn't think about it", "I don't see it".* Some respondents pointed out that the social structure within the area has been affected by emigration:

"Surely it would have been better if this region had developed. Young people leave, pensioners, pensioners and mothers with children who are not able to leave." (L_RES_F_B_03).

And this, apart from economic consequences, has above all social, neighbourly and social consequences - *"Towns gets sad". (L_RES_F_C_02).*

Conclusion

The case study investigated the relationship between migration and perceived social and spatial inequality for long-term residents in the sending city of Lukow. The findings suggest that, unlike in Nysa,

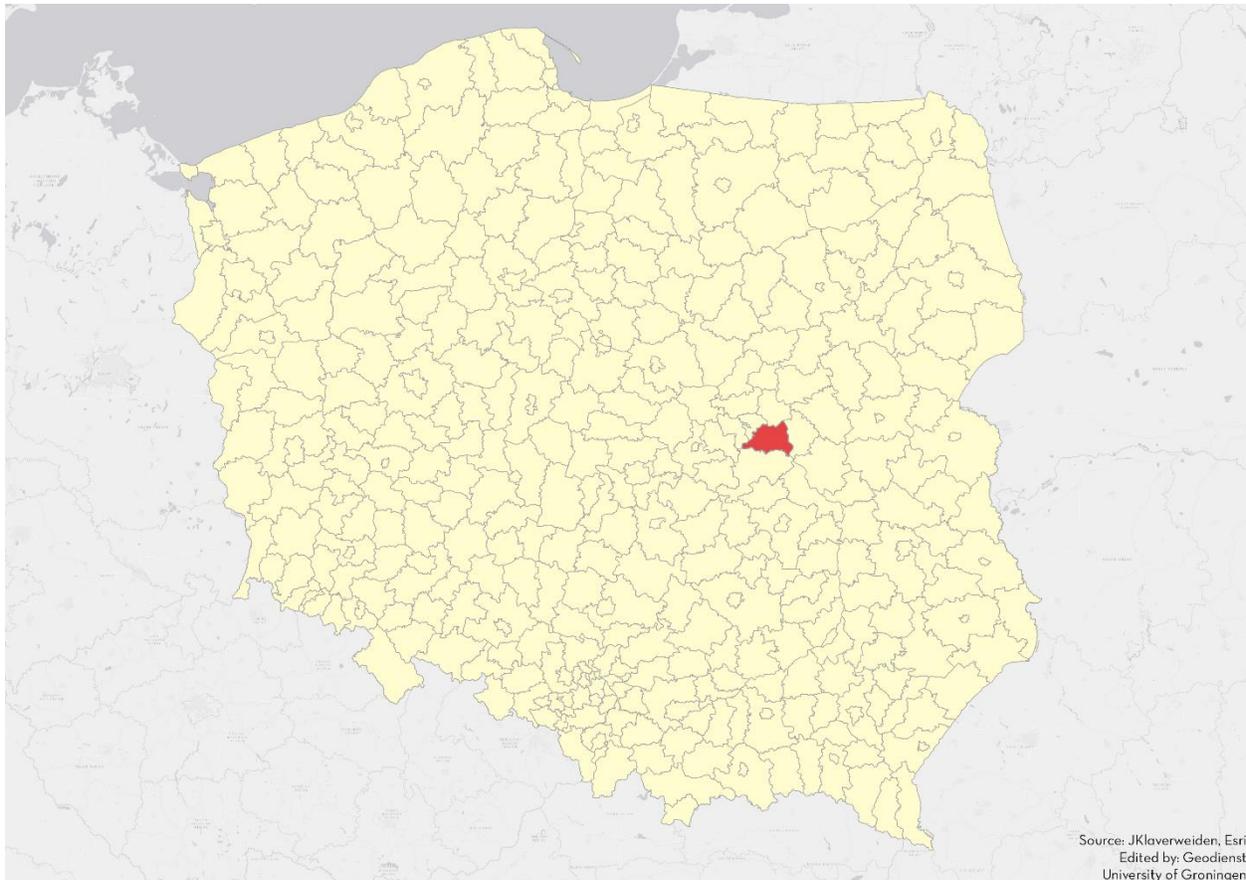
respondents in Lukow did not perceive a relationship between the standard of living in the place and migration to exist, whether that would have been negative or positive. Again, in a similar manner to respondents in Nysa, residents in Lukow, too, pointed out that emigration meant more job options for those left behind. In terms of services, a lack of infrastructure for the increasingly aging population of the city was mentioned by one resident.

Piaseczno

Profile of the area

Piaseczno (Figure 10) is a satellite town, situated in the direct vicinity of Warsaw. It is also the seat of a county (powiat), encompassing 10 municipalities (with four towns in this number). Most of these are subject to very strong sub-urbanisation pressure.

Figure 10 Piaseczno



The southern part of the Piaseczno county includes the fragments of a larger traditional horticultural region (apple production). In the period of the centrally planned economy (before 1989) the residential suburban housing estates had existed here already but were limited to a couple of localities. At the same time, Piaseczno was an industrial centre, in which the Polkolor factory, producing TV kinescopes, was established in the 1970s. Between 1991 and 2005 this production was being continued by the French corporation of Thomson. After 1990, the suburbanisation process accelerated.

Simultaneously, in contradistinction to many other municipalities, situated in the neighbourhood of Warsaw, multi-story housing construction developed in Piaseczno, price-wise competitive with respect to the developments inside Warsaw. In the western part of the county, located along the national road linking Warsaw with Cracow, numerous small private businesses have been concentrating already before 1990. With time, the companies, managed by immigrants from Asia, started to settle there.

The factors mentioned above caused that the county of Piaseczno acquired a unique (for Polish circumstances) social structure, composed to a large extent of various immigrant groups. It can be assumed, in a very rough manner, that the local community is composed of the following groups:

- Population, having lived in the county before (i.e. prior to 1989), which is composed of the village residents (partly the wealthier orchard owners and job commuters, working in Warsaw), employees of the local manufacturing plants (e.g. the Polkolor factory in Piaseczno, paper works in Konstancin-Jeziorna), and representatives of the “ancient” suburbanization (including also those from before 1939), concentrated in a couple of family housing estates (Konstancin, Skolimów, Zalesie, Magdalenka);
- Population, flowing in from Warsaw in the framework of mass suburbanization after 1990 (this process lasts until now), settling in dispersion, either on an own initiative and location, or in closed-out small estates of individual family and row houses;
- Population, having come from other parts of Poland, attracted by the Warsaw labour market and settling in the newly built housing blocks, where prices and rents are lower than in Warsaw itself;
- Ukrainian population, having arrived initially mainly for summer jobs (e.g. to work on horticultural farms and service to private estates – cleaning, babysitting etc.), but thereafter also taking up jobs in the local businesses and enterprises, located in Warsaw, profiting from the cheaper housing market in Piaseczno;
- Asian population, attracted by the companies emerged here during the 1990s, with Chinese, Vietnamese or Indian capital, concentrated primarily in the western part of the county (location of the Chinese shopping centre in Wólka Kosowska; in 2018 – more than 6 thousand job offers for persons from the countries mentioned, of which close to 2 500 for those originating from India).

The intensity of inflow of the newcomer population groups, mentioned above, was exceptionally high in the county of Piaseczno, compared to other regions of Poland and even to other counties in the vicinity of Warsaw. A complete transformation of the social structure of the town took place. In 2018, the county of Piaseczno registered a population of 185,000 persons, of whom 48 100 live in the town of Piaseczno, up from 25,300 in the year 1995.

Methodology

Regarding the case study in the context of WP5 in Poland we have conducted data for the three selected case regions in Poland concerning four identified migration flows: Ukrainian immigration, internal migrations, emigration to Ireland and the Netherlands. The interviews with the migrants and

residents was proceeded by desk research and interviews with key stakeholders in each of the case study region. The case regions (LAU 1) has been selected based on statistical data gathered so far for the project research.

The study performed in Piaseczno county included the structured interviews in the County Office of Piaseczno (deputy head of the county) and in the Labour Office (chief manager). Besides, 46 interviews were carried out with the residents of the town, of which 16 with the native population (residents living mostly in Piaseczno, Konstancin, and the rural - horticultural areas in the region), 15 with the immigrants from eastern Poland (county of Łuków and administrative units in its vicinity, mostly: Biała Podlaska county and Siedlce county), and 15 with the immigrants from Ukraine (both eastern and western Ukraine).

Findings and results

The sample comprises a total of 46 individuals, of which 16 are long-terms residents, 15 are internal migrants and 15 are Ukrainian immigrants. In terms of gender, 50% of the residents, 66% of the internal migrants and 60% of the Ukrainian immigrants, are female. In terms of education, 56% of the residents, 80% of the internal migrants and 33% of the Ukrainian immigrants are tertiary educated. The average age is 40.0 years for the residents group, the youngest respondent being 18 years old and the oldest 63 years old; the average age among internal migrants is 39.7 years, the youngest respondent being 25 years old and the oldest 55 years old; and lastly the average age for the Ukrainian group is 36.6 years, the youngest being 21 years old and the older 64 years old.

(Non)-Migration decisions and determinants

The **Ukrainian immigrants** originate both from western and eastern Ukraine (before the war in Ukraine, economic migration to Poland more often originated from the western part of the country because of geographical proximity), hence their experiences and motivations are strongly diversified. Most often they came from Lviv and its vicinity, Kiev and its vicinity, Ivanofrankowsk, Zhytomyr, Volyn and the Dnietropetrov region.

Most respondents have been coming to Poland for many years. Some of them are Ukrainians of Polish origin. A large proportion of the respondents have family there, having moved either before the respondents, e.g. children arriving to study in Poland (then it was an additional motivation to leave Ukraine), or were "brought" after acclimatization in Poland (children, parents).

In general, respondents value contacts with family and friends:

I talk to my friends, my mother every day, these relationships are important, at my age it is harder to establish deeper relationships with new people." (P_MUA_F_A_14).

The reasons for migrating among the Ukrainian respondents were mainly of economic character, although some respondents mentioned geographical proximity and cultural affinity ("*one can easily learn the language, it is close by*" – P_MUA_F_A_15). Some migrate only for short periods of time to Poland, mostly for financial reasons:

First time it was accidental. My husband died and I was offered a temporary job to replace my friend to work with my child. Nice intelligent family, I feel very good in Poland. My grandfather was from Poland, I have Polish roots. (P_MUA_F_B_02)

Others, however, intend to stay permanently in Poland, invoking also the political situation in Ukraine as factoring into their decision:

First of all, the war scared me, and secondly, I did not accept the law. (...) I didn't like living in Ukraine. I didn't get enough money that I earned there. I was afraid of the political situation that was at that time. I was afraid of this instability. (P_MUA_F_A_15)

The **internal migrants** presented similarly varied histories of migration. Some decided to move directly after graduation, either in Warsaw or in their previous place of residence (Biała Podlaska), while others moved to Piaseczno during their professional career, often due to the lack of any other prospects:

There was no work in Łuków, so it was the only indicator that one had to change the environment and look for something else. (M_PL_F_A_07).

