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The importance of the UK's rural spaces to EU8 migrants

Submitted by Paulina Anna MacKrell as a thesis
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Abstract

This PhD examines the importance of rural space to new migrants. Developing upon existing work (for example, Spencer et al., 2007), it explores the lives of economic migrants *beyond* the workplace and the ways in which they i) understand and define the rural space; ii) inform and shape the nature of different rural spaces; and iii) how such spaces impinge upon their (migrants') experiences, identities and spatial practices in the context of rural space in the UK. Based on 60 in-depth interviews, and additional 20 follow up interviews with EU8 nationals, residing in both rural and urban areas of the North-West of England, this study examines how and in what ways the countryside might be important to EU8 migrants. In order to do so, the research first considers the different influences that shape EU8 migrants' representations of rural, as well as how such representations are entwined with materiality of rural space and their experiences and practices in the UK's countryside. Further research also explored the complicated relationship between rural mobilities and fixities, whilst revealing the nature of these mobilities, including the flows of migrants to, from and through rural settings, as well as the struggles with practicing mobilities in the context of everyday. This PhD finally provides a number of important new insights into the engagement and practices through which EU8 migrants have sought to influence and shape rural spaces and communities in locally distinctive ways.

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Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements	v
<u>Chapter 1. Introduction to the thesis</u>	1
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Research drivers.....	2
1.3. Wider relevance of the research.....	5
1.4. Research Aim and Objectives.....	10
1.5. Brief Overview of Research Methodology.....	12
1.6. Structure of the thesis.....	12
1.7. Summary.....	19
<u>Chapter 2. Literature Review</u>	23
2.1. Introduction.....	23
2.2. Rural approaches.....	24
2.2.1. Conceptual Developments	28
2.2.2. A shift towards a three-fold model	31
2.3. Mobility, motility and EU8 migrants.....	36
2.3.1. Migration to the rural.....	38
2.3.2. Rural fluidity and fixity.....	43
2.3.3. Relational mobility.....	45
2.3.4. Motility.....	49
2.4. Shaping the rural.....	51
2.4.1. Migrant experiences, performances, identity.....	53
2.5. Summary.....	56
<u>Chapter 3. Research Methodology</u>	58
3.1. Introduction.....	58
3.2. Ontological and Epistemological Foundations.....	60
3.2.1. Research Ontology.....	60
3.2.2. Epistemology.....	64

3.3. Methodology.....	65
3.3.1. Research design.....	65
3.3.2. Research strategy.....	67
3.3.3. Research sampling.....	70
3.4. Research methods and process.....	77
3.4.1. Interviews.....	77
3.4.2. Photographs.....	80
3.4.3. Transcription and analysis.....	81
3.5. Positionality.....	82
3.6. Conclusion.....	84
<u>Chapter 4. Defining the rural: Perspectives of EU8 migrants.....</u>	<u>86</u>
4.1. Introduction.....	86
4.2. Rural imaginaries and representations.....	88
4.3. Rural materiality.....	103
4.4. Rural experiences, practices and encounters.....	122
4.5. Conclusion.....	138
<u>Chapter 5. Motivations and challenges for EU8 migrant mobility.....</u>	<u>142</u>
5.1. Introduction.....	142
5.2. Rationales for migrant mobility in the rural.....	146
5.3. Discrimination as a mobility driver in, out and within the rural.....	150
5.4. EU8 migrants' motilities.....	161
i. Access.....	163
ii. Skills.....	172
iii. Appropriation.....	184
5.5. Conclusion.....	189
<u>Chapter 6. Shaping the rural.....</u>	<u>191</u>
6.1. Introduction.....	191
6.2. EU8 migrants as key agents in the rural.....	195
i. Sustaining the rural.....	196
ii. EU8 migrants - community involvement, conviviality.....	198
6.3. Places of the rural – Home, Work and Community.....	209

6.3.1. Home.....	209
6.3.2. Work.....	215
6.3.3. Community.....	224
6.4. Conclusion.....	234
<u>Chapter 7. Conclusions</u>	236
7.1. Introduction.....	236
7.2. Empirical and theoretical reflections.....	239
i. The importance of a migrant centred perspective on understanding rural space	239
ii. The importance of a migrant centered perspective on shaping rural spaces.....	243
iii. Discrimination as a mobility driver for EU8 migrants	248
iv. The new application and development of a motility framework to understand (differential) migrant mobility	251
7.3. Recommendations emerging from the thesis – policy.....	255
i. National	256
ii. Regional	258
iii. Sub-regional.....	259
iv. Local / municipal.....	259
7.4. Research reflections and directions for future study.....	261
i. Multi-voice approach	262
ii. Language.....	262
iii. Geographical location	263
iv. Timing	266
v. Other areas for further research	266
7.5 Concluding remarks.....	268
<u>List of References</u>	270
<u>Appendices</u>	337
Appendix 1. Example of an interview.....	337
Appendix 2. Follow up interview.....	376

List of Figures and Tables

Tables:

3.1 Participants Characteristics

Figures:

2.1. Halfacree's (2006) Conceptual triad of the production of rural space

2.2. Model of rural counter-urban populations

3.1. Rural-Urban Classification for North West

4.1. A postcard as a scripted representation of the rural.

4.2. Leaflets as scripted representations of the rural.

4.3. A Facebook page created by EU8 migrants.

4.4. Blog used to share information about places to visit in the UK, including the countryside.

4.5. The natural environment of rural.

4.6. Rural Landscapes.

4.7. Rural gardens – places of beauty and pride.

4.8. The importance of animals in shaping migrants' definitions and representations of rural.

4.9. Stone walls as an integral part of the rural in the UK.

4.10. Rural as inaccessible.

4.11. Rural as inaccessible.

4.12. Stone house as rural idyll.

4.13. Rural as affluent.

4.14. Signage in the rural.

- 4.15. Rural work commute.
- 4.16. More than a job – meeting a Lancashire Clog Dancer.
- 4.17. Educational experiences - collecting the money for local birds.
- 4.18. Educational experiences – a group tour in Peak District Caves.
- 4.19. Aesthetic experiences.
- 4.20. Esthetic experiences through walking in the countryside.
- 4.21. Escapism experiences.
- 4.22. Escapism experiences.
- 4.23. Passive absorption and consuming rural products as an entertainment experience.
- 5.1. Assisting children with their everyday school commutes.
- 5.2. Safe roads and clear signage as mobility enablers.
- 5.3. Mobile phones and navigation applications to facilitate mobility.
- 5.4. Trip planning using Google Maps.
- 5.5. Weather as a mobility constraint.
- 6.1. Liepins' model of 'Dynamic Communities.
- 6.2. Making new friends in the rural.
- 6.3. Food and other items collected for the poor.
- 6.4. Supporting the poor and homeless on the streets.
- 6.5. Beautification of 'first places': Anna's front and back garden.
- 6.6. Production of rural second places.
- 6.7. Supporting small rural businesses.
- 6.8. Village Gala and Scarecrow Festival.
- 6.9. Therapeutic rural space: Magda's frequent trips to Cumbria.
- 6.10. Polish Saturday school – meeting with parents and children.

Chapter 1. Introduction to the thesis

1.1. *Introduction*

'We asked for workers. We got people instead'.

(Frisch, 2016, p.45)

and

'Too often both sides of the immigration debate – for and against – speak about immigration in transactional terms, arguing over what it does for and to us. Opponents say migrants are a drain on the economy; defenders say they add to the country's prosperity and cultural richness. What's missing is the experience of migrants themselves.'

(Freedland, 2017)

The first quotation, from the book *'We Wanted Workers: Unravelling the Immigration Narrative'* (2016), succinctly captures the myopic perspective that many migrants, other than filling the employment gaps, do not play any significant parts the country's cultural, social or political life. Both citations not only strongly relate to the focus of this PhD, but are also central to recent calls for a (much needed) migrant perspective on current immigration debates taking place in the UK (for example, see Rye, 2014 and Cavendish, 2018). Indeed, as far back as 2004, Halfacree (2004) made a similar plea for academics and politicians to show a greater appreciation of the 'non economic' issues that inform migration behaviour (2004). Economic migrants are much more than workers, and their

experiences and dispositions have a great impact on the host country they live in; and on the communities, services and locales in which they reside and visit - such as the UK's countryside. Therefore, it is necessary to consider migrants' (and in the respect of this research, EU8 migrants') daily experiences, engagement with others, their practices beyond the workplace and their sense of identity in order to uncover how and to what extent the UK's countryside might be important to them.

Consequently, this research addresses an important gap in knowledge in relation to EU8 migrants' representations and understandings of rural space in the UK, their mobility practices (and challenges) in the rural, and their perceptions on shaping and equally being shaped by the rural. Such a focus is largely absent at present but which needs to be addressed given that new migration flows to the UK over the last 15 years have led to a very different geography of settlement than hitherto, and with international migrants having a substantial impact on many 'new immigrant destinations' (NIDs) (see Haartsen and Stockdale, 2017).

1.2. Research Drivers

Four main drivers have shaped the focus of the research set out within the thesis. Each of these are discussed and elaborated in turn below and strongly reflect the need for developing a migrant centered perspective in the context of immigration and its effects on the rural spaces of the UK:

- i. Following the enlargement of the European Union (EU) in 2004

considerable numbers of EU8 'accession' migrants moved to other European countries, including the United Kingdom (UK). 1.8 million EU8 migrants currently live in the UK (Vargas-Silva and Markaki, 2017). However, unlike previous patterns of migration, EU8 migrants moved to rural areas as well as urban areas (McCollum *et al.*, 2012). Increasing evidence suggests that the majority of migrant workers from the 2004 accession states have found employment in rural areas rather than the traditional migration centres (TUC, 2004). Employment was a primary motivation for EU8 migrants to move to rural areas of the UK (Jentsch, 2007). This is unusual, as until recently immigrants of northern and central Europe have chosen towns and cities as key settlement locations rather than rural areas (Jentsch, 2007). Consequently, the implications of such movement for rural areas, as well as EU migrants themselves, needs to be further unpacked.

- ii. Whilst much discussion has taken place of the impact of EU8 migrants on local labour markets and / or access to services (Jentsch, 2007; Chappell *et al.*, 2009), no research has yet focused on EU8 migrants' representations and understandings of rural space (Jentsch *et al.*, 2007). As such, a migrant-centred perspective of the rural is absent (Danson 2007, p.16; Rye, 2014). In a UK context, 'migrant lives beyond the workplace' have also received little attention (see Spencer *et al.*, 2007 for an exception; also Sumption and Somerville, 2009), and with

even less reference to migrant lives in the English countryside. Of the literature that has been written on EU8 migrants in rural areas, this has predominantly focused on Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. In contrast, research on EU8 migrants in rural England is less evident (Chappell *et al.*, 2009). This provides a further justification for developing research in rural areas of England.

- iii. Representations, as Halfacree and Rivera (2012) point out, are an important starting point for understanding in, out, and '*within*' rural migration. However, understandings, representations and definitions of rural space are often unable to tell and fully explain the *story* as they leave the *party* of the migrants' lives too soon. Indeed, migration towards and across rural areas is a well explored field; however, the focus tends not to go beyond spatial relocation, and with migrants' subsequent lives and experiences in rural areas in the UK leaving under-researched, if not neglected (Halfacree and Rivera, 2012). Therefore, in order to fully explore migrants' lives beyond their initial relocation, we need to consider rural places as more than just places moved to or from (Malkki 1992; Doel 1999) and explore EU8 migrants' mobility practices in, out and within the rural.
- iv. Although there has been considerable literature published on conceptualising rural space, the presence of EU8 migrants in

such spaces as well as the implications arising for how they shape the rural (beyond their economic contribution) has been largely absent. Indeed, to date no research has connected the above fields of inquiry in the context of rural areas of the UK. Consequently this study also responds to this gap in knowledge and contributes to a wider body of literature presenting a new view of 'rurality' (Cloke and Little, 1997; Little, 1999) from the perspective of EU8 migrants, as well as also providing new insights into migrant mobilities in the rural and the different ways in which they perceive that they shape or are being shaped by the UK's rural spaces.