A large network effect could also be observed among respondents, people coming to Piaseczno encouraged by those who had come here earlier, particularly visible in the case of circular migration (word of mouth) trends similar to those in international migrations. An important feature of all respondents, regardless of the period of residence in the region, are strong links with the region of origin. They manifest themselves in maintaining social contacts with family and friends (trips once a week, once a month, occasional) and financial support for families (parents or children). Over time, some natural loosening of contacts is noticeable as a consequence of a stronger involvement of the region of migration or migration movements of families remaining at the point of outflow.

I used to go very often, every 2 weeks, every 3 and holidays I also sometimes spent there, (...) but now only for sure on all holidays [Christmas, Easter] and other occasional events, it also happens that if we have a free weekend we go. Now it is less common, or they come to me. (M_PL_F_A_11).

In terms of reasons for migrating, wages still constituted the main motivation for changing the place of residence:

Here one can earn money, get a job, while there (...) no sense to work for the minimum wage. (M_PL_F_B_13)

I reckoned that work I am doing is not adequate to my earnings. (M_PL_M_B_15).

In time, however, the range of attracting factors becomes broader, with respondents referring to satisfaction with work done: “here one gets more respect” (M_PL_F_B_10); possibility of personal development: “here the perspectives are much wider” (M_PL_M_A_06), “much bigger personal development, many more opportunities for additional work” (M_PL_F_B_10).

On the other hand, most **residents** were born in Piaseczno, and felt like they belonged to the place. There was also a group of people who moved to Piaseczno county, but this happened in the previous era of city development (migrations to work in large factories, before the political changes in Poland). The vast majority of the residents have not considered migrating either domestically or internationally. Their non-migrating decision was conscious and partly resulted from family obligations, or from developing prospects for personal and professional development. Several respondents also emphasized that they do not rule out future migration.

*We care more about peace and living closer to the family. We wanted to start a family.
(P_RES_F_A_02),*

Standard of living

Among **residents**, the material aspects of well-being were perceived in very different ways. Some of the respondents did not notice the impact of immigration on their quality of life in the area, some noticed a positive impact on business development (increasing the companies' turnover), while many highlighted negative aspects, such as changes in the safety of the area or the lowering of the wages because of Ukrainian immigration. An important issue raised was also the concentration of negative phenomena on some housing estates and in some areas of the city.

Most **Ukrainian** assessed that their standard of living had improved since migrating to Poland. Many mentioned the fact that they can afford more, to buy and to travel and to feel more like in Europe.

*I like life here, I can buy a lot of things for a child, I do not refuse him some things that was difficult in Ukraine. If a child asks for something and you can't buy it means something is wrong. As for the standard of living there, it was much worse, and nothing improved.
(P_MUA_F_A_01)*

I felt more in Europe, I earned money and we went on holiday to Turkey. I earned and could afford to rest. I have more money for other things. (P_MUA_F_B_13)

All **internal migrant** respondents pointed out that their standard of living has improved (to a greater or lesser extent) post-migration and emphasized that this would not be possible in their origin area:

Of course [our living standard improved], we can live in a detached house with a garden, we can afford to educate the children properly, that we can use our own cars, therefore we can use the attractions that are in the area, go on vacation to other countries. People who stayed there could not afford such a normal life. (...) There has not changed much, which does not mean that these people are less happy. (...) as a rule, they live in the same houses. They drive the same cars, have the same job, or are already retired, just a little bit by prescription. (M_PL_F_B_12)

Employment

In terms of employment, some **residents** emphasised the positive impact of Ukrainian immigration, particularly in performing jobs that the Polish themselves do not want to perform.

Emigrants come and perform simpler activities in Poland that Poles do not want to perform. (M_RES_F_A_02).

Some residents, however, felt that immigrants represent competition for jobs that they themselves can do and that by being more flexible, they tend to lower the wages:

People say differently, some would not want Ukrainians to come here, that they are taking jobs from Poles. Wealthy people will rather take a Ukrainian to work than a Pole. (M_RES_F_A_01)

For the **internal migrants**, an important issue in relation to employment in the area, was the opportunity to find a satisfying job, as well as great opportunities to change it into a better, more interesting one.

This was not the case for the **Ukrainian** respondents, many of whom, although generally satisfied with their work, felt that there is still room for improvement in terms of remuneration, being promoted at work or being able to find jobs for higher levels of education.

“One would like better, but work is good, the boss is a very good person, but more work could be needed, I like and want to work.” (P_MUA_F_A_01)

Housing

A couple of **residents** in Piaseczno perceived that the influx of people in the area led to the demolition of old buildings to be replaced by the more efficient apartment buildings, which destroy the aesthetic of the city:

Buildings that were built in the old years, they can be demolished for new investments, to creating new ones. And the housing estates that are being built are very concentrated and very close to each other (in Piaseczno itself - blocks of flats Ptasia, Bema, Prestige, Julianów, Józefostaw - more apartments and closed estates). The structure of the old market square, the old infrastructure is disturbed. And in 15-20 years, if someone comes to Piaseczno, they will not know the places he knew, the buildings do not connect with the character and structure of the street. (P_RES_M_B_09)

Some **Ukrainian** respondents, on the other hand, focused on the housing conditions in Poland, compared to Ukraine, and in particular, on the possibility to buy a house. Generally, respondents perceived it very difficult to buy a place for themselves in Poland:

Unfortunately, we do not have our own, we rent a house with my husband, they refused us a loan. Housing conditions are acceptable, but I would like to have something of my

own. In Ukraine I lived in my flat, I can't sell it now, because the price has dropped significantly. (P_MUA_F_A_15)

Access to services

Some **residents** perceived that immigration and in-migration has affected the access to some services. Some mentioned queues when visiting the doctors' office, queues in shops, and more real estate developing. On the other hand, some residents believed that most immigrants and internal migrants do not make use of the services in Piaseczno, because such services are cheaper where they come from (applies to internal and external immigration). One respondent argued that the city has failed to adapt its services yet to the increasing number of inhabitants in the city:

I would like the services to be adapted to the number of inhabitants, while the city is not able to implement everything on the surface because there are no vacant areas. (...) The city cannot cope with communication, services, premises or administration, because the number of these inhabitants is growing, and we do not know how many people are not registered and use the entire infrastructure of Piaseczno and the surrounding area. (P_RES_M_B_09)

The **Ukrainian** respondents evaluated the availability of services to be better in Poland than in Ukraine, although they noticed the sometimes-higher prices for medical services. The advantage of Piaseczno was the proximity of services (medical, school, gym) and availability of shops:

Here there are more products and it is cheaper than in Ukraine. There are empty shelves in stores in Ukraine, and here everything is available. (P_MUA_F_A_10)

The **internal migrants** too noticed the availability of services in the city, although they also pointed to negative aspects:

This [area] has its good and bad sides. Good is certainly economic development and the multitude of companies, the opportunity to work. Negatives, on the other hand, are overcrowding, communication and educational difficulties (necessity to build new schools), parking possibilities in the city, journeys to / from Warsaw. (M_PL_F_B_09)

Environment

In terms of environmental aspects, one **resident** mentioned the lack of green spaces in the city, although he did mention their availability in nearby areas:

There are very few green areas in Piaseczno itself (only the City Park - now after modernization), it is good that Piaseczno is surrounded by areas such as Zalesie Dolne, Zalesie Górne, Powsin and Konstancin, where there are lungs for Piaseczno. Most of those arriving do not look at it, they look at the fact that flats are much cheaper than in Warsaw and they mainly choose that they have the opportunity to find a good job and can change conditions. (P_RES_M_B_09)

Most **Ukrainian** respondents, in turn, positively evaluated the availability of public spaces (parks and squares) and cleanliness of the city:

“I like it here, the roads here are very nice compared to ours in Ukraine, there is a lot of greenery. It's very nice here in Piaseczno. As far as the environment and environment are concerned, it is better here than in Ukraine.” (P_MUA_F_A_07)

The emotional

There was no generalizable feeling towards migration across all the **resident** responders. Some felt that migration is a positive thing:

I see migration positively. It's difficult in Ukraine, they come to Poland. Poles are leaving and Ukrainians are coming. (P_RES_F_A_01)

Other felt more neutral towards it, considering that is a natural process that one has to just accept:

“Migration is an unavoidable phenomenon, because the geographical location is such and not different, I think it will stop at some point, because people will say that there will be no services available to them, we do not have a cinema, we do not have swimming pools, we do not have such attractions that can attract more. (P_RES_M_B_09)

While some expressed uneasiness at the increasing number of people in the city:

I have also heard about negative aspects, about crime, theft and vandalism, which is strongly associated with the influx of people. (P_RES_M_B_14)

In the case of the **internal migrants**, most felt happier after the move to Piaseczno, although many considered to have been happy in the origin area as well:

I live comfortably and well. I have all the needs met, I have a job, a home, a family, I have all these intellectual goods (...) I have nothing to complain about.” (M_PL_F_B_09)

Some remarked that they are happy to an extent, indicating feelings of homesickness:

If you come here, you miss home very much, you go home - you don't want to come back here, but you know, you must.” (M_PL_F_B_14)

Most **Ukrainian** respondents declared feeling happy both in Poland and in Ukraine, however, some of them associated their future with Poland, because of the political and economic situation in Ukraine:

“In Ukraine I was also happy I had a home, a family a job. After the death of my husband, I had to take over some duties, and I was rather the housewife and had to take over the man's duties. Financial security is important, but not the most important thing. I feel happy because I have a group of friends who think similarly about life.” (P_MUA_F_B_06)

The relational

Some **residents** perceived that the influx of people into the city has changed social interactions in the area:

I knew my neighbours before and now I don't. Social gatherings, we supported each other, I had colleagues and friends. (...) Younger people from Ukraine are coming to Piaseczno, so there is a chance for quick assimilation. (P_RES_M_B_09)

The **Ukrainian** respondents on the other emphasized that it is easy to meet new people, but that they mostly have close interactions with fellow Ukrainians. While they meet Polish national at work, they do not interact much with them beyond that. Some respondents emphasized that, unlike in Ukraine, in Poland they did not have as much time for contacts with the community, because they had to work, take care of children and rarely they had time for other activities. In Ukraine, their social life was richer, because there they had a permanent group of trusted friends.