1.3. Wider relevance of the research

The above drivers help to outline the varying rationales for conducting the research, and highlight the potential impact of the research for developing new theoretical and empirical understandings of rural space, as well as new insights into rural mobilities and the place-shaping activities of EU8 migrants in the UK countryside. Hence in the section that follows, the wider relevance of the research is considered, including current perspectives concerned with migration and mobility in the rural, and key gaps within the existing literature.

i. EU8 migrants as an important set of actors in the rural

'Rural idyll' nostalgia situates the English village as timeless, bounded and static' (Goodwin-Hawkins, 2015, p. 167). Mobility is seen as an urban phenomenon, whereas the rural is left fixed (Bell and Osti, 2010; Goodwin-Hawkins, 2015). Milbourne and Kitchen (2014) also identify that mobility in the context of rural spaces and places has not been given enough attention to date. This PhD therefore draws on such work through treating rural spaces and places as fluid and relational rather than fixed and static. As Cresswell (2006, p.3) has pointed out, 'mobility is just as central to the human experience of the world as place'. Discussion of rural mobility strongly links with two particular fields of inquiry - migration and tourism. However, each has generally been studied in isolation of each other. Over six decades ago, Bracey (1959) argued that mobility and migration hold the key to the future of the countryside. Mobility has therefore opened up rural spaces to different groups, including international migrants. Indeed, following EU Accession in 2004, areas of the UK – including many rural spaces – which had hitherto had not experienced the effects of international migration attracted significant numbers of new EU8 migrants (Vertovec, 2006; Pollard *et al.*, 2008; Chappell *et al.*, 2009; Sumption and Somerville, 2009). However, the rationales for movement of such individuals to rural spaces beyond looking for work - as well as their impact on such spaces - has not been widely reported.

Polish migrants were the largest group amongst EU8 nationals and have been recorded in every local authority across the UK (Pollard *et al.*, 2008).

The 2011 Census in the UK also revealed that Polish has become the most commonly spoken non-native language in England and Wales. This, along with the high numbers of Poles, could be the reason why many studies of EU8 nationals are based around new Polish immigrants. However, there is also a need to explore 'within group' and 'between group' variation in respect of the EU8 cohort. To this end, this PhD attempts to provide such a perspective, although the majority of interviewees are indeed from Poland given their presence within the case study area selected for analysis.

Furthermore, thus far research in relation to EU8 migrants has generally been conducted in the context of the UK as a whole. Few studies have explored EU8 migrants in the context of rural spaces. Hence this research project focuses specifically on the importance of rural spaces to migrants residing in the rural, as well as those visiting such spaces.

Finally, given that the 'rural means different things to different people' (Kandel and Brown, 2006, p. 17), different people will perceive, perform and shape the rural in various and often distinctive ways. This leads to the PhD focusing on how EU8 migrants perceive the rural in different ways and how this also serves to differentially shape their mobility and activities in the rural.

ii. Migrants' experiences beyond the workplace

A further theme of relevance to the PhD relates to new migrants and their differentiated 'capitals' (Bourdieu, 1986). Such 'capitals' are important as

they can serve to inform the motivations behind migrants' mobilities and the extent to which they shape rural spaces in the UK in distinctive ways. However, existing studies have mainly portrayed migrants just as workers (for example, see Stenning and Dawley, 2009; Kilkey *et al.*, 2013) without giving attention to the implications of their actions and activities in the rural beyond the labour market. Hence the research responds to Halfacree's (2004) call for a more balanced debate on the impacts of new migration, including their 'everyday' lives and experiences and how they choose to spend their free time. Indeed, perhaps it is only the work of Spencer *et al.* (2007) who have specifically focused to date on migrant lives and practices beyond the workplace. Yet even their study is not specific to the rural. More recently, a study by Tadevosyan (2014) entitled '*Migration and Everyday Life: Movement Through Cultures and Practices*' did explore such issues in the context of the rural, but only in relation to Armenian migrants.

iii. The absence of a migrant-centered perspective

Most studies of EU8 migrants are not written from the perspective of the migrant (Rye, 2014). There is often a simple focus on numbers *per se* (and not necessarily in relation to rural space; for example, see Danson, 2007; Jentsch *et al.*, 2007). As already highlighted, EU8 nationals are often mainly researched in the context of the (non-rural) workplace (see Chappell *et al.*, 2009; Cook *et al.*, 2011). Studies that have focused on EU8 migrants in the rural often cover their impact on particular services,

such housing, schools, education and health (Jentsch *et al.*, 2007; Chappell *et al.*, 2009; Marangozov *et al.*, 2014), as well as community relations / and / or discrimination in the rural (De Lima and Wright, 2009; Woods and Watkin, 2008; McAreavey, 2012). Yet no research to date has explored how EU8 migrants in the UK:

- 1) define the rural;
- 2) develop particular representations of the rural;
- 3) generate particular experiences and mobility practices in the rural;
- 4) shape rural spaces and places.

Such issues warrant further investigation and therefore form the basis of much of the research set out in this thesis.

iv. The lack of a broader inter-disciplinary context for placing migrants in the rural

Rurality is enacted by a range of different actors, including rural residents, in-migrants, tourists, workers, policy-makers, farmers, the media and researchers (Edensor, 2006). Woods (2010) argues that contemporary research in rural geography is witnessing a re-assertion of the importance of the materiality of the rural and how this shapes the performances of individuals in the rural. This has challenged rural geographers to ask new questions about how such performances and actions are developed and framed, as well as the types of methodologies required to explore such issues and how to develop new interdisciplinary perspectives – in this

instance those connecting migration, mobility and rural studies. The PhD therefore draws upon Halfacree's (2009) arguments that rural space should be seen as a significant conceptual category, and which involves a critical consideration of migrants' different social, cultural, and economic capitals that shape their rural mobilities and their entanglements in rural spaces and places.

Moreover, the research involves the application of a number of conceptual and theoretical frameworks established by others (for example: Lefebvre, 1991 and Halfacree, 2006) and which are refined and re-shaped to reflect upon the (often) differing different ways in which EU8 migrants represent and (re-)shape rural space, as well as their motivations and practices of mobility (see Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004; Bourdieu, 1986) In essence, the research attempts to develop an inter-disciplinary approach through bringing together work from three different sets of literatures - rural, migration and mobilities - and in so doing giving an 'active' voice to such individuals.

1.4. Research Aim and Objectives

Within this context, the overarching aim of this study is as follows:

To explore the importance of rural space for EU8 migrants

This aim is operationised through the following research objectives:

1. To establish how EU8 migrants define and develop particular representations of the rural.

2. To critically explore the ways in which rural space shapes/informs EU8 migrants' mobilities (or fixities).

3. To explore how EU8 migrants perceive they are shaping / re-shaping the rural.

4. To analyse the experiences, activities and decision-making processes of EU8 migrants in rural space, and how this may vary according to migrant dispositions, including their social, economic and demographic characteristics

In addition to the above, due to the unique timing of this research during the final months leading up to the UK's EU Referendum vote, colloquially referred to as Brexit, an additional objective was added:

5. To explore whether and to what extent EU Referendum had shaped EU8 migrants' understandings, representations, mobilities and engagement with rural communities and place.

1.5. Brief Overview of Research Methodology

The above research objectives are addressed through an exploration of the representations, experiences and practices of EU8 migrants in the North West of England. The selection of the region for the case study was based on its specific demographic and geographic features, which are further outlined in Chapter 3 (Methodology). The use of qualitative methods for the research was drawn from a post-structural ontology and hermeneutic epistemology (again, see later). The empirical data was collected through a process of in-depth semi-structured interviews and through the use of more visual methods of engagement in the form of shared photographs. A total of sixty interviews were conducted with EU8 migrants, and with an additional 20 follow-up interviews (following the EU Referendum) also undertaken. The research aim and objectives were initially used as the framework for the research design, but this was also supplemented by attendance at a number of conferences hosted by different professional and academic associations, and which assisted the process of scoping the research aims and objectives.

1.6. Structure of the thesis

The first three chapters of the thesis provide the essential contextualisation for the study. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the PhD. It situates and contextualizes the research, whilst providing an overall academic and empirical justification for the study, including the aim and objectives of relevance.

Chapter 2 provides the literature review for the research. It initially focuses on the theme of rurality and examines the importance of rural space itself. By building upon Lefebvre's (1991) conceptual triad of social space, it follows Halfacree's (2006) argument that there is a need to consider the ways in which rural space itself is conceived, perceived and lived – or in his words the 'nature of rural locality', 'rural representations' and 'lives of the rural'. In so doing, this three-fold model of rural space is drawn upon in order to explore EU8 migrants' mobilities and experiences in the context of differing material, representational and practices associated with (varying) rural spaces. This section of the literature review also introduces EU8 migrants as an important set of actors in the UK's rural spaces, by providing analyses of the main features of the new wave of migration from Eastern and Central Europe after EU Accession in 2004. The discussion highlights the geographical distribution and distinctive features of new migration from EU8 countries through use of a number of statistical sources.

The literature review subsequently focuses on the theme of mobility and theories relating to 'motility' (Kaufmann, 2004) and mobility capital (Bourdieu, 1986). In this section of the literature review, a consideration is made of how and why rural space is important in shaping patterns of (hyper) mobility / fixity in relation to EU8 migration. It follows Milbourne and Kitchen's (2014) suggestion that mobility should be seen as an equally important component of rural lives and rural places (Seamon 1980; Edensor 2010; Ingold 2011; Goodwin-Hawkins, 2015). Finally, the literature review evaluates how and in what ways rural areas are

changing. It is argued that due to the diverse impacts of globalisation, the potential for individual mobility has increased considerably (Urry, 2007, Adey, 2006), and migration is often an inherent feature of such growth. In turn, the literature review concludes by highlighting the new forms of migration associated with rural spaces, as well as the internationalization of the rural population (Milbourne, 2007).

Chapter 3 (Research Methodology) outlines the details of the methodologies employed to conduct the research. It provides the theoretical underpinnings to the research design, strategy and methods utilized and the process through which the research developed. The case study area is introduced – including its justification, as well as the sampling framework and methods (interviews and photographs) utilized. Details of the participants who took part in the research are set out and the complexities associated with the researcher's positionality and (potentially) privileged access to interviewees are also discussed.