I feel normal here, it's fun. But people close themselves individually and contact is often difficult. It used to be different, now everyone has their problems. It's the same in Ukraine. Once, when a man built a house, half the village helped, and now the neighbour to the neighbour goes to work for money. (P_MUA_M_B_05)

For the **internal migrants**, on the other hand, a common feature was the development of friendships and families in the receiving area and the gradual integration within the local community. The exceptions are circular migrations, where connections with the destination area relate to the workplace and colleagues for the most part, and social life is focused in the origin area.

"Yes, the community is only within my work. I am happy, but my home is in Piszczac"
(M_PL_F_B_13).

Most respondents pointed to the fact of having friends both met already in the destination area (in the workplace, in organizations in which they operated, including church), as well as having friends from the origin area (in particular in the case of their parallel migration to the Piaseczno region or to Warsaw). A common feature of all respondents was the lack of greater interaction with the Ukrainian community in Piaseczno. Respondents also noticed the change of pace in the receiving society, compared to the sending one:

[Here] People are very nice and friendly, they have time to talk, here is rush, there is no time to meet, it is more formal. (...) (M_PL_F_B_10)

Conclusion

The case study investigated the relationship between migration and perceived social and spatial inequality for three groups in Piaseczno, namely long-term residents, internal migrants and Ukrainian immigrants. The findings suggest that most residents did not perceive migration to have affected the area, although they were some noticing the booming business sector or perceived loss of safety. Some residents were happy with the influx of migrants, feeling that Ukrainian immigrants, in particular, perform the jobs

Polish locals do not want to perform. Perceptions on the impact on services varied, with some believing there is a pressure on public services like health, while others perceiving that migrants do not make use of services as much. Generally, residents sympathised with migrants, which some felt were being used as cheap labour.

Most internal migrants moved to Piaseczno because this is where they found employment opportunities, many times aided by a string network of friends or family members already in the area. All internal migrant respondents pointed out that their standard of living has improved (to a greater or lesser extent) post-migration and emphasized that this would not be possible in their origin area. Most respondents considered themselves happy in Piaseczno, although they were happy in the sending area too. A common feature among respondents was the smooth integration into the local community, developing friendships in the area with local residents.

For the Ukrainian migrants, the motivations for migrating were mainly of an economic nature, although some respondents mentioned geographical proximity and cultural affinity. Most assessed their standard of living to have improved since migrating to Poland, being able to afford more, to buy and to travel and to feel more like in Europe. Many respondents declared feeling happy both in Poland and in Ukraine. However, some of them associated their future with Poland, because of the political and economic situation in Ukraine, even though most mentioned difficulties with integrating into the local community.

5. Romania

Romania is a main country of origin for many migration patterns within Europe, three of which – Greece, Wales and the Netherlands, are covered in this project. It became important for us, therefore, to trace back this flow to Romania, where we interviewed long-term residents about the perceived effects of emigration on the place, the community and individuals themselves. We selected the village of Bosanci, in the county of Suceava, Romania, as the location for our case study. The Suceava county itself was selected in an effort to match the destination and origin areas of Romanian migrants interviewed in the Netherlands. Additionally, Suceava exhibits one of the highest emigration rates in Romania and is located in the poorest region of the country, Moldova. Once in Suceava, we contacted the county administrative body (Consiliul Judetean) which suggested two villages as potential research locations: Bosanci and Marginea, both exhibiting high rates of emigration. We excluded Marginea because representatives from the municipality were not available for an interview, and because it has been previously researched, thus not constituting a new case. Moreover, due to its geographical location, at the edge of the county, Bosanci represented a great example of international and internal migration dynamics, and of within and between villages inequality.

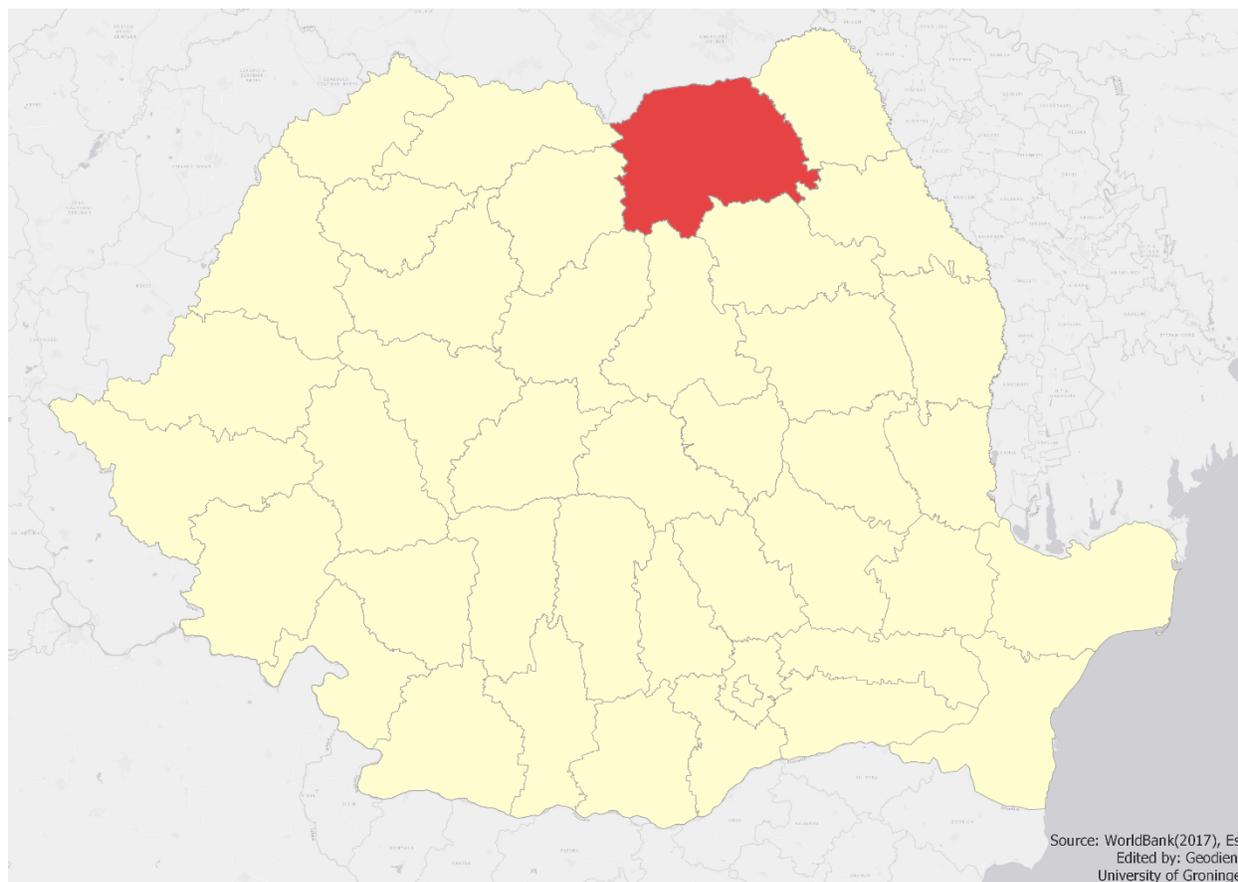
Bosanci, Suceava County

Profile of the area

The village of Bosanci is one of two villages in the commune of Bosanci, situated 8 km away from the city of Suceava, in the county of Suceava (Figure 11), the North-East region of Romania. The region of North-East is one of the least socio-economically developed in Romania. In 2016, the gross domestic

product per capita in the region was 23,754 RON, lower than the national average of 38,826 RON, and substantially lower than the capital region of 90,718 RON (Institutul National de Statistica 2019a). In 2017, the relative poverty rate in Nord-East was 33.4% compared to 23.6% at the national level (Institutul National de Statistica 2019c), while the at-risk-of-poverty-and-exclusion rate was 43.9% compared to 35.7% at the national level (Institutul National de Statistica 2019b). In the county of Suceava, specifically, in 2017, 14 out of a total of 16 cities had running water and 46 out of a total of 97 communes²⁴(Institutul National de Statistica 2019e). Similarly, 14 cities and 37 communes had access to a sewage system, and in 8 cities and 4 communes, households had access to natural gas (idem).

Figure 11 Suceava County



Within the broader context of a less developed region, the village of Bosanci seems to be undergoing a process of investment and economic development. New businesses are created within the village, some becoming county-wide renowned. In 2018, there were 357 persons employed²⁵ in the commune, a 3% increase over the previous year. This is a relatively low number, considering that half of the population in the commune is of working age. Nevertheless, it can be explained by two factors, namely

²⁴ A commune is an administrative unit comprised of several villages.

²⁵ We cannot compute the employment rate, as we do not have information on the total labour force within the commune (only at the county level).

emigration and informal work. Almost a third of the village's population has emigrated abroad for work or family reunification, significantly reducing the share of active labour force. The second factor, informal work, is a characteristic of rural life in Romania and implies that much work performed informally will not be reflected in official statistics²⁶. Information on the unemployment rate at the village or commune level was not available, however, we know that in the county of Suceava, in 2017, it had a value of 5.4% (Institutul National de Statistica 2019d). The unemployment rate was higher for men (5.8%) than for women (5%) (idem). Information provided by a municipality representative would seem to suggest not only that the unemployment rate is low within the village of Bosanci, but that, on the contrary, the local economy is experiencing a labour shortage. Indeed, out of an estimated population of little over 6,000 inhabitants, a municipality representative estimated that approximately 2,000 young individuals (under the age of 40) have emigrated in recent times. Countries of emigration include Germany, Austria, the UK, the Netherlands, and particularly Belgium, where, due to network effects, a significant number of people from Bosanci have emigrated to.

Methodology

The researcher spent one week in the county of Suceava, travelling to the village every morning for interviews. Interviews were carried in respondent's private homes or their workplaces. Recruitment was carried out by approaching individuals on the street, knocking on doors, participating in local social activities (i.e. going to church) and through snowballing. An attempt was made to have a balanced sample in terms of gender, age and education level, which was mostly achieved. An estimated 60% of the sample is female, 60% is high educated and 46% is between the ages of 25-45.

Informed consent involved explaining the goals and aims of the research project and the interview with each participant, and by ensuring anonymity and the option of withdrawal from the interview at any time. Contact details of the Groningen University research team were provided, and participants acknowledged their consent through a provided consent form.

Findings and Results

The sample comprises 15 individuals, of which, 60% are females. A total of 9 respondents were tertiary educated, 4 were high school educated, 1 had a secondary education and 1 primary education. The average age in the sample is 39.3 years old, the youngest person being 18 years old and the oldest 61 years old. Almost two thirds of the sample were married (60%). In terms of occupations, 4 of the respondents were shop sellers, 5 were public functionaries, 2 were pharmacists, 2 were priests and 2 were unemployed, but worked informally for other people.