The substantive element of the thesis is divided into three distinct, yet interlinked, chapters (Chapters 4, 5 and 6), which together respond to the research aim and objectives. Chapter 4 (Defining the rural: Perspectives of EU8 migrants) explores how the rural is represented and understood based on EU8 nationals' perceptions. This chapter offers a much needed migrant-centred perspective exploring different influences influencing EU8 migrants' definitions of rural space. It shows a new, and previously ignored, view of rurality by giving a voice to the rural '*minority*' population rather than the rural majority population (Rye, 2014). This part of the

thesis therefore emphasizes how rural spaces are being understood and described by migrants - as much more than places of residence or work, which are just used to maximize economic gain or increase one's social position. These findings contrast with previous publications on migrants' representations of the rural – as up to date the rural has been described instrumentally, and mainly as a place of production to influence one's economic position (Rye, 2014). This chapter (Chapter 4) also highlights the importance of scripted representations to EU8 nationals when defining the rural. For many interviewees, those scripted representations are strongly associated with material aspects that are noted through consumption practices, which beyond purchasing local products also include (rural) leisure and recreation practices. Varying material dimensions of the rural shape EU8 migrants' imaginaries and their experiences, practices and performances (Bell, 2007) – this point also reflects the re-assertion of materiality in the social sciences. The chapter shows that from a material perspective, various features of the natural and built environment are of great importance. These elements include the landscapes, greenery, cottages and stone walls – and continuously inform EU8 migrants' view of the rural as a predominantly idyllic space. However, on a contradictory note, the material features highlighted by the migrants also meant that they perceive the rural to be heavily managed (for example, looked after public and private spaces) and strongly regulated (with restricting fences and hedges restricting) - leading into wider arguments in relation to access and rights in the UK's countryside. This is also seen as a contrast with Eastern and Central Europe's countryside

that is described as largely accessible to all (Bravo and De Moor, 2008). With reference to the importance of migrant experiences, '*beyond work*' experiences have the strongest influence on interviewees' perceptions of rural space, and are referred to as extraordinary and rewarding. The analyses also highlight that encounters with 'others' are also seen as being of significant importance in the context of rural representations and definitions. In this sense, migrants' engagements with rural residents mean that they understand and view the rural in the UK as convivial, welcoming, and a '*family-friendly*' place. However, the chapter also point out that such positive definitions should be viewed with a cautionary note as they may hide issues of poverty and deprivation.

Chapter 5 (Motivations and challenges for EU8 migrant mobility in the rural) analyses motivations for migrants' rural mobilities and evaluates the importance of mobility capitals. This chapter takes further Meeus' argument that 'the process of migration (and mobility) does not stop after physical movement to another country' (Meeus, 2012, p.1779), and it points out that it is carried on - within and across a new place of residence. The chapter begins with exploring motivations for EU8 nationals' mobility in, out and within the rural. The key rationales for migrants' rural mobilities are outlined, including work-related, education and tourism movements. Tourism is an important motivation for EU8 migrants' rural mobilities and this chapter shows that those migrants participating in such (tourism) mobilities should arguably be viewed as domestic tourists, rather than migrants. The latter part of the section then moves onto exploring new rationales that were never reported in the literatures. Those new mobility

motivations were heavily influenced by perceived and actual experiences of discrimination and othering. This was reported within and beyond the rural, but with the majority of EU8 migrants stressing the role of rural as a 'space of sanctuary', rather than a place to 'escape from'.

The second part of the chapter introduces the concept of motility as a mobility capital (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004) in the context of rural space and EU8 migrants. In relation to the above, the prominence of migrants' dispositions and other forms of capital (following Bourdieu, 1986) is also shown and explored. The analyses illustrate different ways in which migrants employ motilities in order to increase their rural mobility. Three distinctive motility features are outlined and explored. These include; *access* - to public and private forms of transportation and services in the rural – largely linked to economic capital; *skills* – including time management and linguistic abilities (and the use of cultural and social capitals); and *appropriation* – showing the importance of functionality, cost and the physical environment that influenced EU8 migrants' rural mobilities.

The third empirical chapter, Chapter 6 (Shaping the rural), offers a number of key insights into migrants' processes of differentiated embedding and their perspectives on shaping rural space in the UK. This chapter is largely linked to exploring EU8 migrants' '*lives of the rural*' – by concentrating on their production and re-production of rural space. It begins with application and development of Liepins' framework (2000a), showing EU8 migrants as a distinctive set of actors in the rural who influence sustaining rural communities and places through their presence and actions. Further,

Ryan's (2018) concept of '*differentiated embedding*' is explored highlighting migrants' agency, dispositions and degree of embedding in and shaping the rural place. The discussion subsequently introduces and applies Oldenburg's framework (1999) of '*Three Places*' and shows how migrants shape, and equally, are being shaped by different places of the rural. First of all, the importance of home as a '*first place*' (to EU8 migrants) is highlighted. This part of the chapter explores different degrees of migrants' embedding showing practices of renovation and sustenance of infrastructure influencing the English countryside. *Home* is also of particular importance offering a '*home away from home*' and a '*safe place*', especially to those migrants, who feared discrimination and othering (increasingly in the context of the UK's EU Referendum). The following part focuses on '*second places*' – mainly related to workplace. It shows how EU8 migrants feel they shape their places of employment, especially in the context of production and consumption activities. The discussion focuses on issues of power, self-sufficiency and othering – strongly related to Brexit. The chapter then turns to '*third places*' of the rural – communities. Differentiated embedding highlights different degrees to which migrants feel they shape rural communities. Furthermore, the role of the Catholic Church, its communities and related practices are discussed in relation to migrants' embedding and shaping the rural. The final part of the chapter sheds a new light on the development of '*alternative*' ('*fourth*') *places* and their importance to EU8 migrants, and influencing their territorial embedding.

The final chapter (Chapter 7 – Conclusions) summarises, reflects and explains the main conclusions of this study and identifies the main theoretical and empirical contributions of the thesis. It begins with outlining the key contributions of this research. This is then followed by the policy recommendations that emerged from the thesis on national, regional, sub-regional and local level – highlighting different agencies and organisations that could potential benefit from this research. The subsequent section offers methodological reflections focusing on the research process, geographical location and specific timing during data collection (EU Referendum). Finally, the chapter outlines future steps for research that have arisen from the data, followed by possible new avenues of research.

1.7. Summary

This chapter provides key contextual information and sets out a number of justifications for the research. As such, the chapter highlights how the thesis directly responds to Halfacree's (2009) call for a greater appreciation of the non-economic issues that inform migration choices and everyday lives.

Furthermore, Halfacree (2004) has argued that migration and culture (in any sense – both ontologically and epistemologically) should never be viewed or studied as separate concepts. In essence, they can therefore be contextualised through Bourdieu's (1984) idea of habitus explaining *'how both the association between migration and key events and experiences in people's lives and the selectivity of any specific migration process are*

reflected in the relative position that migration holds within specific societal groups' (Boyle *et al.*, 1998, p. 207 as cited in Halfacree, 2004, p. 242). Such a perspective is also reiterated by Lawson (1999, p. 263) who states that *'while migration is often prompted by economic motivations, the migration literature all too frequently stops there'*. Consequently, this provides an important basis for framing the research set out within the thesis.

This chapter has additionally illustrated how the research within the thesis is inherently inter-disciplinary and bridges work across rural geography, migration studies and also contemporary research on mobility. The aims and objectives set out reflect such an approach and what emerges from the research as a consequence is the ways in which EU8 migrants both perceive, experience and practice the rural in the UK in a variety of different ways. In turn, this leads the thesis to highlight how a much more nuanced narrative of the UK's contemporary rural spaces is now required, and especially from the perspective of a set of actors - EU8 migrants – who have been less evident in discussions hitherto.

The overall aim of this thesis - to examine the importance of rural space to EU8 migrants in the UK – was met through developing a migrant centered perspective (which is currently absent) and involving 60 in-depth interviews (and 20 follow up interviews). The first key finding related to the UK's countryside as being perceived by EU8 migrants as a largely idyllic, utopian, therapeutic and 'problem free' space, and which was based on a highly relational perspective. Nevertheless, this may serve to exacerbate

the 'screening out' of problems in the UK's rural areas, such as issues of poverty and deprivation.

A second key finding highlighted how rural areas in the UK served as a platform for shaping migrants' mobility practices. In this context, the research offered new, rich and diverse understandings of migrants' mobility practices and motivations, whilst uncovering issues of perceived and experienced discrimination and othering. In addition, it also offered a new application of the motility concept (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004) including the importance of access, skills and appropriation – and which were shaped in interesting and distinctive ways for EU8 migrants.

Third, the research generated new insights into how EU8 migrants perceived they shaped, and indeed, were shaped by, different aspects of rural space. Crucially, the research identified how EU8 migrants have become increasingly involved in rural community life and have provided formal and informal reciprocity and support to others, often as 'silent actors'. The findings also offered a new application and development of Oldenburg's (1982; 1999) theory of place through a focus on 'home', 'work' and 'community', as well as uncovering EU8 migrants' development of 'alternative places' as a result of their 'differentiated embedding' (Ryan, 2018).

In essence, the research has provided a voice to a group of individuals who have been rather neglected, to date, in debates over the rural space

in different parts of the UK. The study has also developed and extended a number of relevant literatures, namely those focused on rurality, mobility and migration, as well as a range of theoretical and conceptual frameworks (for example, Halfacree's (2006) *trilectic of rural space*; Kaufmann's (2002; Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004) concept of *motility*; Bourdieu's (1999) theory of capitals; Liepins' (2000) '*Dynamic Communities*' model; Oldenburg's (1982; 1999) '*Three Places*' framework and Ryan's (2018) '*Differentiated Embedding*' approach). Additional research would therefore be valuable to deepen our understanding of the breadth of issues this study has uncovered and to further refine and develop empirical, conceptual and theoretical approaches to the (appropriate) 'placing' of international migrants in the context of a differentiated rural space.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This PhD research draws upon literature from the disciplines of rural geography, migration and mobility. Currently, there is little scholarly space that connects these fields both, theoretically or empirically, and especially in relation to the importance of rural space to EU8 migrants in the UK. Consequently, a post-structural perspective both informs and provides an over-arching framework for this research as it focuses on the ways in which rural space is fluid and constantly being produced and/or re-produced (Panelli, 2006). Indeed, post-structuralism draws attention to increasing social diversity and the discursive construction of rural society and space, as well as the growing diversity of rural groups and their uneven experiences. In this respect, EU8 migrants clearly illustrate such diversity. However, their role in constructing and experiencing the rural has largely been ignored in previous studies.

In this context, this literature review initially focuses on the social construction of rural spaces, and how such constructions increasingly highlight rural hybridities and different forms of hyper-mobility (rather than fixity) in the rural (Cloke, 2006). This is followed by a discussion on mobility, in relation to the new patterns of migration (and economic migrants, including those from the EU8 countries), and which in turn leads to a review of the importance of rural space in shaping EU8 migrant

mobility and motivations (Halfacree, 2004). This is followed by a consideration of motility (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004) and other forms of capital that may be of influence on migrants' ability to be mobile (i.e. Bourdieu, 1986). Issues associated with EU8 migrant identity and belonging are also discussed in relation to the concept of differentiated embedding (see Ryan, 2018). This is in order to help us unpack how different forms of capitals inter-relate with their experiences, and how these impact on their engagement with rural communities but also how they shape the rural space itself. Finally, the review concludes with a consideration of the implications arising and the key contributions associated with this piece of research.

2.2. Rural approaches

'Rurality is idyllic, we are told. You can't get away from it. The long fingers of idyll reach into our everyday lives via the cultural paraphernalia of film, television, art, books, magazines, toys and traditional practices.' (Cloke, 2003, p.1)

Rural geography mainly focuses on and brings together the spatiality of rural environment and life. As Larsen (2016) points out, its historical development as a sub-discipline can be grouped into three broad phases: a preliminary period (before 1950), during which time human, cultural and regional geography concentrated mostly on rural landscapes as part of a

broader disciplinary preference for non-metropolitan study areas; an emergent period (1950s – 1970s), when the subfield was originally formalized under a heading that focused predominantly on agriculture, land use, and population / settlement patterns; and the contemporary period (1970s –present), emphasised the importance of integration of political-economic and post-structural theories, as well as new interests in rural restructuring, social movements, discourse, governance, identities, and experiences.