(Non)-migration history and the decision to stay

The majority of the respondents (80%) has been living in the village all of their lives, with the remaining respondents having lived in the village for 20 years or more. Most respondents expressed a

²⁶ For more information, see <https://bns.ro/images/studii-si-cercetari/Economiainformalasiimpactuleiasuprapieteimuncii.pdf>.

deep attachment to the village, and the country more broadly, many using this attachment as an explanation as to why they have never emigrated or why they would not do so again in the future.

I have not considered emigrating, although I'm sure I would find good employment opportunities with my qualifications. But no, I'm too attached to this country and I do not think I would successfully integrate into another one. (Female, 25, Tertiary education)

About 60% of the respondents have emigrated at some point in their lives, many in several countries. Countries of emigration included Austria, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Greece, Italy and the UK. Belgium, in particular, is a main destination point for the people in Bosanci – an estimated 2,000 Bosanceni²⁷ live in Anderlecht alone²⁸, a clear example of network effects. For many of those who have decided to emigrate, returning was often not a voluntary decision. People returned because of changing situations at home (e.g. sickness of parents, death of spouse) or because of their changing circumstances at destination (e.g. loss of visa).

Standard of living

Most respondents agreed that the village has changed tremendously in the past 5-10 years. Many pointed to the paving of the streets, the extension of electricity, sewage system, running water, street lighting, and the aesthetic and size of the houses, as examples. Generally, the respondents seemed to be content with the quality of services in the village, and oftentimes to consider it to be better off than nearby places, but more importantly, better off than places in the Western part of Romania, the richest area in the country, attracting most investments and internal migration.

There are many grocery stores, small and large [...] Compared with the Western part of the country, where there are factories and plants, where people remain in the country, stay locally, individuals themselves, do not achieve as much [material wealth] as people in this area. (Female, 39, High School education).

The standard of living, however, has not increased evenly for everyone, and emigration seemed to have increased the level of inequality within the village. While most of the families with at least one person abroad experienced a surge in monetary resources and increased ability to consume goods and services, those who have not emigrated, and the elderly, in particular, were more susceptible to poverty.

I don't see any changes for the better, I think it's all changed for the worse. Personally, for me, the situation is worse now... (Male, 46, Secondary education)

Employment

Most respondents agreed that the number of jobs available in the village, and the nature of these jobs has changed substantially in the past 5-10 years. The salary increase might be due to the village (and

²⁷ The residents of the Bosanci village call themselves Bosanceni.

²⁸ As estimated by a stakeholder from the municipality.

the country more generally) experiencing a labour shortage, particularly in key sectors like construction. The labour shortage seems to be affecting village projects, with the municipality complaining of not being able to find workers for ongoing projects, for which funding is available already.

There are many jobs available and it think this is very much related to migration. Many have returned and have opened up businesses, warehouses, workshops, greenhouses, generating many jobs. (Female, 38, Tertiary education)

Access to services

Most respondents seemed satisfied with the quality and accessibility of the services in the village, which underwent a process of modernization, including the provision of electricity, running water and a sewage system in some parts of the village, the renovation of the firehouse and one of the schools and the building of a medical clinic, the first in the village. However, there didn't seem to be much agreement among respondents as to the extent to which these changes can be attributed to migration. Most respondents did not perceive a connection between improvements in the quality and access to services and migration:

Here I can talk about changes for the better. The school is being extended and modernized, the firehouse the same, they're building a new medical clinic, I don't know, here there are probably some EU money as well... but this doesn't have anything to do with migration; what, am I going to go abroad and work and then put all my money into this? ... (Male, 46, Secondary education)

Environment

Generally, most respondents seemed to be satisfied with the surrounding environment and the way the village has evolved. When asked to specify an aspect of the environment which has changed in recent times, many respondents pointed to traffic, particularly in the presence and the absence of emigrants:

Since the streets have been paved, there's so much traffic now. Now everyone has a car, where there are more siblings, you have 2-3 cars. (Male, 38, Primary education)

Asked whether the perceived changes in the surrounding environment are related to migration, some respondents seem to believe they are. One respondent pointed to the fluctuations in traffic as reflecting migration fluctuations in and out of the village, while another pointed to the dual effect of migration on the improved aesthetic of the houses, both as source of financing and a source of inspiration:

The streets are clean, some streets are paved, there are a couple of parks, the houses are modernized, not the old peasant houses of old times. People get inspired from the architecture and the standard of living abroad and then bring it back to Bosanci. (Female, 25, Tertiary education)

The emotional

Several aspects related to the emotional effects of emigration, became evident from the interviews. To begin with, emigration was perceived to generally affect the emotional wellbeing of the children and the elderly left behind in the village, for whom the material benefits derived from migration did not always seem to offset the emotional costs.

They (the children) do not realise it, but they are affected by it. They don't exteriorize their feelings but are affected by the departure of their parents. (Female, 26, Tertiary education)

Yet, when asked about their own feelings in relation to emigration, the responses were much more nuanced. For some respondents the departure of their close family (i.e. wife or children, siblings) did not only affect them emotionally, with feelings of sadness and desolation, but also physically, altering their behaviour. One respondent mentioned sleeping with his day clothes on, on the couch, not even having the desire to change or go to the bedroom.

I have a sister in the US, and two brothers in Italy. My wife and my daughter are away, in Brussels. Of course, I'm very affected by their absence, many times I arrive home and sleep without even taking my clothes off. Is this life? This is not a way to live. I talk to them constantly, but I feel like the relationships have cooled off since they're away. (Male, 46, Secondary education)

The relational

In most cases, migration was perceived to significantly alter the dynamic of relationships within a family, or between friends. The interviews revealed a spectrum of experiences, from negative, to positive and in-between. The respondents who did not experience detrimental changes to their relationships with family and friends abroad, mentioned constant communication over various means, keeping everyone in the loop for minor and major life occurrences. In these cases, the relationships concerned siblings, which might be significantly different than that of parents and children.

I think, it has changed [my relationships with friends and family] for the better, because if you see people more rarely [laughs]. No, relationships are ok, at least in our family, I cannot talk for the people in the village. (Female, 39, High School education)

Conclusion

The case study has explored how long-term residents in the village of Bosanci, Romania, experience the effects of emigration on their quality of life and wellbeing, and on the place. Drawing on a total of 15 semi-structured interviews with residents, the case revealed that the decision to stay and/or not emigrate again was often linked to deep attachment to the village and the country, more generally. Most respondents agreed that the village has changed, for the better, from a material point of view, but has changed for the worse socially, and few respondents associated the material changes in the village to migration, although many associated migration with (negative) social changes. Migration was perceived to have amplified existing differences in the standard of living and quality of life between Bosanci and neighbouring villages, and existing cleavages in terms of material wellbeing, in a sense exacerbating

economic inequality within the village. Importantly, the local government was perceived as being essential in fostering the economic development of the village and is emerging as a key stakeholder in harnessing the positive effects of emigration.

6. Wales

Primary data gathering for the research in Wales, United Kingdom, concentrated on four participant groups, namely German and Romanian immigrants, internal migrants and long-term residents, and two case regions. The two case regions – Ceredigion and Swansea Bay – were chosen to provide a spatial contrast between rural (Ceredigion) and post-industrial regions (Swansea) of Wales. These spaces dominate imaginative geographies of Wales, while also raising different issues about wellbeing and quality of life in relation to migration.

Ceredigion, Wales

Profile of the area

Ceredigion (Figure 12) is one of 22 local authorities in Wales, with a total population of 75,922 at the 2011 Census. It is an area with a 'greying' population, with the 16-24 cohort buoyed by the presence of two universities in the county.

Figure 12 Ceredigion



The 2011 Census reported slightly more females than males. 2.7% of the population were from a Black, Asian, or minority ethnic (BAME) background (compared to 4.9% across Wales). 51.1% of the county considered themselves Welsh (compared to 63.3% across Wales).

While statistics are provided for Ceredigion as a whole, it is important to note the socio-economic divide in the county. The northern part, around Aberystwyth stretching down to Aberaeron, is more affluent and employment is centred around institutions such as Aberystwyth University (around 8,500 students), the National Health Service, the National Library of Wales, the Welsh Government, and Ceredigion County Council, as well as a number of employers making use of the overspill of graduates from Aberystwyth University. The south, around the Teifi Valley, is more focussed on agriculture and tourism, although there is a small university at Lampeter (around 2,000 students) and a small RAF facility in Aberporth. Consequently, there are considerable differences between the areas (such as a concentration of the 18-24 age group around Aberystwyth, which would otherwise be substantially lower in the county due to the out-migration of young people for education and employment opportunities).

Although there have historically been pockets of mineral extraction and textile production, Ceredigion is mainly associated with an agricultural economy, primarily livestock. Fisheries have also developed in small ports along the county's coast. Tourism has also grown in the region, with many efforts to attract tourists centred on the county's landscape and leisure opportunities. Tourism in Ceredigion has mostly drawn the UK domestic market. As the combination of agriculture and tourism suggests, the food sector also has a strong presence in Ceredigion, with proportionally more people working in food services in the wider Mid Wales region than in Wales as a whole. Retail has also been the lifeblood of local townscapes, supporting around 1 in 10 jobs, but an ongoing squeeze on the sector has seen the number of retail enterprises in Mid Wales decline by almost 15% since 2010 (AECOM 2018).

Ceredigion's lack of an urban centre has posed major challenges for the county in terms of the predominant agglomeration-based economic policies in the UK. One response to this has been advocacy from Ceredigion County Council and the neighbouring county of Powys for a Mid Wales Growth Deal. While some funding has been announced, this is considerably smaller than 'pots' made available for City Deals in the UK, and it is too early to say whether the growth deal will have the capacity to underpin significant long-term growth and development.

In the year ending on 30th June 2019, 19.4% of Ceredigion residents were economically inactive (students are excluded). The unemployment (ILO²⁹) rate in Ceredigion in 2018 was 3.0, compared with 4.2% across Wales. There is no Ceredigion breakdown for unemployment by gender, but West Wales and the Valleys had a ratio of 4.5% in 2018, and 5.3% for males. 1.7% of Ceredigion residents had claimed Jobseeker's Allowance in 2018, compared with 3.0% across Wales. The median gross weekly income for Ceredigion in 2018 was £486.50, compared to £509.00 across Wales. 20% of Ceredigion's households were workless in the year ending 30th June 2017. 28.3% of Ceredigion worked in the public sector in the

²⁹ This includes those who are out of work, are looking for a job, and can start within two weeks, and those who've found a job which they'll start within two weeks.

year ending 30th June 2019, with 71.6% working in the private sector (compared to 26.6:73.3 across Wales).

Methodology

In Ceredigion, interviews were conducted with residents, internal migrants and German immigrants. Recruitment for residents and internal migrants was largely carried out by mobilising the researchers' own networks, making contacts through attending local events and social spaces, and snowballing. Recruitment for the German respondents was largely based on advertisements in Aberystwyth University's weekly bulletin, through identified gatekeepers (such as German teachers and the University of Aberystwyth's Erasmus officer), and through snowballing. Researchers also made some contacts through attending local events.³⁰

Informed consent involved explaining the goals and aims of the research project and the interview with each participant, and by ensuring anonymity and withdrawal from the interview at any time. Contact details of the research team were provided, and participants acknowledged their consent through a provided consent form.

Findings and results

The sample comprises a total of 30 interviewees, 8 of which long-term residents, 14 German immigrants and 8 internal migrants. In terms of gender, 5 residents, 5 internal migrants and 11 German immigrants are female. In terms of education, 7 of the residents, all internal migrants and 13 of the German immigrants are tertiary educated. In terms of age, the youngest resident interviewed is 25 years old and the oldest is 67 years old, the youngest internal migrant is 38 years old while the oldest is 69 years old, and among the German immigrants, the oldest respondent is 21 years old and the oldest 70 years old.

Migration decisions and determinants

For **internal migrants**, education served as the initial driver for a number of interviewees to leave the areas where they had been raised. For most, this was going on to university or further education. Lifestyle opportunities were also commonly noted in Ceredigion. 001 *"was a kind of eco person"*, and drawn to environmentalist and alternative lifestyles in the area, which *"is a much cleaner, wonderful place to live."* She recalled first visiting in the 1970s to volunteer: *"I was nineteen on a nature reserve ... I saw some dolphins in the bay and I thought ... I want to find out why you should live."* Retirees 012 and 013, while not sharing these ecological goals, had regularly taken holidays in Wales and, as 013 recalls, *"we made a decision quite early in our marriage that ... we would actually retire to this area. ... I think we both found a love of this area"*.

³⁰ Engagement with participants from Aberystwyth's twin town in Germany, Kronberg-im-Taunus, also grew into a fork from the research, but is not reported on here.

On the other hand, **German** respondents did not speak about a specific desire to leave Germany as a 'push' factor; indeed, most appeared to be enticed more by 'pull' factors. For some life in Germany was unhappy, particularly in comparison to time spent abroad:

I only knew I had to leave Germany because I was desperately depressed there. I mean the time before that, right before that I was in Germany for ten months in between and it was the most horrific time in my live because I didn't want to be there. I didn't enjoy the job. (002)

Push factors can also be multiple, and a lack of career opportunities were mentioned with specific roles in particular contexts. 008 and 009, for example, are a married couple who are both medics. During their training, there was a surplus of places for medics in Germany, as they were part of a baby boom at a time the population was beginning to decline. Consequently, the German government had encouraged many German medical students to consider positions outside Germany, in places like the UK and Norway.

So, I looked to the UK really when I was looking for a job and there was unemployment in Germany and that was the main motivation to really move away and consider areas where I hadn't thought about. The job situation in the UK was good at the time. (009)

Finally, some respondents were attracted to living in Ceredigion due to its rural locality. While this factor may have been entwined with other factors for many respondents, it was the most important factor for others, drawing on similar ideas of rurality that are reported in studies of counterurbanization:

Well I just thought it would be great to raise the kids here because it's nice and rural and it's the sea (003)

Standard of living

Residents in Ceredigion typically understood the standard of living to be comparatively good in the region.

[I]t depends how you're actually measuring [standard of living], if you take it from, say, third world countries where they haven't got enough food to put on their plate, right up to very wealthy people that live in, say, America or ... Scandinavia, I would say we are three quarters up. We're very, very, lucky we don't want for a roof over our head or food on our plates. ... I mean, you've only got to put the news on and see people starving in African countries, to realise how lucky we are. (Male, 53, tertiary education)

While incomes were small, Ceredigion residents noted that they were able to pay their bills and get by: "I managed to get a job and a flat and a mortgage" (049); "we've never been big spenders" (036). Few comments were directly made regarding the effects of migration on standard of living (or vice versa), as it was more common for interviews to discuss more specific elements, like housing and employment.

For **internal migrants**, financial, material and lifestyle aspects were all raised as part of the ‘standard of living’ in Ceredigion. Retiree 012, for example, experienced a rise in purchasing power, and was able to access:

[...] a bigger house. A bigger garden for what we had, but it was a nice village that we came from ... and we did have a good standard of living there.

While these comments suggest that a combination of increased purchasing power and reduced cost of living make Ceredigion a comfortable place to retire, for working interviewees this was balanced by a decline in income. 001 reported having been “*very poor*” in Ceredigion but added that this was both part of her own ecologically minded values and illustrated the possibility of living a good life with little money in the area. She reflected:

I think I’ve had a very different standard of living. I think I’ve had a less materialistic standard of living and there’s been less pressure. Not I am necessarily susceptible to that, but my children might have been less susceptible to it, but then I think it was hard for them to go into the big world.

A similarly positive change in their quality of life and standard of living, was reported by the **German immigrants** as well. However, they found it difficult to distinguish whether this was a result of migrating per se. Many attributed the change in quality of life due to life course developments. Some respondents had left their origin areas in their early 20s and had lived in the vicinity for over fifteen years. During this period many people had developed their careers, established families, and anchored to communities. These may well have taken place, admittedly in possibly different forms, in different places. 005 reflects on this difficulty:

That’s quite a tricky question because of course when I was in Germany I was a student. I briefly worked in Germany before doing a Masters, but most of the time spent in Germany was either childhood or going to school or going to university or a little bit of travelling. I volunteered for a year. So, they were all situations that are just not comparable with being a full-time worker. (005)

Employment

When it came to employment opportunities, the **residents** in Ceredigion described it primarily in terms of a lack of opportunities: “*very, very limited*” (049); “*there are better opportunities [elsewhere], there aren’t any here*” (028); “*it’s hard to get a job here*” (015); “*I could probably earn more in a more built-up area*” (011). 031 raised concerns about the relationship between employment opportunities in Ceredigion and regional prosperity:

[I]t seems that the big chains [shops] that come in, they manage to negotiate some sort of good deal, whether they get good rates and they offer jobs, whether they’re real jobs or not and how many jobs there are. So, it’s always they’re creating jobs, but the money

doesn't stay in the community, so it all goes out. So, whereas in local shops you know it stays in the local economy so it just makes it poorer somehow.

The relationship between employment and migration emerged from the interviews as multi-dimensional. None of the residents interviewed perceived a simple, one-way relationship between in-migration and more or less employment. There were certainly some comments about the 'taking our jobs' discourse, but no interviewee told us that they believed this discourse to be true.

A similar story emerged for the **internal migrants**, who did not consider the area as offering particularly good employment opportunities. 006 pointed to the "*brain drain of people [who] leave Wales*", while 043, who ran a non-profit social enterprise, observed that, as a result of continuing economic decline she was no longer able to pay her staff, who had become "*basically part volunteers ... I give them something to help out*".

How the internal migrants characterized the employment opportunities in the places they moved from often depended on a rural-urban distinction. Of rural Southern England, 027 observes that "*there's not a ... great deal there for us*".

The **German immigrants** further confirmed this perception. Ceredigion was not noted for its considerable employment opportunities. Major employers include Aberystwyth University, the National Library of Wales, the National Health Service, the Welsh Government, and Ceredigion County Council, located in the north of the county. However, austerity politics and the marketisation of higher education (as well as a demographic dip of people born in the late 1990s/early 2000s) has seen fewer employment opportunities develop in the county, and those that do appear are increasingly short-term or casualised. Similarly, the rural location and the perceived isolation from major urban centres meant that the region may not be considered an attractive location. 008 felt that those who came (and stayed) in Aberystwyth were often those who had made an active choice to be here:

I would say it's more like it's a selective process of people who want to work here. There are of course job opportunities but also looking at other colleagues often people make a positive choice of coming here and that then affects the climate of work as well. (008)

Housing

In terms of housing, the **residents** often spoke of the cost and affordability of housing, although they had mixed perspectives on this – for some, housing was affordable: "*the price of houses in Aber has actually gone down over the last five years*" (007). For others, housing was not affordable: "*Houses up the way I think one of them was £250,000 for a three bedroom. So why? We're not in the middle of London.*" (015).

As with the relationship between migration and employment, there was a complex push-pull relationship between migration and housing. Some interviewees viewed in-migration as a driver of house price inflation. 049 considered that:

This area, property is artificially high, I would say, because it is a place where people want to live. ... Properties are at a premium because of the sea, because of the countryside.

Affordability was an important factor in **internal migrants'** perceptions of housing in Ceredigion too. It was also common for interviewees to have bought property to improve: *"we are going to do that up"* (027); *"if we tidy it up, we're not going to lose out"* (038). Internal migrants typically drew attention to the cost – *"A big difference in the price of the houses"* (038) – rather than the conditions, of housing in their areas of origin. This is unsurprising, given that housing stock within the UK is generally physically comparable.

Unlike internal migrants, housing quality was something many **German** respondents discussed, however. Many outlined key parts of housing which they felt as inferior in Wales/the UK compared to Germany. These include such aspects as glazing on houses:

I knew that I would be moving to a much, much poorer area. So, I knew that my quality of living, like just the quality of flats will not be up to German standards. So no double glazing. (020)

Access to services

A number of **residents** mentioned the various services provided by the community or county council. In Ceredigion, 007 reflected on the pressures on services:

I don't think that [there is a] lack of finances for services, I think there are lots of other things that are affecting that money stuff. You know, like the fact that austerity and the government has cut all the money that goes to the County Council, for example. I think that's the main thing that's affecting our lack of services.

Despite the awareness of, and often strong opinions on, access to services, few interviewees made connections between services and migration. 049 observed that *"you get the problems with more people adjusting to straining public services ... [but] more pros than cons"*.

For **internal migrants**, education was commonly mentioned in response to questions about local services. Schools in Ceredigion were more frequently commented on, simply because internal migrants in this area often had children and/or worked in education. For 017 small, family-oriented primary schools were a welcome contrast to larger urban institutions, while 006 was pleasantly surprised to see *"eco strategies ... being built into my kids' education ... even from nursery age, which I wasn't aware of as happening in London"*.

Health was also widely commented on by internal migrants in response to questions about access to services, with interviewees focussing on doctors, hospitals, and, to a lesser extent, dentists. Responses naturally varied according to the respondents' own need for health services; for example, retiree 038 prioritised *"A healthy diet. Lots of exercise. Keep fit."*

Many **German respondents** reflected on their experiences of healthcare and roads, with less reflection on other aspects, although those with children often discussed education to some degree. Ceredigion is a rural area, with a hilly topography, and virtually all roads in the county are single carriageways with an upper speed limit of 60mph (although driving at this speed would be dangerous on many roads). These were perceived as fairly poor by the German respondents:

So for me everything I factor over is a road which means pretty much everything. So I suppose the streets in Germany are in general...we have a bigger range of sizes, and here you seem to have two or three uniformed sizes and that's what you get and it doesn't really matter if it's practical or not.