Rural space has a number of meanings and functions. As Woods (2010) points out, rural areas are responsible for capturing most the majority of the world's water supply and production of its food. They capture most of the energy and renewable resources. They also act as 'people's playground' – providing a place to rest, socialise, walk, cycle or escape. Rural areas are also largely appreciated for their natural environments and sceneries. As such, they are often recognised as symbols of national identity; they are valued for their wilderness, idyllic landscapes and atmosphere. On the other hand, rural areas are seen as remote and under-developed places (Woods, 2010).

The multi-functionality and different meanings of rural space means that 'rural' is a complex and difficult concept to define. Woods (2010, p. 5) contends that although indicating whether a place is rural, rather than urban, is a rather easy task, explaining 'why it was rural?' may be a lot more difficult to achieve. Indeed, the complex distinction between rural

and urban, the countryside and the city, is one of the oldest and most persistent geographical binary. The phrases may have their origins in attempts to differentiate between defensible early towns and open spaces outside, which soon developed symbolic significance and became part of the language (Woods, 2010). Williams aptly notices that “country” and “city” are very powerful words, and this is not surprising when we remember how much they seem to stand for in the experience of human communities’ (1973, p. 1). Williams argues that terms ‘city’ and ‘country’, ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ are indivisible, rich in their meanings, feelings, reminders and associations.

Throughout the majority of the twentieth century, up to the 1970s, the research development in both areas - urban and rural, was part of the broad model of regional geography (Woods, 2010). This approach used geographical characteristics of a particular region and at the same time replicated common assumptions in regards to the relationship between the city and the country. Rural areas tended to be explained through their functional connections to urban spaces, such as food sources. There was also a number of tries to turn these popular understandings into scientific theories that could be applied to any specific area. One of the approaches was von Thunen’s (1826) ‘*concentric model*’ of land use, which indicated and calculated out the types of farming in relation to the juxtaposition of rural regions to cities. Christaller, in 1933, developed ‘*a central place theory*’, which aimed to represent the hierarchy of rural and urban settlements. Woods (2010) observes that both models failed in practice, as they were not able to explain the complexity of rural spaces. These

models, however, prefigured the developments of new, less descriptive and more systematic, rigorous approach in 1960s. Now the city became the focus of research by applying principles and cross-examining quantitative data to identify models and laws of spatial organization (Hubbard, 2006, in Woods, 2010). This development of urban geography included mapping and modeling 'urban systems', which isolated the rural, recognising it only by its agricultural value – there was no equivalent systematic research of 'rural systems' (Woods, 2009a; 2010).

The 1970s brought a more integrated methodology to study the rural. Textbooks by Clout (1972) and Hart (1974) presented the rural as more than a food source and provider of natural resources, but still portrayed it as a rather simplistic and distinctive system focused on production and land use. From one perspective, rural geography uncritically acknowledged and accepted the existence of 'rural space' as a container for the phenomena that they studied, yet, from a different perspective, the authors' attempts to distil the essence of the rural, and to authoritatively map the boundaries of rural and urban areas, were compromised by methodological issues in dealing with and fixing the scale of analysis, by the random and unclear spatial units of available data, and by the arbitrary nature of the indicators selected (Cloke, 2006 as cited in Woods, 2010, p. 6).

2.2.1. Conceptual Developments

The course of rural geography after the 1970s has been shaped by broader conceptual progress and developments in human geography and its wider connection to social science. The trajectory focused on moving away from the positivistic principles and focusing towards formation of a more objective definition of the rural. Cloke (2006) points out that the functional concepts, which were primarily supported by the statistical findings, were inadequate in their assumptions. Although the functional models of rurality could describe the characteristics of specific rural areas and rural citizens, they were not able to verify that such characteristics were inherently rural, or prove how these characteristics influenced the rural lives' realities.

The flaws of these functional models were further revealed by the development of a new trajectory of geographical studies in the 1970s and 1980s that focused on the political-economy approach based on the neo-Marxist theories (Buttel and Newby, 1980; Cloke, 1989a; Woods, 2005a, 2009a, as cited in Woods, 2010). Some of these works contributed to studies in rural sociology as well as to a political-economy approach to agriculture, which stressed the importance of considering farming as equally important to other capitalist industries (Woods, 2010). Such approaches eliminated nostalgia and romantic ideas of farming as the core of a traditional rural life. Other political-economy studies challenged rural planning and processes of development and interrogated urban to rural

shifts in the employment sector. They have also examined social relations, migration and shifts in population based on class analysis (Cloke, 1989; Halfacree, 2010; Woods, 2009a; Woods, 2010).

This research has demonstrated that the developments framing contemporary rural areas and societies surpassed the imaginary borders of rural space, functioning at regional, national and even global levels.

The impacts of wider social and economic processes on particular rural localities is mediated by local factors, producing uneven development, but these local factors will vary between different rural localities, just as they will vary between urban localities. As such, the explanatory capacity of the rural-urban dualism and the value of 'rural' as a geographical concept, was brought into question.

'The broad "rural" is obfuscatory, whether the aim is description or theoretical evaluation, since inter-rural differences can be enormous and rural-urban similarities can be sharp' (Hoggart, 1990, p. 245). As Woods (2010) points out, the initial outcome of this critique was to 'do away with the rural' (Hoggart, 1990) as a meaningful concept in human geography. Yet, whatever the issues experienced by geographers in attempting to demarcate rural space, ascribe the condition or specify the characteristics of being rural with explanatory powers, it was clear that the understandings of rurality continued to be widely recognised and employed within the general population and that 'rural' continued to have a very clear and powerful meaning for many groups and individuals.

A framework for investigating these theories was supported by the 'cultural turn' in human geography and social science, which was a trajectory for the rise of post-modern and post-structuralist approaches to rural geography. Shifting away from the previous positivist and political-economy theories, post-structural perspective emphasized that both, institutionists and individuals form their own 'realities in order to make sense of the world' (Woods, 2010, p. 12). Following this theory, rural geographers began to explore the ways in which central concepts in relation to rurality had been produced and reproduced, as well as analyze alternative experiences and meanings of rurality articulated by the minorities. Philo (1992) called for a change from the rural geography research representing and stereotyping rural people as a white, healthy male in employment, who lack religious and political beliefs. He encouraged engagement with neglected groups. Consequently, the focus has shifted towards the representations of the rural, where the rural is believed to be socially constructed. As Woods (2010) observes, rurality as a social construction is an entity that exists through a number of discourses that are produced, reproduced and queried by a range of organisations and individuals, including researchers, policy makers, media and 'ordinary' people. The rural is 'a category of thought' (Mormont, 1990, p. 40, as cited in Woods, 2010).

2.2.2. A shift towards a three-fold model of rural space

Social constructions of rurality are intertwined with practices, places and material objects, but are not tied to them. Halfacree (1993) points out that the growth of diverse representations of rural space through popular discourses may have little connection with the realities of rural life and rural space. The world is filled with images and ideas of the rural that are not necessarily grounded in specific places or realities of lived experiences – those virtual realities are themed to match their image: ‘if at some time in the past some ‘real’ form of rurality was responsible for cultural mappings of rurality, it may now be the case that cultural mappings precede and direct the recognition of rural space, presenting us with some kind of virtual rurality’ (Cloke, 2006, p. 22, as cited in Woods, 2010). Halfacree (2006) developed a framework to investigate the complex relationships between rural representations, rural localities and the lives of the rural.

Halfacree (2006) points out that definitions of rural space are often abstract and the ‘truth’ of rural space can be discovered only through the focus on contextual and relational practice. This ties with the PhD, as the rural definitions or theories alone do not help us to uncover migrants’ understandings, use and importance of rural spaces. Halfacree (2006), however, developed a model that applies to rural areas, which helps to broaden the understanding of the construction and production of rural spaces and their meaning to different actors. This complex three-fold model is mainly based on Lefebvre’s ‘conceptual triad’ (1991) on the

importance of the everyday. Halfacree (2006) introduced his own understanding of each element in relation to rural space starting with spatial practices interpreting them as actions (including interactions), flows and transfers. Amongst them there is a society's space, which facilitates materialistic expressions and societal reproduction. Spatial practices are inscribed in mundane activities associated with everyday perceptions of rural space, as well as in its norms and rules (Halfacree, 2006). The model developed by Halfacree could be adapted and used as a useful resource that can be drawn upon in order to explore the central questions of this research and deepen the understanding of the importance of rural space to the EU8 migrants. However, Halfacree's model used in the context of this study is problematic as this PhD focuses on rural spaces and the actors, who experience it, use it and perform it, whereas Halfacree's model does not give enough attention to the key actors, their social practices and relations (Frisvoll, 2014).

Halfacree argues that in order to understand, and therefore, appreciate space (here: rural) there is a need to apply the geography and temporality of its production without forgetting about how it operates as a means of production. All three: materiality, representation and imagination do not exist in separation; they are interwoven worlds (Harvey, 1996, as cited in Halfacree, 2006). Halfacree (2006) maintains that a starting point here is the idea that space should be regarded as a 'socially produced set of manifolds' (Crang and Thrift, 2000, p. 2, as cited by Halfacree, 2006). Space is never passive, it is something constructed by social individuals in a number of forms and scales. In this instance these social individuals are

EU8 migrants, who live and travel within the UK's rural spaces. Halfacree (2006) then presents his interpretation of representations of space. He refers here to formal ideas of space, often marked by the presence of developers, capitalists, academics and planners. These representations of space are often abstract and associated with 'arcane signs, jargon, codifications' (Merrifield, 2000, p. 174, as cited in Halfacree, 2006). They are also directly expressed through static examples, including housing, monuments and factories. Thirdly, he recalls spaces of representation. He sees them as diverse, although disjointed, symbols and images expressed through loud noises of space as directly lived. Spaces of representation should be associated with 'vernacular spaces' and they will seek to control and dominate spaces of representation (Halfacree, 2006).

Based on the interpretations of Lefebvre's ideas (1991) Halfacree (2006) suggested his own triad, which focused on rural space (Figure 2.1). The model includes three facets:

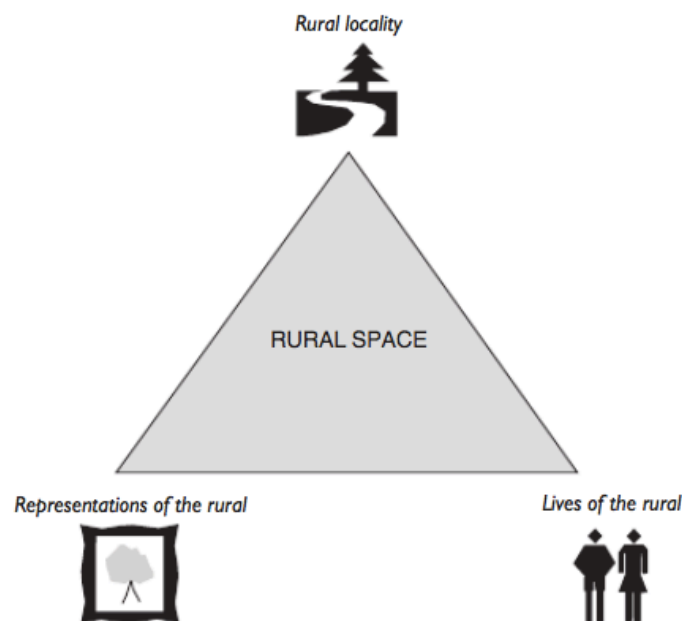


Figure 2.1. *Conceptual triad of the production of rural space*

Halfacree (2006) first discusses *formal representation* of the rural highlighting the role of authorities, bureaucrats and politicians, which is often linked to capital interests and gain. The author explains how rural is portrayed in the context of capitalist production process, for example commodification. Formal representations dominate the two other facets on several levels (Halfacree, 2006).