Environment

Residents in Ceredigion often drew attention to rural landscapes and green space: *"it's a very pretty place"* (026). Such comments were often made in contrast to urban areas, as with 015:

[Y]ou've got the sea. You've got walks. You've got air. You're not covered in pollution and all that crap in the cities. I don't think it's bad at all. Anybody that says it's bad needs their heads read. ... What more could you ask for? You've got the sea and you've rivers. You've got walks

Despite the often-effusive comments on the environment, few links were made between the environment and migration. The rural environment was recognized as a potential draw for in-migrants: *"the thing that does draw people is the countryside and the sea and all the things that that brings"* (049); *"many people want to bring their kids up in this kind of area"* (026). Interestingly, 028 in Ceredigion raised a Welsh-English dimension, particularly with English environmentalists moving to rural Wales:

Basically, if they come on the news and speak, like a couple of times watching the news with my parents, and my dad specifically pointed out English people talking about being environmentally friendly. Resentful and just like, judgemental ... being told what to do by outside people, there is more backlash I guess.

The **internal migrants** often spoke about their appreciation for the area's rural landscapes. Ceredigion was particularly associated with *"green space"* (001), *"scenery"* (013), *"the sea and the woods and the hills"* (006). Despite otherwise positive views of local landscapes, rubbish was viewed as an issue especially in terms of streetscapes. The problems with seagulls were also noted. 001, who considered that local streetscapes *"always used to be good"*, attributed changes to austerity and *"this clawing back within the council"*. For 017,

Things that do upset me are, because we pay Council tax things with litter and the collection of refuse. We're all for recycling which comes every week. ... [but] black bags it's every other week and with the seagulls they love to rip those bags and you've got all the rubbish spilt ... that's something I really dislike.

The theme of cleanliness recurred frequently across the **German migrants**. This includes the visual appearance of buildings etc:

The reasons she pointed to were often visual (checked with a probing question), including buildings in disrepair (the interviewee stated that EU funding has caused some improvements in this respect), gardens that were left to grow wild or run down, rubbish everywhere, and a general air of neglect. (004)

The emotional

For **residents**, some of their feelings about in-migration were directly related to material aspects, such as employment or housing. 049, for example, put himself into the shoes of someone who believed a migrant was taking his job, reflecting: *“if that happened to me as an individual I would feel disgruntled, I would be hurt, I would vote for Brexit”*. But interviewees viewed in-migration as not exclusively about migrants from abroad – indeed, in-migrants from England were often viewed more critically than those coming from, for example, Poland. More so, in-migration was rarely seen as a singular flow but as differentiated between different purposes and types of settlement. Despite many media reports of the supposed anti-immigrant virulence of people in so-called ‘left behind’ places, few interviewees seemed particularly interested in immigration at an emotive level. In line with some of the concerns about losing local services, especially in rural areas, some residents in fact felt more worried about out-migration than in-migration.

The majority of the **internal migrants**, on the other hand, described themselves as being happy in Ceredigion: *“I’m really glad I moved”* (038). Others expressed something more akin to contentment, as with 001, who described her own happiness *“in terms of, as relative to this place”*.

Many **German respondents** reported feeling happy in Ceredigion. For some, they felt happy fairly quickly in the region:

So, from the first week I was constantly on cloud nine. (022)

Others mentioned that it took time to settle and feel happy in Ceredigion:

Well there are times when you struggle and I really wanted to go back to Hamburg because I missed the diversity in Hamburg and I missed the people and I missed my family, but now I think I’m much more happy in myself in general and I care more about myself and I care more about motivation, rather than the ones on the outside.

The relational

Residents spoke about the friendliness, or community feel of the area: *“a close-knit community”* (011). For some – but not all – long-term residence meant embedded social connections: *“obviously I know more people here”* (028); *“I know and I’m known by a lot of people ... if I go into the local village shop everyone knows me (011)”*. Some residents noted the Welsh language dimension of social relationships: *“within the Welsh speaking community, it’s even more-close knit”* (011).

Internal migrants also noted a sense of community or friendliness: “*a bit more community*” (045); “*the friendliness*” (013); “*really friendly*” (006); “*friendly, they’re welcoming*” (038); “*inclusive*” (038). Neighbouring practices were particularly seen as distinctive by those who moved from larger urban areas. 012, who moved from the Midlands, reported: “*we got to know all our neighbours which was quite nice because it’s quite a nice little close vicinity, the five houses*”.

Similarly positive impressions were echoed by the **German** respondents as well. The vast majority of respondents talked about positive experiences of interacting with people in Wales. Many spoke of a more ‘laid-back’ or friendly attitude, which aligns with particular constructions of Wales as a tolerant nation:

I never feel left out, and I’m invited to attend social activities more than I like to actually attend them. And people tend to talk to me and recently because of my job change, people had to start to, to be in the position that they have to talk to me if they wanted to or not, before that nobody was in a position that they had to talk to me, they just did.
(010)

Conclusion

The case study investigated the relationship between migration and perceived social and spatial inequality for three groups in Ceredigion, a region perceived as “left behind”. The findings suggest that for residents, despite the low salaries and poverty markers, Ceredigion was seen to offer a good standard of living. Although employment was viewed through a lack of opportunities, in-migration was not seen to ‘take’ scarce jobs, but employment was a key push-factor for out-migration. Views on housing affordability were mixed: while cheap prices fostered in-migration, rising prices could result, concerns being largely affixed to internal migrants and second homeowners. Access to healthcare was evaluated as being good, but service centralisation affected rural areas; in-migration could strain health, but was primarily seen to sustain healthcare through a migrant workforce. Austerity, not migration, was viewed as the predominant pressure on public services. Rural and coastal spaces were emphasised in quality of life and the environment was viewed both as a pull-factor for in-migration and a reason for staying in the region. Despite media reports of supposed anti-immigrant sentiment in ‘left behind’ places, few interviewees responded emotively to migration. Out-migration was more affectively provoking, as it involved separation from friends and loved ones.

For internal migrants, education and life stage were common drivers for departure. Those leaving larger cities cited lifestyle reasons associated with modern urbanism as reason for migrating, while lack of employment did not drive departure, although freelance work and digital commuting offered affordances for mobility. Migrants further cited the rural lifestyle, family connections and child-friendly spaces, and the Welsh language as attractions to Ceredigion. Although housing was cheaper, it was often in poor condition. Nevertheless, internal migration offered younger interviewees opportunities to buy a house, which they would have found difficult elsewhere. In terms of services, healthcare, infrastructure, including public transport posed challenges in terms of connectivity to other places. While roads were problematic, urban-rural migrants appreciated a reduction in traffic.

For the German immigrants, many respondents had studied in the UK and had subsequently remained or returned to the UK. Many were attracted by the ability to study in English and the lower fees for EU students in Wales attracted current students. Ceredigion, as a rural area with a declining population has thus benefitted from such decisions. This highlights implications for UK immigration policy after Brexit, where EU students may be treated similarly to other International students, who had restricted rights to remain after the completion of their course until recently. Many German respondents reported a better quality of life since migrating, but this may well be a reflection of the life course than the impact of migration. Most respondents had been in the country for over ten years, and attributed their quality of life to life events. Moreover, many respondents kept in touch with their places of origin. There were visits once or twice a year, often at Christmas and the summer, or at key stages during the life course. People generally kept in touch with friends and relatives through social media. However, these experiences suggest particularly middle-class experiences. While not all the respondents were of a middle-class upbringing, all possessed substantial economic and cultural capital. These positions may well reflect the broader position of German migrants to Wales. The vast majority of the sample was also female, which appeared to reflect the German migration to Ceredigion more broadly.

Swansea, Wales

Profile of the area

Swansea³¹ (

³¹ Unless otherwise noted, we use Swansea to refer to both the substantive urban area and its surrounding area, which may not necessarily be congruent with the borders of the City and County of Swansea.

Figure 13) is the second largest city in Wales. The city proper (the former Swansea County Borough, until 1974) has a population of around 190,000, while the surrounding area that is part of the current City and County of Swansea has a population of around 50,000. The wider urban area, however, extends to other areas in the broader region, and can be said to have a population of around 500,000.

Figure 13 Swansea



Welsh is spoken by 23.8% of the residents in Swansea, compared to 29.6% across Wales (year ending 30th June 2019). There are two Welsh language secondary schools in the county, one in a large housing estate in the north-west of the city. Approximately 10.2% of Swansea residents are from a Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) background, compared with 4.9% for Wales as a whole; Swansea has the third highest BAME population, after Cardiff and Newport. There were very slightly more females than males in the county in 2018. 62.2% of residents (in the year to 30th June 2019) considered themselves Welsh (compared with 63.3% for Wales as a whole).

Swansea was an important centre during the industrial revolution, dubbed *Copperopolis* due to the prominence of its copper industry. However, it has also existed for a large part in Cardiff's shadow. The two cities are around 90km from each other, and both were part of the county of Glamorgan, established in the 16th Century during the incorporation of Wales into the English realm, with Cardiff serving as the administrative centre. At the establishment of the Welsh Assembly, there was some frustration with locating the body in Cardiff, which saw a majority vote against its establishment, unlike Swansea.

Since the decline in heavy industry in Swansea, the focus has been on retail, services, and innovation and research. Several retail parks have been established on the city's periphery, leading to a 'doughnutting' effect in the city centre. Swansea University has been associated with various developments aimed at innovation. There are good transport links, as the M4 motorway skirts the north

of the city, and there is a port in the city. However, the airport is very small and ferry connections to Cork have ceased for several years.

Approximately 21.3% of Swansea residents were economically inactive in the year ending on 30th June 2019 (students are excluded). The unemployment (ILO³²) rate in Swansea in 2018 was 4.9%, compared with 4.2% across Wales. The median gross weekly income for Swansea in 2018 was £506.90, compared to £509.00 across Wales. 18.1% of Swansea's households were workless in the year ending 30th June 2017. 32.2% of Swansea worked in the public sector in the year ending 30th June 2019, with 67.4% working in the private sector (compared to 26.6:73.3 across Wales).