Rural localities – is another angle of the triad, which is inscribed through relatively characteristic spatial practices, which may be related to either consumption activities or production. To follow the above, if the ‘rural locale’ could therefore be viewed as an essential part of the production of rural space, then actors producing rural space will have a certain degree of autonomy over the selection of what, and where, such ‘rural’ is located (Hughes, 2014). In the context of this PhD this can be understood by unpacking the production of space by the EU8 migrants in terms of choosing the type and location of their rural mobilities and domestic tourism experiences. By taking into consideration Thrift’s (2003) arguments rural space seen from the perspective of the ‘rural localities’ vertex can be understood as a multilayered set of performative practices produced through a subjective framing. Therefore, this ‘hub’ (to borrow the term from Frisvoll, 2012) of the triad also includes the actors who help defining the material context through which they produce and perform rural space.

Lives of the rural – refers to actors’ social and individual elements and how they interpret and reproduce rural in everyday lives (Halfacree, 2006). As Halfacree points out, all the above elements cannot be studied in

separation as they form a relationship with each other (Shields, 1999; Halfacree, 2009) and are dynamic. Merrifield (2000) also maintains that such spatial triad will always contain elements of real life events, culture, and their representatives. However, Frisvoll (2012), points out that although actors are an essential component of the foundations of Halfacree's conceptualisation there is very little explicitly said about them. 'The actors/ agency and the social aspects of their (everyday) lives seem to have been lost in the abstractions' (Frisvoll, 2012, p. 448). Frisvoll then applies the 'hubs model' to the different ways in which Halfacree suggests rural space is socially produced. In essence, the argument is as follows: Representations of rural space (i.e. how rural is portrayed by different actors both symbolically and representationally) relates to an 'immaterial hub'. These are the laws, regulations and formal or informal guidelines and rules that are used by actors to facilitate / consolidate particular representations of rural space. Rural Localities (i.e. the reproduction of rural practices in everyday life) relate to a 'personal hub'. These, for example, are actors' actual desired way of life, their careers or career plans, or actual violence to secure power if necessary. The outcomes observed in respect of the nature of rural space that is socially produced therefore depend on how such aspects interact and interrelate to each other.

Rural space is embodied in the all three elements. Halfacree (2006) also maintains that it is important to recognise elements responsible for powering rural change, including rising consumption. Developed countries,

such as Britain, witness the increasing emergence of a multifunctional rural regime with its environmental considerations, land users replacing agriculture and attempts to meet demands of 'external' (often urban) visitors (Halfacree, 2006). Attention is also drawn to the significance of productivism amongst some rural areas in the UK – progressive growth of businesses and expansion of food orientated industries (Marsden *et al.*, 1993; Halfacree, 2009).

Although this chapter has revealed that rural space can be understood and conceptualised in a number of ways, it is important to stress that the rural itself changes too. The rural sociologist Mormont refers to the 'rural' as a 'category of thought' (1990, p. 40), a description that emphasizes that the 'rural' is first imagined, then represented, then takes on material form of places, landscapes and ways of life are shaped to conform to the expectations that the idea of the 'rural' embodied. Experiences of these 'rural' places and lifestyles are fed back into the collective imagination, refining and modifying the idea and thus contributing to a dynamic process through which the 'rural' is produced and reproduced.

2.3. Mobility, motility and EU8 migrants

The British countryside is often portrayed through 'rural idyll nostalgia', which situates it as a confined and static space. Goodwin-Hawkins (2015) argues the rural has too often been discussed as 'still', 'fixed' and 'held' in contrast to urban dynamism and (hyper-mobility). In this sense, mobilities in the context of rural space have been neglected for too long. Milbourne

and Kitchen (2014) suggest that mobility should be seen as an equally important component of rural lives and rural places as mobility has never been entirely urban (Seamon, 1980; Edensor, 2010; Ingold, 2011; Goodwin-Hawkins, 2015). Therefore this research treats rural mobilities as diverse and manifold. Due to the diverse impacts of globalisation, the potential for individual mobility has increased considerably (Adey, 2006; Urry, 2007), and migration is often a named feature of such growth. This shift is visible in rural areas and has brought new forms of migration into them as well as the internationalization of the rural population (Milbourne, 2007).

As a result, new patterns of mobility, along with notions of globalisation (Frys and Nienaber, 2015) increasingly shape and challenge (European) rural spaces. Indeed, across the UK, rural areas that have hitherto experienced relatively little international migration have attracted significant numbers of EU8 migrants. Furthermore, the scale of movement of A8 nationals into such areas has had a much larger impact beyond the labour market (Vertovec, 2006; Pollard *et al.*, 2008; Sumption and Somerville, 2009). As Milbourne and Kitchen (2014) argue, there is a need for a more critical engagement and integration between the mobilities turn within social sciences and rural geography. Recent years have witnessed a criticism aimed at rural population research that it narrowly focuses mainly on unidirectional and permanent movements of people to rural areas. There is a call for a new, broader, approach which could capture a larger range of spatial temporalities and scales that have place within the

rural and are associated with rural (Milbourne and Kitchen, 2014). In 2007, Milbourne argued that such an approach should include movements in relation to uneven power relations and processes of marginalisation; hyper- and im-mobilities; economic and lifestyle-based journeys and those, which are a choice or necessity; movements out of, into and within rural spaces; short and long distance journeys; linear flows between distinct destinations and more diverse spatial patterns of movement; those movements that include short stops and those involving days or weeks. 'It is these different mobilities, present in different combinations in different places, that produce the complexities of rural population change' (Milbourne, 2007, p. 385). The latter of these have a significant importance to this research looking into movements in to, out of or through the rural places by the EU8 migrants in the context of their employment, but also beyond work and domestic tourism practices.

2.3.1. Migration to the rural

Traditionally rural space has been considered as fixed and immobile, and the only type of migration that was observed was the out-migration to urban spaces. The shift in rural studies then moved towards counterurbanisation, which refers to the movement (migration) of people from urban areas to rural areas (or larger settlements to smaller settlements) (Luck *et al.*, 2010). However, the research on counterurbanisation focused predominantly on in-country movement, without recognising the presence of international migrants (Halfacree,

2012). 'More recently, researchers of rural population geography started to think more critically about the broad range of movements and mobilities that are being played out in rural spaces' (Milbourne, 2007, p. 385, as cited in Halfacree, 2012). They are not simple, but often constructed, intertwined and layered. Migration forms an important part of mobility and is thus an important consideration for rural areas (Cohen and Sirkeci, 2011). Across the UK, spaces with limited previous experiences of international migration attracted significant numbers of EU8 migrants particularly into rural areas. In the last decade rural spaces have been predominantly affected by the changing spatial patterns, which also resulted in the growth of international migrants, especially those from the EU8 group. Polish migrants were the largest group amongst EU8 nationals and were recorded in every local authority across the UK (Pollard *et al.*, 2008). A substantial number of the EU8 migration into rural areas was seasonal, which was a reflection of the labour market and its availability (agriculture, hospitality, manufacturing). Although there already was a presence of international migrants in rural areas, the scale of EU8 nationals had a much larger impact on those spaces beyond the labour market and economy. Such impacts are understudied and this research aims to fill this gap.

EU8 migrants were found to be more geographically dispersed than previous groups of migrants (Vertovec, 2006; Pollard *et al.*, 2008; Chappell *et al.*, 2009; Sumption and Somerville, 2009). White (2011), within her study of Polish migrants to the UK, maintains that: 'this re-location outside the city is often a congenial arrangement for Poles from

rural parts of Poland, and that the similarities they perceive between their Polish and British places of residence constitute a powerful translocal tie and do much to make them feel at home abroad' (White, 2011, p. 2). This PhD illustrates many of the ways through which migration is integral to the formation of different mobility networks, including those of shaping and performing rurality through beyond work and tourism practices. These networks often bring about dramatic changes within the rural areas of many developed countries (here UK) and creation of a post-productivist countryside. This research is contributing to the new migration theories by exploring the insights of migration into and within the relatively under-researched rural areas. Human migration has a central place within the 'era of mobilities' (Urry, 2000). However, it is important to note that there are not only quantitative aspects that matter, but qualitative experiences, such as those of migrants' everyday lives, are equally important. Mobility researchers have also acknowledged how migration qualitatively impacts on issues, including belonging, identity or social-cultural expression (Hannam *et al.*, 2006; Urry, 2007), but as Halfacree rightly points out, simply acknowledging the growing quantitative and qualitative importance of migration within everyday life is not in itself enough (Halfacree, 2011; 2012).

Recently, Halfacree (2011) reviewed the model of counterurbanisation, offering a broader application especially in the context of populations and consumption of the rural. It could be interesting to employ the model developed by Halfacree (2011) (Figure 2.2) to this research. This exercise could have several implications in relation to the aim of this study, which

focuses on exploring importance of rural spaces, especially when it comes to analysing migrants' beyond work experiences and domestic tourism experiences and practices. In further detail, it could be applied to help to explore Objective 3 of the research, which considers the perspective of both EU8 migrants visiting and residing rural areas. Halfacree (2011) focuses on the 'pull of rurality' axis and distinguishes three areas: 'back to the land counterurbanisation' – where the pull of rurality is in the core; 'default counterurbanisation' – where rurality is rather irrelevant; and 'mainstream counterurbanisation' – where rurality has a significant, but at the same time, balanced role (Halfacree, 2011, p. 219). This new model includes an important dimension - the 'intensity of time spent' within a particular rural space. Halfacree (2011) believes that the added dimension of time and intensity deserves additional attention and elaboration. The intensity of time spent within the rural space seeks to measure the extent to which people become entangled with this rural environment. It puts focus on the importance of the rural environment to an individual and formation of their identity and therefore connectedness to their rural environment. The new dimension may not be precise, but it serves as a demonstration to enable distinguishing different categories. Halfacree (2011) introduces 14 categories that represent counter-urban encounters. They vary from 'in-transit visitors', whose rural engagement is incidental and minor to opposing 'non-commuters in situ'. Halfacree's model puts emphasis on the consumption of the rural spaces within mobilities rather than on migration embedded in sedentarism (2011). However, it is important to remember that the model should be treated as a contextual

and heuristic tool. It acknowledges diversity amongst those producing and consuming post-productivist countryside and challenges ‘taken for granted boundaries within the era of mobilities’ (Halfacree, 2012, p. 220; also Urry, 2000; Adey *et al.*, 2014).

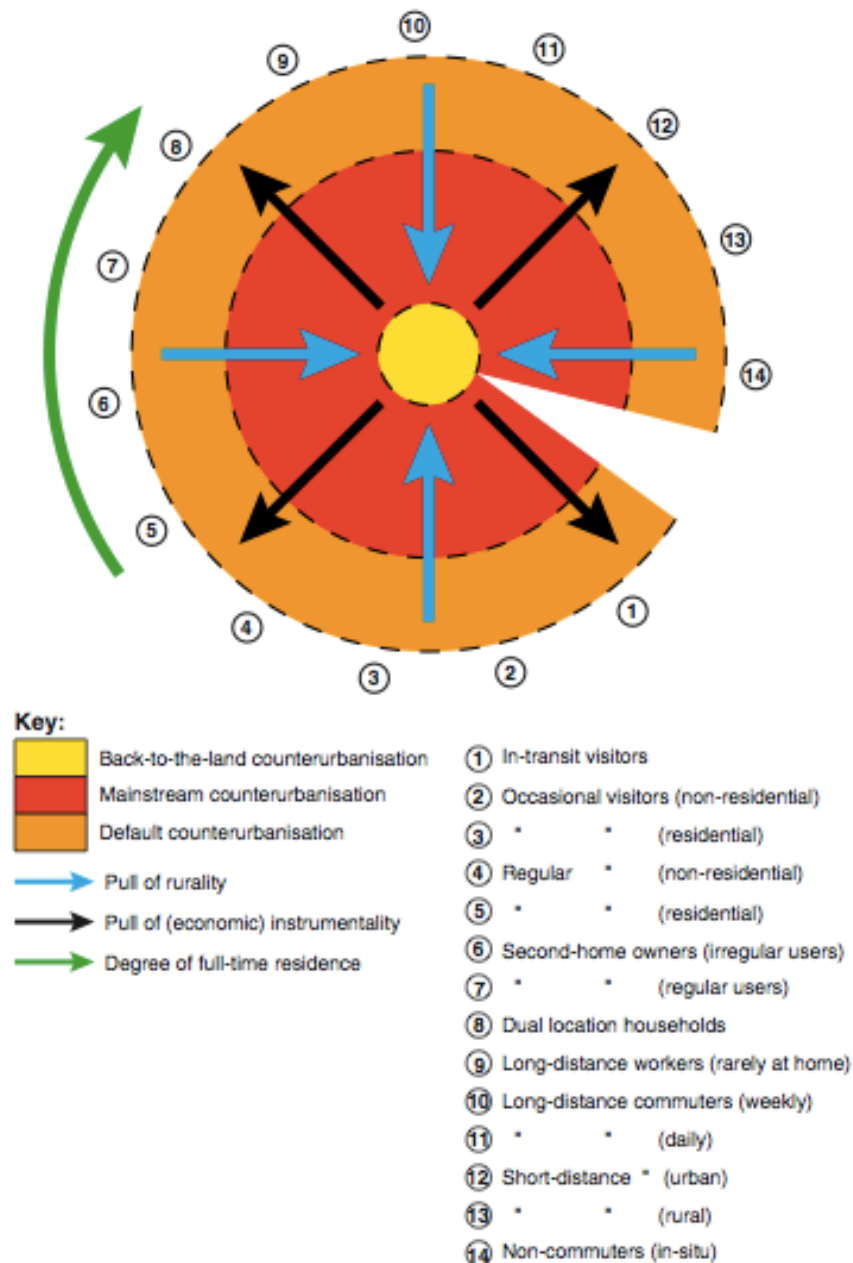


Figure 2.2. *Model of rural counter-urban populations* (Halfacree, 2011)

In order to contextualise this research it is essential to apply EU8 UK based migrants to the above model. They fit in more than one category - mainly (but not only) the first four. Some, perhaps those who visit rural areas only sporadically, sometimes unintentionally, could be called 'in-transit visitors'. 'Occasional visitors' do not reside in the rural areas but travel there (perhaps from the relatively close urban areas) and consume the rural. There are also migrants, who live in the rural places and in their free time visit other rural destinations. The following category covers 'regular residential visitors', whose main areas to travel to are rural places. 'Regular non-residential' rural visitors could relate to any EU8 migrants, who do not reside in the rural areas, but visit it quite regularly, such as weekly day visits. There is no data that indicates the percentage of EU8 of migrants who are second home owners.

It is important to note here that the limited existing research of migration to rural areas recognise that such areas do not only appear attractive to middle-class counter-urbanisers, but also to other tourists and more diverse group of movers fluctuating from low income groups, such as economic migrants (Fitchen, 1995; Anderson *et al.*, 2006; Foulkes and Newbold, 2008).

2.3.2. Rural fluidity and fixity

International migrants connect rural areas to the world through their transnational networks containing potential for translocal dynamic change

(Hedberg *et al.*, 2011). The web of networks that links migrants to their home countries can be an opportunity for rural areas to increase their international contacts and relationships, which could also be of importance to the dynamics of local labour markets and many other industries. The global network economy looks beyond 'world cities' and other urban areas, and it also includes rural areas in terms of intensifying international relations and global economic processes (McCarthy, 2008; Woods, 2007; Young, 2010). To follow the above, international migration processes have a strong impact on the demographic and dynamic restructuring of rural areas, which is why Hugo and Moren-Alegret (2008, p. 477) suggest that 'international migration will play an increasingly important role in that change over the next two decades'. Immigration is crucial in order to increase the working-age population, which will be decreasing in the near future in most developed countries (Woods, 2010). In rural areas in particular, especially in developed countries, international migration contributes increasingly to balancing aging population structures (Kasimis and Papadopoulos, 2005; Camarero *et al.*, 2009; Hedberg, 2010).

Therefore, not only demographic structure, but also qualitative aspects of the countryside are influenced by the influx of international migrants. Immigration constitutes an important part of the socio-economic restructuring of rural areas (Halfacree, 2008). In some countries, international migration has 'produced its own dynamics' while playing a crucial role not only in the structural development and transformation of the agricultural industry, but also by engaging in a range of sectors, including manufacturing, house-hold work and tourism. Accordingly,

migrants are part of a rural labour force that has multifaceted influences on rural areas both economically and socially (Kasimis *et al.*, 2010). Similarly, it is argued that international migrants would have the potential to create dynamics in rural areas of other European countries, not least through migrants' entrepreneurship and by connecting national firms to the home countries of migrants.

2.3.3. Relational mobility

With increasing intercultural contact and rising migration numbers, the description 'on the move' encapsulates a common experience for the large part of the world's population. The total number of migrants across the world is increasing yearly, for example, from an estimated 150 million in 2000 to 214 million in 2010; 1 out of every 33 people in the world today is a migrant – and this number is growing (United Nations Population Division, 2009). Thus, one of the curious questions that comes to mind is 'Do people's psychological orientations change after they move to a new culture?' The answer appears to be *positive*, as confirmed by research showing that immigrants become more alike as the majority group of the host country in attention (Kitayama, Duffy, Kawamura, & Larsen, 2003), emotion (De Leersnyder, Mesquita, & Kim, 2011; Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003), personality (Eap *et al.*, 2008), and self-esteem (Heine & Lehman, 2004; as cited in Zhang and Wai Li, 2014, p. 2). Thus, physical mobility also includes a psychological recalibration to the local cultural frequency.

Migration involves, above all, moving to a host society, place that often differs in the structure of social ecology from the home society. These dissimilarities in social ecology entail differences in the physical environment, social networks and economic institutions. Relational mobility is the number of options available to individuals to form new relationships in a given society or social context (Yuki *et al.*, 2007). As a socio-ecological construct, relational mobility does not refer to an attribute of an individual's mind but a characteristic of the social environment that surrounds the individual.

The recent theoretical approach of relational geography invites us to study the spatialities and mobilities of everyday life on different scales. The relational approach has become popular in human geography and may be described as 'an emphasis on the significance of networks, connections, flows and mobilities in constituting space and place and the social, economic, cultural and political forms and processes associated with them' (Woods 2011, p. 40). In relational understanding, space is imagined as the product of multiple interrelations and time-space as an open process of constant change (Thrift, 2003; Massey, 2005; Murdoch, 2006). Interpreters of relationality and of human-environment relations consider spatialities as practices and processes where human and non-human, social and material actors and relations are engaged (Whatmore, 2002; Hinchliffe, 2007; Woods, 2011). This PhD emphasises that human mobility, especially the one of migrants, is always relational (Massey 2005; Adey 2010). The relational view to mobility also involves understanding of lived

experiences, perceptions, imaginaries, feelings and motives related to spatial movement (Hiltunen and Rehunen, 2014).

As with Lefebvre and Soja, it is the relational intersections that are of most interest here. It is the interactions between meanings and the ways in which mobilities are produced and reproduced through embodied practices. As Cresswell suggests: 'often how we experience mobility and the ways we move are intimately connected to meanings given to mobility through representation. Similarly representations of mobility are based on ways in which mobility is practiced and embodied' (Cresswell, 2006, p. 4). These relational interchanges between mobilities and representation are not devoid of politics. For Cresswell, this is demonstrated at the micro level in the ways in which moving bodies are represented according to sociocultural norms and on a grander scale in the classed and racialised mobilities (Murray and Upstone, 2014).

The majority of the work and research on relational mobility is based on the long-term residents, such as people who have lived in a particular area for generations (Schug *et al.*, 2009; Schug *et al.*, 2010; Yuki *et al.*, 2013). However, as Zhang and Wai Li (2014) point out, it is less understood what happens when people actually move to a new social environment that is different from the old one. Some research has shown that people are responsive to experimentally elicited change in mobility (Lun *et al.*, 2012; Oishi *et al.*, 2012; Yuki *et al.*, 2013). Zhang and Wai Li (2014) argue that immigrants do not simply inherit a pre-existing social environment but

construct their own as they continuously interact with the host society in many different ways – for example, through everyday life experiences, mobility or work. Their perspective stresses the active role humans play in constructing and maintaining a social environment (Yamagishi, 2011).

Although it seems intuitive that individuals residing within a particular environment develop imaginations similar with the certain characteristics of that environment, it is less straightforward whether beliefs and practices (such as mobility practices) adapt immediately in the wake of a changed environment. Therefore, the occurrence of a change highlights the wider issue of the remaining of cultural heritage (Hamamura, 2012). One argument against rapid cultural change is that certain habits and cultural traditions tend to be maintained over time (Zhang and Wai Li, 2014) - this is strongly linked with the fields of embedding, belonging and identity. Once culture is endured in the form of principles, values or beliefs, its influence may be strong despite change in the environmental and sociological conditions it was originally adapted to (Nisbett, 2003; Cohen, 2001; Zhang and Wai Li, 2014).

Mobility is relational and differs from person to person. It matters who is doing the moving, where, when, how, and why. Immigrants, diaspora populations, and international tourists experience mobility differently from commuters and native citizens, and they should be studied in more depth (Adey, 2006).

2.3.4. Motility

In the context of rural studies, mobility and migration it is crucial to explore different aspects that shape them to different extents. Therefore, this part of the chapter addresses the concept of motility – mobility potential. Houtkamp (2014) argues that a clear limitation of both mobility and migration studies is that they are both predominantly concerned with actual or past movement giving relatively little attention for potential movement. Hence, in order to further our understanding of movement of people and equally enrich the research on migration and mobility it is imperative to employ the concept of motility. Kaufmann *et al.* (2004), influenced by the work of Bourdieu (1986), introduced motility as a form of mobility capital, which is influenced and intertwined with other forms, including social, cultural and monetary capital.

Dubois *et al.* (2015, p. 259) argued that individuals are characterised by (more or less prominent) predispositions to be mobile in different spaces. Such propensity is referred to as motility. Motility, therefore, is defined as the group of subjective characteristics that allow individuals to be mobile (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004). It refers to a wide range of elements that cover aspirations to be mobile (or sedentary), physical abilities, access to transport and telecommunication services, and acquired skills (Kaufmann, 2002; Dubois *et al.*, 2015).

The literature addresses three dimensions of motility: *skills* (needed to be mobile), *access* (conditions that make the mobility possible) and *appropriation*. As Kaufmann *et al.* (2004), point out, ‘all three elements of

motility are fundamentally linked to social, cultural and economic processes and structures (Bourdieu, 1986) within which mobility is embedded and enacted' (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004, p.750). Hence this part of the chapter is supported with Bourdieu's (1986) capital theory to examine the impact and extent of different forms of capital on EU8 migrants' motility – their mobility capital.