Methodology

In Swansea, interviews were conducted with residents, internal migrants and Romanian immigrants. Recruitment of residents and internal migrants was largely carried out by mobilising the researchers' own networks in both areas, making contacts through attending local events and social spaces, and snowballing. Some contacts in Swansea were made through social media and community councils. Romanian respondents were recruited through snowballing, leafletting, and through gatekeepers. The wife of a professional acquaintance was the first interviewee, who then led the team to two other respondents. Contact was also made with a Romanian-Welsh cultural association, with other participants recruited through them. However, the organisation noted that many Romanians in southern Wales were suspicious of the organisation, thinking that they were involved with the state (possibly through facilitating voting, etc), so the team did not manage to recruit as many respondents though this organisation as it had hoped. The team also contacted many cafes, restaurants, and care homes with Romanian language flyers to ask if there were any staff who'd be interested in contributing. While some contact was made, no interviews materialised, due to busy schedules. The team was mindful of cold-calling on car-washes based on other studies of Polish migration and focus on gang-masters seeking to police researchers' actions and was mindful of exposing potential participants to surveillance or suspicion through participating. Consequently, the sample is, like the German migrants to Ceredigion study, more middle-class in its constitution. Only one respondent's profile aligns with the reported generalisation of Romanian migration to the UK after 2013; all but two respondents had migrated to the UK before Romania's accession to the EU. All but one of the respondents were based in Swansea. The seventh was based in Ebbw Vale, a smaller town (population around 30,000) associated with steel production some 80km to the north-east, in the southern valleys. Like Swansea, it has seen a considerable industrial decline since the 1980s, and its associated social problems. Given the low numbers, the team was keen to recruit respondents wherever they could. Lastly, one respondent was from the Hungarian-speaking minority in Romania.

Informed consent involved explaining the goals and aims of the research project and the interview with each participant, and by ensuring anonymity and withdrawal from the interview at any time. Contact

³² This includes those who are out of work, are looking for a job, and can start within two weeks, and those who've found a job which they'll start within two weeks.

details of the research team were provided, and participants acknowledged their consent through a provided consent form.

Findings and results

The sample comprises a total of 30 interviewees, 19 of which long-term residents, 7 Romanian immigrants and 19 internal migrants. In terms of gender, 7 residents, 5 internal migrants and 6 Romanian immigrants are female. In terms of education, 6 of the residents, all internal migrants and 5 of the Romanian immigrants are tertiary educated. In terms of age, the youngest resident interviewed is 42 years old and the oldest is 77 years old, the youngest internal migrant is 26 years old while the oldest is 57 years old, and among the Romanian immigrants, the youngest respondent is 38 years old and the oldest 49 years old.

Migration decisions and determinants

For **internal migrants**, education served as the initial driver for a number of interviewees to leave the areas where they had been raised. Swansea has a large university, and educational opportunities were often a pull factor. Affordability was another factor mentioned by interviewees alongside – despite Swansea being a post-industrial urban area – lifestyle and environment. 058, moving for university,

“just saw how close the uni was to the beach. I remember looking on Google Maps and being like, God it is right across the road from the beach, and I just decided, yeah, I want to go, and I’m still happy.”

A sense of ‘Welshness’ was also important for some interviewees, although not as commonly as those who moved to Ceredigion. Coming from North Wales, 045 remembered, *“I never see myself as super-patriotic but I had this moment where I was like, no I want to stay [in Wales].”*

Maintaining relationships with spouses was an important factor for many **Romanian** respondents. Two had met their spouses while living in Romania, and had moved to Swansea to join them:

I met my actual husband and he invited me here to meet up and know each other better. I was divorced at the time. So at the time Romania wasn’t in the European Union. So to be sure I applied for a marriage visa. So I came. This was the only reason to come to the UK to have a family. It might be we couldn’t have children. So this is my history back home. (024)

Other respondents had decided to migrate for a number of reasons, including to develop new skills, experience living different places and improve their English language skills:

The UK to improve my English. Again for better job prospects, but at the moment I landed in I felt I would go never want to go back to an ex-communist country. (040)

Standard of living

Residents living in Swansea spoke of their standard of living in comparative terms. The sense of modest living and affordability noted in Ceredigion was repeated in Swansea, too: *“the wages aren’t that*

great, but then again the houses are cheaper” (047). But, for 032, there was an additional element of “keeping up appearances”, which she saw in, for example, “very posh cars”, but added, “we’re all a group of people with no knickers”.³³

Similarly to Ceredigion, few of the residents’ comments were directly made regarding the effects of migration on standard of living (or vice versa), as it was more common for interviews to discuss more specific elements, like housing and employment. Only one respondent directly addressed the topic:

I think the quality of life is pretty good. And it’s driven by many circumstances, people coming and going must be one of them, because among the people that are coming and going are friends leaving, new friends appearing. So yes, I think it’s affected in that way, but nothing more over. (031, Swansea)

Internal migrants to Swansea also perceived a reduction in the cost of living. 034 observed that *“living costs in Wales is much lower compared to Birmingham”*. While recognising nevertheless that salaries in Birmingham were higher, she added that, *“in Birmingham you will spend more, you might be earning more, but you still spend more and what you end up would be less”*. 035 went on to raise the difference between quantitative and qualitative measures of standard of living:

I lived in London, I ate in 5-star restaurants, I went to the theatre, I did a lot of very affluent things ... I don’t do that in Swansea so much now because there isn’t the opportunity to do it. ... do I feel healthier in Swansea, do I enjoy my week, do I have the quality time with my family? Absolutely, yes. Swansea is a better standard of life in that sense.

Most **Romanian** respondents, too, mentioned an increase in their standard of living since migrating. Some mentioned the relational aspects of family life they valued:

It’s hard to generalise because really I think we have a very classic residence, me and [husband] and the boys, because of our jobs and where we live. In my job I come across people who are very deprived. Their lives are very limited and they’re struggling with everything, like drug addiction and big problems, like having their children taken away. So it’s very hard to say in general. I think there are pockets of people who live very well. There are pockets of people who live very constrained lives. I can’t really say what the general is. (018)

Another noted that she had a range of experiences since migrating, particularly when the focus was on money after initially migrating, and the difficulty in conceptualising quality of life:

³³ This is a reference to the English idiom ‘all fur coat and no kickers’, describing someone who gives an outward appearance of affluence, but actually has very little.

I don't know. I've been very, very low. I feel very, very low since migrating because it's not all about...well it was about money at some stage. I didn't have the money. It depends what you measure as value when you talk about standard of living. As I said I'm coming from a well-off family in Romania. My parent's house is bigger than mine. They have more money than I do but it's not about money. I miss them a lot. I think that's the difference really. Yeah you have a different lifestyle. The lifestyle and the way things are organised and the opportunities there are more opportunities in Swansea, but when it comes to missing family you cannot compare it. So I'm trying to keep myself busy with other things. So I don't think about it too much. Don't get me crying now. (037)

Employment

Employment in both Ceredigion and Swansea was described by **residents** primarily in terms of a lack of opportunities: “not enough employment” (032); “if I wanted career advancement I'd be looking at leaving” (051). Given the perceived lack of local job opportunities, it is unsurprising that most interviewees characterised employment as a driver of out-migration. 031 considered his own family:

Take our children for example. One of them is in Cardiff, having travelled around the world. ... One's a doctor, and she goes wherever the work is ... she's now in Bristol working there. ... [One is] a very, very bright young girl, and she's in London. She was in London with her entire cohort of friends from school all the same sort of cleverness ... and they all want to live up there. So, there are a number of people not living in [Swansea] at the moment. [But] If there's one thing about the Welsh we tend to come back, so I guess they're only doing what I did.

For **internal migrants**, employment opportunities were also tight in Swansea – “Dreadful, absolutely dreadful” (035). As with Ceredigion, some interviewees reflected on people leaving the area. For 030: “I suppose people just have to do what they have to do. They don't feel that there are opportunities here, they've got to go looking for them.”

In the case of the **Romanian** respondents, one reflected on the opportunity to retrain as a medic, and the further implications for quality of life on doing so:

I suppose I thought when I arrived here I thought maybe I'll work in the university or something. Do some sort of administration and when I got the job in the Council I thought, oh I'll be in the Council for all my life. I never expected to become a doctor because really it does put you in a different social category. (018)

Housing

Residents in Swansea reflected on the affordability of housing in the area. For instance, 059 reflected on affordable housing, from the perspective of noticing new-builds:

there are big housing estates being built, but they need to stop being housing estates. They need to be communities.

Respondent 031, on the other hand, disagrees:

there's not enough affordable housing, and the inherent unwillingness to take the problem of social housing seriously. They [the council] go through the motions [of] providing the minimum and the minimum is never enough. So, yes there is a problem

For **internal migrants**, affordability was noted for both the purchase and rental markets (the latter was the more typical experience among the Swansea interviewees). 058 explained:

Swansea is good for cheap houses. I've got friends that live in Southampton. They came to visit me last weekend and they have a tiny two bedroomed terraced house just like mine and they paid 320 grand for it and they just couldn't get over how big my rooms were and how high the ceilings were. They were like, wow it's just so big. I was like, that's what you get for living in Swansea. It's really nice. It's really cheap.

Similarly to Ceredigion, it was common for internal migrants in Swansea too, to buy property and renovate it. For 055 in Swansea:

a project was the only really thing that I could afford. I couldn't afford to buy a house of this size that was finished. So, I had to buy a house of this size that was ruined.

As with the German residents in Ceredigion, many **Romanian** respondents in Swansea reflected on the poor housing quality in Wales:

Compared to Romanian very poor. The Romanians are good at building strong houses. Proper houses. (042)

Respondents reflected on the reasons behind the difference:

This thing with the houses, British people are very, very bothered about having a house. They don't like flats. Something I don't understand. I think it's mainly for the garden. So I can see the advantage of a garden, but I think you could have higher density. If you built nice blocks of flats you could have a different type of environment, but instead you have these old Victorian houses which are quite difficult to maintain. A lot of things go wrong with them. You have to keep repairing them, and there's lots of people who live in houses that are very inappropriate. They are mouldy and they give them asthma and the children are not well. So there's a lot of things that could be improved I think, especially in Swansea.

Access to services

A number of **residents** mentioned the various services provided by the community or county council. Swansea resident 053 also noted the effects of austerity measures:

[A] lot of services are less than they were ... within the council ... The cuts have been remorseless for about 15 years and cutting millions, so lots of things that I was involved

in or knew about ... projects to help disabled children in holidays, families with problems, youngsters with problems, a lot of those things have just been cut, cut.

Like in Ceredigion, and despite the awareness of, and often strong opinions on, access to services, few residents made connections between services and migration in Swansea. Respondent 053, who is now retired, mentioned access to services as a reason *not* to move from Swansea in the future:

I say look at our age, now is not the time to move somewhere because if you move to the country, countryside, which my husband would love, I said it's ridiculous, you can't access what you need like hospitals, doctors, dentists. Some places literally don't have any post offices and banks. Now again living here, my bank is in the centre of town, there are several post offices around here, but you go to places where there aren't any post offices anymore.