As motility is seen as a mobility capital, it is therefore argued that other forms of capital (for example, see Bourdieu, 1986) might be of particular importance. In the context of rural studies, Riley (2008; 2011) draws a useful account of Bourdieu's notion of the habitus, cultural construct and agricultural activity (Riley, 2018). He helps us to understand how useful the re-production of Bourdieu's capitals is when it comes to discussing experiences and interrelation between these different forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu (1979; 1986; 1991) has highlighted the importance of individuals' 'habitus', which is reflective of migrants' economic capital (i.e. disposable income that is often related to employment), their social capital (their networks, people they may know, family and friends links) and their cultural capital (existing in three main forms: embodied, institutionalized and objectified). Cultural capital in the institutionalised form relates to educational skills and achievements – for example, their ability to speak English. Objectified capital signifies the possession of cultural goods. Embodied cultural capital concerns individuals' skills, tastes and values (Pinxten and Lievens, 2014). In particular, individuals may use their 'habitus' in different social and geographical settings to increase their symbolic capital. This, in turn, can

provide them with (differential) 'agency' or ability to be mobile. However, it is important to remember that habitus may change over time (Riley, 2008), based on an individual's circumstances, experiences and practices in different rural spaces. Therefore, it is crucial to explore how an EU8 migrant's habitus, in the form of their economic, social and cultural capital, shapes their potential to be mobile.

2.4. Shaping the rural

In the context of the third part of the literature review – how the rural is changing, and what is shaping this change - it is crucial to highlight that there is very limited research that directly responds to this area, especially reflecting on how migrants are shaping the rural or shaped by it. However, in order to help us to understand this aspect, there are different models and concepts that could be utilised. First of all, it is important to reflect on the significance of communities. Communities can be described as networks of people, taking part in social interactions. Rural communities are often characterised as having a specific propensity towards entrepreneurialism and communitarianism that could be traced to (their) high degree of social homogeneity (Gallent *et al.*, 2015). 'The starting point for communitarian theory is the basic tenet that the existence of strong community life – expressed as a state of affairs in which individuals belong to and participate in a wider group (or groups) of common interests and shared goals – is of inherent value in human society' (Sage, 2012, p. 267). Communitarianism emphasises of what individuals, coming together,

can accomplish for themselves, which applies to the new migrants in the rural.

The model of Liepins (1999) could be valuable in the context of this research and the above arguments. First of all, it highlights different nuances of *dynamic communities* - it is particularly useful to look at what aspects of rural communities relate to each other and shape each other in different ways. This model is also useful to analyse the results (see Chapter 6). Another concept that is of importance in the context of this chapter is Differentiated Embedding (Ryan, 2018) - helping us to understand different aspects in which migrants shape the rural may vary according to degree of embedding. Oldenburg's (1989; 1999) Three Places concept is another theory that is important when trying to understand how different places change.

Liepins (1999) argues that (rural) community should be viewed as a platform where communication and practices take place despite differences between individuals. The central element of Liepins' framework is '*People*', who, it is argued, drive rural change (1999). The model subsequently encapsulates three broad elements which shape / are shaped by 'people' residing in rural communities: i) *practices*; ii) *meanings*; and ii) *spaces and structures*. *Practices* remind us of the dynamic nature of rural space and communities. They include a range of different ways in which people conduct their everyday lives. Detailed accounts of such practices are explored in Chapter 5 with a particular attention on migrants' mobilities in the rural, as well as the motivations behind them and

obstacles to those activities. However, how the model can be critiqued for that it brings *spaces* and *structures* together in a rather uniform way.

2.4.1. Migrant experiences, performances, identity and embedding

Given the migrant centered perspective adopted in this PhD, Liepins' concept (1999) is developed (Chapter 6) to consider EU8 migrants' meanings and definitions of the English countryside as these are inseparable from their actions and practices. This is undertaken through integrating Ryan's (2018) work on 'differentiated embedding'. Although, 'embeddedness' has its roots in the sociology of economics (Granovetter, 1985), geographers have shaped and extended the original concept by adding a spatial dimension. Recently, Ryan (2018) has developed the concept of 'differentiated embedding' to explore migrants' negotiation of attachments across different places (Hess, 2004; Ryan, 2018). As a result, the concept is drawn upon to elucidate how and to what extent EU8 migrants are able to shape different places across the UK's countryside. In so doing, it also draws attention to the importance of migrant agency and issues of power, and how this may vary temporally and spatially. Belonging and identity are two key themes that relate to migrants' lives in the workplace and beyond. The notion of belonging and identity are intertwined within migrants' lives, decisions and choices (Krzyzanowski and Wodak, 2007). Both, belonging and identity are an important part of

this study as they are tightly connected with migrants' individual motivations and experiences of travel.

Identity and behaviour cannot be seen as fixed and invariant as they change over time, space and specific situations (Song and Schwarz, 2008). Adjustment to new cultures and ways of being - including "free time" activities and engagement in rural spaces can be complex and even difficult for some. They both change over time due to individual factors, including language shift, social and cultural integration, exogamy and personality of the migrant (Schulze, 2008; Bhugra and Gupta, 2011). Time is one of the key dimensions when discussing identity and belonging, as the 'temporariness' as well as temporality of a migrant's status strongly affects the degree to which migrants are involved in identity "work". Different temporal perspectives explain different attitudes towards the need to feel at home in a new place (Rewers, 2000).

Belonging consists of inter-related emotional, mental, social, and geographical dimensions (Codesal, 2015). Rojek (2009) challenges the belief that in contemporary society, leisure has become the domain of intensive identity work. Leisure practices may play an important role in home-making, insofar as they are situated in time and physical as well as social space. Through embodied leisure practice, migrants are not only in the place where they happen to live, they also become of that place. Self-awareness, attachment and embeddedness develop in the interaction with (public) places, and space is (re)appropriated through bodily engagement with it. Embodiment therefore features prominently in several

contributions. For example, Horolets (2015) shows how Polish economic migrants in the UK gain a sense of belonging and re-invent their identity by exploring their living environment through leisure and recreation. By literally finding their way, whether through making use of ready-made tourist offers like theme parks or through wandering around, these migrants engage in identity work: the place becomes theirs, they become the place.

Migrant identity and belonging inter-relate and impact on their experiences and choices of outer work activities and subsequently shape their engagement in (rural) domestic tourism. For some, visiting the UK's rural areas may be just a form of exploration, for others it could be part of the lifestyle. This research is going to explore the implications identity and belonging may have on migrants' decision-making and choices in regards to their mobilities.

Tadevosyan (2014) also hypothesises that when going from one cultural environment to another, migrants do not just take with them the practices characteristic of their native culture but also form new practices or adopt the practices of the host culture, especially those that are necessary for the realization of their goals. These practices play a significant role for migrants.

2.5. Summary

The literature review started with a focus on the rural – exploring the different theories defining and conceptualising it. The chapter showed different ways in which the rural has been represented and how these (representations) have changed over time. Particular attention was drawn to the increasing ways it has been socially constructed and the reassertion of the material aspects of rural space in recent times. Yet, the chapter highlights that contemporary theories were never really explored from the perspective of international migrants – this is a clear gap in the knowledge and it is explored through the research (notably in Chapter 4).

The subsequent section focused on different aspects of rural mobility – showing how rural space (especially in the UK) has increasingly become a space of hyper mobility. However, what the literature highlights is that there is less attention on opportunities and challenges for doing mobility for different groups – including migrants. In this respect it was particularly useful to therefore draw on work on motility as it highlights how mobility potential may be actualized (or not) for various groups based on issues concerned with access, skills and how these are appropriated. This concept is particularly important in the context of Chapter 5, where it is applied in order to help us to understand migrants' mobility and motility practices in the rural.

The final section of this chapter therefore focussed on how new actors in the rural may shape it or, indeed, be shaped by it. Again, in this respect

the research is limited and we know relatively little about how EU8 migrants might be influencing rural spaces and places. However, through the application of particular models, such as Ryan's differentiated embedding and Oldenburg's Three Places we can explore how certain areas and communities can be shaped in distinctive ways (as well as influencing particular individuals in terms of their identities, activities and belonging). This gap is filled and responded to in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methodologies employed to investigate the overarching research aim identified in Chapter 1. In so doing, the chapter also sets out the ontological and epistemological approaches that have been adopted for the research and which underpin the study (Section 3.2). Subsequently, the research design and research strategy are discussed in Section 3.3. A key element of the research strategy was the use of a case study approach. Details of the case study are therefore set out, including the justification for its selection (see Section 3.3.2). This is followed by a discussion of the sampling approach and the research methods used – in this instance a combination of semi-structured interviews combined with the use of visual methods – i.e. photographs (Section 3.4). Beyond this, a focus on issues of positionality is also set out, which is crucial given the characteristics of the interviewer and interviewees (see section 3.5).

Research Aim and Objectives:

The overarching aim of this study was to explore **the importance of rural space to EU8 migrants**, and this was operationalized through the following research objectives:

1. To establish how EU8 migrants define and develop particular representations of the rural.

2. To critically explore the ways in which rural space shapes/informs EU8 migrants' mobilities (or fixities).

3. To explore how EU8 migrants perceive they are shaping / re-shaping the rural.

4. To analyse the experiences, activities and decision-making processes of EU8 migrants in rural space, and how this may vary according to migrant dispositions, including their social, economic and demographic characteristics

In addition to the above, because of the unique timing of this research during the final months leading up to the UK's EU Referendum vote, colloquially referred to as Brexit, an additional objective was added:

5. To explore whether and to what extent EU Referendum had shaped EU8 migrants' understandings, representations, mobilities and engagement with rural communities and place.

3.2. *Ontological and Epistemological Foundations*

A clear and transparent knowledge of the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the research '*is required for a number of reasons, key among which is establishing the researcher's orientation to studying the social world*' (Grix, 2002, p. 176). It is also key to linking together the main research components, all of which should represent the orientation of the researcher to the social world and the research enquiry. As it is evident that both ontology and epistemology are 'central to all social research' (Grix, 2002, p. 176) this part of the chapter aims to explain the ontological and epistemological foundation for the research.

3.2.1. *Research Ontology*

As Bergin (2017) highlights, 'ontology' refers to the study of things around us, whilst 'epistemology' focuses on the approach and methods of obtaining the true knowledge of the above '*things*'. The research ontology for this research is post-structural because it does not identify with one particular position such as Marxism, feminism, or neoliberalism, and it appreciates the value of different voices (Jensen, 2008). The below quotation ties neatly to the nature of this research, emphasizing a post-structural qualitative approach that provides appropriate opportunities for exploring and assessing the importance of cultural diversity in (material or

symbolic) constructions of rurality, rural spaces and rural society (Cloke, 2006; Panelli, 2006):

'Rural studies have long sought to understand how people experience and organise rural life; how families operate farms; how communities construct cultural meanings and control space; and how marginal groups negotiate inequalities and sometimes contest social relations and structures' (Panelli, 2006, p. 63).

Indeed, post-structuralist approaches – in the context of this PhD – are useful in that they allow a focus on the dispositions (i.e. different forms of capital) and experiences of EU8 migrants who both visit and reside within the rural, and through the use of deconstructive strategies can help to document the various interconnected discursive and material dimensions of rural space, migration and mobility (Cloke, 2006).