In terms of access to services, healthcare was an important aspect mentioned by the **internal migrants** in Swansea. Here, access to health services could be particularly dependent on where in the city one lived, largely due to the catchment areas of suburban clinics. 058 explained:

I'm registered to the campus doctors and it's got a walk-in. That was a big thing for me because I have a couple of health problems. When I was staying temporarily for six months in my friend's house up in [road], it was too far away to go to the doctors from uni ... [So] I'd have to leave work and drive all the way up to [suburb] and go to the doctors there and come all the way back. ... Whereas now I live in [road] which is in the catchment of the doctors on the campus. So, I would just go to the walk-in whilst I'm in work. It takes twenty minutes.

As in Ceredigion, infrastructure was also widely commented on in Swansea. Interviewees noted challenges with infrastructure especially in terms of the connectivity to other places. Even in urban Swansea, 055 considered,

"You do feel a little bit disconnected down here ... When you go to England or you go to London in particular, obviously they've got better infrastructure, but it's a lot easier to get around."

The **Romanian** respondents, on the other hand, reflected on the different experiences of services and bureaucracy in Wales and Romania. These accounts often reflected on the more corrupt and bureaucratic experiences in Romania. Respondent 040, who was a young adult during the end of communism, noted that relatives of doctors or nurses would often 'skip the queue' in her youth, and many others bought bribes (such as chickens) to try and secure a shorter waiting time. A younger respondent spoke about his similar experiences, twenty years later:

Yeah, and I don't need to keep aggravated. I have some issues with my meter (ph 11:52) for instance (inaudible 11:56) and they're helpful over the phone. If I want to do that back home I would have to, I don't know, push some paper, queue up with some stuff we had

to deal with and more stressful back home. One of the reasons I moved out from Romania.

I: So it's the bureaucracy of...?

R: Yes. (039)

Environment

In a similar vein to Ceredigion, residents in **Swansea** also had positive perceptions of the natural environment within reach of the city. 059 explicitly drew a connection between landscape and quality of life:

you go down to the beach, and some days the sea is rough, and some days it's like a millpond. You see the birds just sitting on the surface as if it's on glass ... [and] the petrified forest down on the beach and over the years since our children were small, which we're now talking fifty years, that petrified forest has altered and altered and altered until now. It's almost gone, but I was looking at it this morning and I was thinking ten thousand years ago people were walking along here through this bit of forest and I'm doing it now, and of course that was land obviously, and you think, you know, the sea keeps on in and out ... So that for me is quality of life.

However, Swansea was also associated with problems in the urban environment. Many Swansea residents criticised the state of the city centre: *"It's the blight, the blot on the landscape"* (053).

For **internal migrants**, on the other hand, views of urban Swansea, and particularly of streetscapes, were typically negative: *"the city centre is a bit run-down. The area around the train station it's not super-nice."*; *"post-war 60s architecture it all looks kind of the same"* (050); *"There's nothing beautiful to walk down the road"* (052). As 057 considered, *"I think when people come here it's not like they go, 'oh Swansea is nice, isn't it?' ... Walking around Swansea City Centre isn't exactly a nice experience."*

As with Ceredigion, the coast was particularly praised by the internal migrants. For 055, *"you walk around [the city centre] to get to the beach. Then you walk away from it to get to Mumbles."* Lastly, some internal migrants complained about the Welsh weather: *"The rain"* (034); *"It rains"* (055).

Despite the negative perceptions of the residents and internal migrants on the Swansea environment, many **Romanian** respondents spoke of the charm of the city. Swansea's surroundings – the sea, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the Gower peninsula, and the Brecon Beacons to the north – was characterised as giving the city a beautiful location:

But we have very beautiful beaches. So where I live because I live in Bishopston I'm so lucky because I can reach Caswell Beach just walking. So I do like going on my own. I don't care about people and the company. I'm quite keen. So, no I don't like the weather, but I

have the experience of beaches. Where I used to live in Romania and my county we were surrounded by mountains. So my closest experience was half an hour. (024)

The effect of the pleasant environmental surrounding and climate was seeing Swansea as more relaxed and less stressful, promoting better well-being:

It is. Well there's the less stress factor. I think that has a great significance, importance of how people perceive every day stuff. I find people to be less stressed. Maybe I'm just imagining things, but complete strangers they just smile and saying hi just because, and I can see that people are being less stressed. [...] I don't know how many people here are worried about tomorrow, but I am going to bet way less than in Romania. (039)

The emotional

In a similar fashion to residents in Ceredigion, **residents** in Swansea seemed to be more worried about out-migration from the area, rather than in-migration. In an emotive sense, this was particularly associated with friendship groups and the loss of social relationships. For 032 for instance:

I: How do you feel about people leaving the area, how does that make you feel?

R: Well it depends for what reason. If it's because they need a bigger house and they can't afford to live here well that's quite sad, isn't it, because you don't want to have a generational thing. You want generations to stay together. It makes sense. It's nicer if you've got the kids around the corner to look after grandparents when they're older. That's lovely. That's what you want, isn't it?

For **internal migrants**, the emotional, and happiness in particular, had different facets. For 058, this came down to “a job that you enjoy” with work-life balance. For 035, happiness implied “Good quality of life, good job with plenty to do, no crime, great community, you could probably go out every weekend ... and do something different”. By contrast, 030, also in Swansea, found happiness in the natural environment:

seeing a lovely view ... or just being in the countryside ... the spring is just starting to turn into summer now and like the air is lovely, the sun shining through and everything like that, all the bees and insects and everything like that.

Similarly, for **Romanian** respondents, happiness meant different things. Respondent 039 reflected on being less stressed since migrating:

I am less stressed. When there's no stress like this what happens? I try to find things and pleasure in the smallest of stuff and can enjoy them, but not having to deal with tomorrow that's a load off my back. It makes things way easier. (039)

Others felt that they would, one day, return to Romania. Brexit, and the xenophobic discourse and state policies experienced in the UK reinforced the idea that there was a place that people could return to:

I will be back in my country one day. I think it's not fair to do that. If they could find something and they didn't like us here, I will say thank you. What a really nice experience. I'm so happy because my son he his finished with school. University he can make in Romania and can make in other countries. We'll be okay. I didn't forget never in my life this experience. I get a house in Romania. I get everything. My house, my family house. (041)

The relational

Similarly to Ceredigion, in Swansea too, **residents** mentioned the friendliness, or community feel of the area. 047 considered: *"It's a friendly place, people are good here, a lot of people are in a mess here, but I've never had any trouble here."*

The perceived effects of migration on social relationships were mixed. 032 in Swansea noted that out-migrants who returned could make important contributions:

For me it's funny talking about people that have come back to Swansea. This guy ... he did take up skating. What he loved more than that was [photography] and he kept sending them to this magazine in America and they finally got together and they said alright come over. He managed to get there, and he was at the top of this big prestigious magazine that specialises in skateboarding. ... and he came back and because of the skate park thing he came to a meeting and said I've got all the connections. I've got the LA connections. ... So he's helping us with that.

Internal migrants often noted a sense of community or friendliness in the area. Neighbouring practices were particularly seen as distinctive by those who moved from larger urban areas. However, some interviewees experienced loneliness or isolation following their move. This could be compounded by a sense of having left friends behind elsewhere. For 050, *"I moved from Exeter I still had all my friends [there] ... [Swansea is] further away from my family. So, I felt a bit lonely at the beginning, definitely"*.

Many **Romanian** respondents spoke of people in Wales as friendly, drawing on the construction of Wales as a tolerant and open nation. However, many also noted a different sense of socialising, and felt frustrated or upset that attempts to build connections with local residents were not replicated:

I have just one, I call her a friend. I don't know how it looks here. You know, the relationship as a friend. She's British and because I used to work before having the job in the Council, in university as a clerk. So we are just going swimming and we like hiking. So we went to Cardiff Flower Show recently. So I don't have any...I don't know why people they won't invite me, but it's not only me. This is how we feel all the foreigners. (024)

Some respondents reflected on a different kind of expectation in socialising, where in Romania it was common to invite people into one's home, but in the UK the trend was to meet in public places, such as cafes, restaurants, or pubs. Lastly, one respondent noted that she felt the prejudice of some people's views in interactions, which came through such markers as accent:

I've never felt it myself. I felt judged and prejudice. I suppose people have to speak to you until you open your mouth. So if you go to them, literally go to them and you ask them and you make contact they know they have to speak to you. So it depends what I ask. If I ask them for money they will never give me money. If I tell them I left my wallet at home and I need money to buy a bottle of water because I'm dying or something I don't think they would give it to me because I'm a foreigner and I have an Eastern Europe accent and they'll think I'll rob them or something. I mean, there is that but, no, generally once people get to know you, but I think there is this stigma of, I don't know. Especially as a woman, I always found that I had to fight my integrity and I had to fight and prove my...I don't know. Basically earn the respect, especially as a Romanian woman because Romanian women have a certain stigma and it's like, oh they're after your money. (037)

Conclusion

The case study investigated the relationship between migration and perceived social and spatial inequality for three groups in Swansea, namely long-term residents, internal migrants and Romanian immigrants. The findings suggest that for residents, despite the low salaries and poverty markers, Swansea was seen to offer a good standard of living, respondents valuing the slower rhythm of life and the surrounding nature in rural and coastal spaces. The environment was viewed both as a pull-factor for in-migration and a reason for staying in the region. Most respondents criticised urban infrastructural problems and stalled city centre redevelopment but did not associate them with immigration. Rather, austerity, not migration, was viewed as the predominant pressure on public services.

For internal migrants, the main reasons for moving to Swansea included education, employment, affordability and access to the outdoors. Respondents also appreciated a lower cost of living, although the trade-off was lower salaries and fewer jobs. Unlike in Ceredigion, internal migrants in Swansea also observed their relative affluence. Cheaper housing, even if often in poor condition, afforded younger interviewees opportunities to buy a house, which they would have found difficult elsewhere. For most respondents, 'homeliness' included friendliness and echoes of other homes, coming to feel personally at home and settled was a gradual process, typically experienced across multiple years.

For Romanian immigrants, most respondents had migrated directly to Swansea to join a partner. Most respondents noted difficulties in adapting to life in Wales, included the weather, which was typically considered cold, wet, and dark. This, in turn, often inhibited the kinds of socialising that was most familiar for respondents, namely socialising with friends in the garden. Most respondents spoke of having a good quality of life in Swansea. The city was generally seen as less polluted and more convivial. Respondents noted that bureaucracy in Wales was simpler. However, the quality of housing and the internet broadband speeds were seen as inferior. Respondents reflected on the fact that money would go further in Wales than in Romania. Most reflected on their own families' high (or higher) quality of life, illustrating the

middle-class tendency of the sample, which would probably not be representative of most Romanian migrants' experiences. Only two had migrated to Wales since the removal of restrictions on free movement of labour by the UK government in 2014.