Poststructuralism offers a range of methods, such as verbal - for example, interviews - and visual data, including photographs, often involving 'subjective' narratives (Kendall and Wickham, 1999; Czarniawska, 2004). Such narratives are broadly recognized as the most influential ways in which individuals construct their understandings of the interaction between themselves and their surrounding worlds. Such narratives can serve as rich sources of the emotive imageries and metaphors, which are often linked to representations, values and attachment in relation to different

places, experiences and behaviours. Importantly, they demonstrate the complexity of the interplay of discourses, as well as points of discontinuity among them. An important concept of poststructuralism is 'the subject'. In the context of this research rural space is the subject, and poststructuralism treats 'the subject' as an ongoing product of discourse, through the construction and development of different identities individuals might take on, and through the ways individuals experience and are maneuvered to take up specific identities or roles (Davies, 1994; Vick, 2006). The discourses that construct social positions also construct objects and experiences of imagination and desire (Grosz, 1994). Individuals come to occupy and take up such positions as their own - as reflecting who they 'really are' - through techniques of self discipline and self regulation (Foucault, 1988; Haug, 1987, as cited in Vick, 2006, p. 2). Taking up those positions involves the formation of particular imaginations (such as the ways in which they might view and define the rural) and desires, such as visiting rural places (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988). The identities of individuals that often arise through these processes are not singular but multiple, and these multiplicity of identities do not always sit comfortably with each other or 'fit' certain forms (Cruikshank, 1996; Foucault, 1991; Lempke, 2000; Vick, 2006, p. 2).

Poststructuralism is closely related to postmodernism, and might be referred to as the 'political wing' of the latter perspective, in the sense that it is suspicious of, and pursues to undermine and resist the broad narratives of modernist social domination, institution and control including

capitalism, colonialism and hetero-normativity (Fox, 2014). It is also important to highlight that this research does not associate with 'skeptical postmodernists' (Jensen, 2010, p. 88) who do not believe in, and reject, the likelihood of finding the truth, who support the abolition of social science, and whose key focus is extreme relativism (Jensen, 2010). Instead, it is believed that this research is more 'affirmative postmodernist', as although it refutes the modernism along with its meta-narratives, it acknowledges and appreciates the potential in social movements (including those associated with EU8 migrants, for example; also see Yapa, 1996).

Poststructuralism considers discourse as language in use (see Walkerdine, 1984; Derrida, 1997). Meaning is formed and recognised by association, through what Derrida calls 'intertextuality', and by contrast other related terms (Derrida, 1978). '*Meaning*' and social realities are thus constructed, rather than reflecting some underlying reality whose meaning has to be 'discovered' or 'revealed'. They are constructed largely by drawing on different combinations of existing available discourses. They include both descriptive and normative elements and dimensions. Further, meanings are never simply fixed, but always being reconstructed, redefined, compared, re-developed and contested. This applies to both broad dimensions, such as 'rural', and the particular objects or actors (such as EU8 migrants) and practices (such as mobility) that constitute them.

Within rural debates, Halfacree (2006) also argues that post-structuralism could be useful in viewing rural as ever changing, and as an evolving space/place. Halfacree even uses the term 'post-rural' – referring to the rural as we may not know it yet – as such, it is yet to be explored / re-discovered.

3.2.2. Epistemology

In relation to the thesis, the research epistemology is hermeneutic because it views language and different views of the social world as representative, constructive, insightful and reflective (Philips and Hardy, 2002, p. 13).

Von Wright (1971) has described the epistemological '*clash*' as being between positivism and hermeneutics (which in the context of human geography and social sciences is associated with the theory and the method of interpretation human voice and action – here EU8 migrants' voices and their practices in the rural). Bryman (2007) further argues that this clash highlights a primary difference between an importance on the explanation of human behaviour that is the key element of the positivist approach and the understanding of human behaviour. The latter puts emphasis on understanding of human voice, action and behaviour. This contrast echoes long-standing debates that relate to Weber's (1947) *Verstehen* (from German - *understanding*). Weber (1947, p. 88) referred to

sociology as a 'science, which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at a casual explanation of its course and effects'. Weber's definition appears to capture both, understanding and explanation, but the critical point is that the duty of 'casual explanation' is commenced with reference to the 'interpretive understanding of social action', which is key in this research.

Hermeneutics refers to an approach, within which the analyst of a text (i.e. interview transcripts) must aim to bring out the meanings of a text from the perspective of its author (Bryman, 2008, p. 535) (in the context of this research this was stressed through giving 'voice' and a 'missing perspective' of EU8 migrants). Hermeneutics should also include a consideration of the social and historical contexts, within which the text was collected / produced. Therefore, an approach to the analysis of data (such as visual data or texts) can be hermeneutic when it is sensitive to the context within which the research is produced (i.e. specific timing of the research – EU Referendum).

3.3. Methodology

3.3.1. Research design

In Chapter 1 and in Chapter 2, it was highlighted how migration studies have arguably focused on the economic aspects or impacts of immigration on both sending and receiving areas at the expense of 'beyond the workplace' issues. Indeed, reference was made to Halfacree's (2004) call

for a greater appreciation of the 'non economic' issues that inform migration behaviour and to expand engagement with individuals and their experiences. Traditionally research in rural geography focused on the collection of numerical data (Cloke, 1997), in conjunction with the adoption of positivist epistemologies. Such approaches were criticised and led to a 'cultural turn' in respect of exploring rural space and its complexities. Consequently, more recent approaches to the study of the rural – and migration therein – have adopted a qualitative research design.

Atieno (2009) pointed out that qualitative methodology is the most appropriate for research, in which complexity and depth reduction of the data would prevent discovery of the subject. Therefore, if the purpose of the study is to explore and learn from the participants about their perspectives, experiences, understandings and meanings they put on it (experiences) - the qualitative methods will be most appropriate and suitable in order to allow for such discovery and do justice to their (migrants') perceptions. Qualitative research is a research strategy that usually stresses the importance of words, rather than quantification in the process of collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2008; Atieno, 2009). It seeks to understand, interpret, allow time for reflection, observe, investigate real life experiences, opinions and perceptions of studied subjects (Foster, 1995) and it fits well with the research aim and objectives.

Given the above justifications, the qualitative research design and methodology were adopted taking into account the need to discover and explore the influences shaping EU8 migrants' representations of rural

space (also see Green and Brown, 2005). This research follows Bryman's arguments 'there are many traditions in qualitative research, one of which is to seek understanding of social reality – providing rich descriptions of people, through talk and interactions. As postmodernism suggests, qualitative research emphasizes 'method talk', which should be sensitive to different ways social reality can be constructed' (2007, p. 533). Therefore, with a focus on the study's aim and objectives (highlighted above), it is clear that qualitative approach and methods (i.e. 'talk / interview method') are most appropriate and useful, as they seek to uncover depth of understanding (of the importance of rural spaces to EU8 migrants), and prioritise exploration over explanation (of perspectives, understandings, engagement and practices).

3.3.2. Research strategy

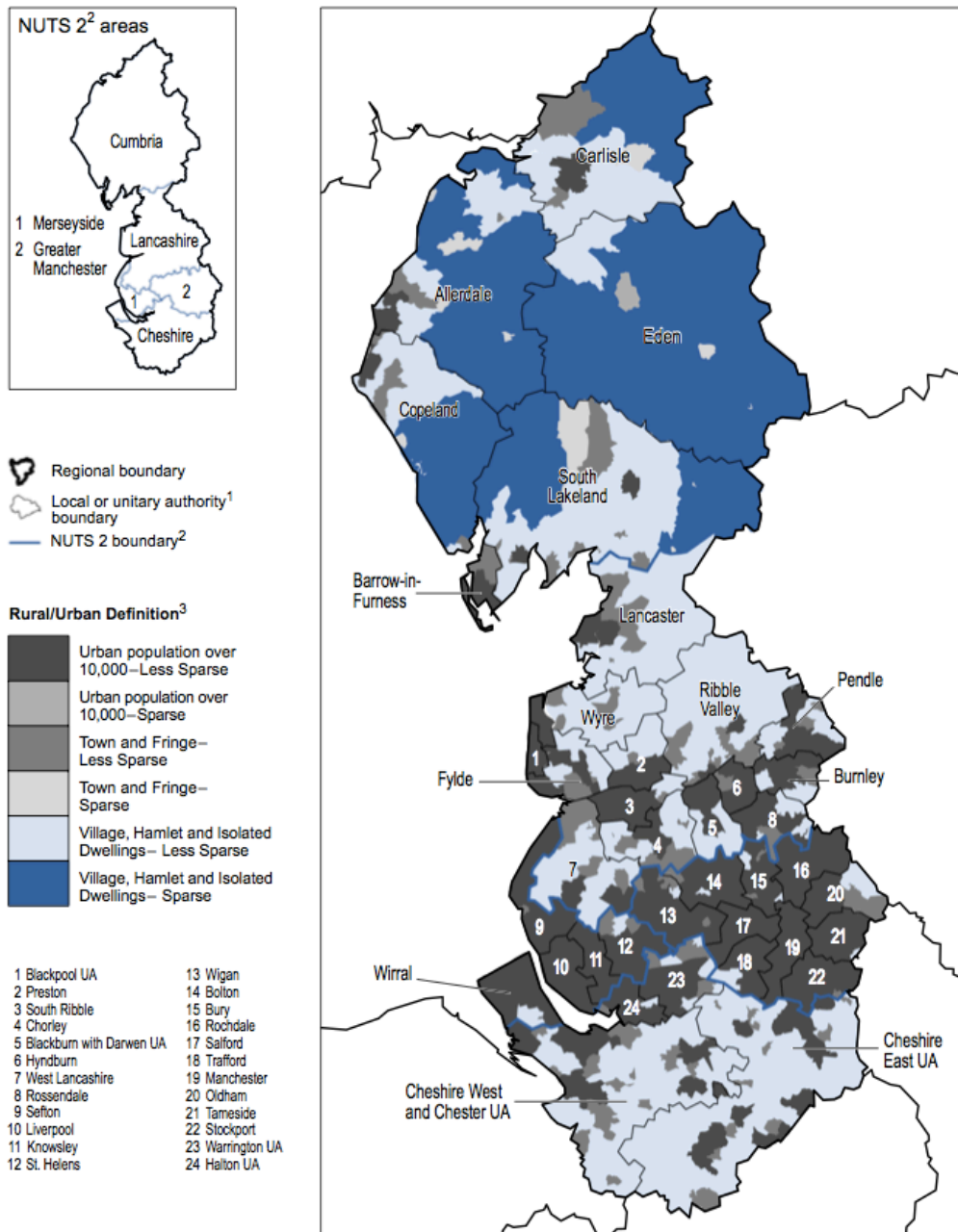
Based on the aim and objectives of the study it was decided that a case study approach was most suitable for this research as it can help to provide an in-depth exploration of the experiences of EU8 migrants who reside in and / or visit rural spaces. Employment of the case study strategy presents the best method for understanding and uncovering complex geographical and social phenomena in a particular setting by allowing for an inclusive investigation of real-life experiences and events (Yin, 2009). Moreover, using a case study for this PhD research was useful because, as Yin (2009) points out, real life experiences (in this case migrant's lives in the rural beyond the workplace, their mobilities and practices) are shaped by a number of contextual conditions (for example, location or the

respective 'capitals' of individuals). Hence case studies serve as an approach which allow for an in-depth investigation and understanding of a phenomenon when 'the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (Yin, 2009, p. 18).

Nevertheless, a key issue when employing a case study as a research strategy is the fundamental problem of determining what the 'case' is – i.e. the case study area selection and unit of analysis. In this respect, Yin (2009) presents several studies with distinctly different units of analysis; this means that, for example, the case may be an event or entity in the context of historical events. An individual could be treated as a case study and information collected about several individuals would be a multiple-case study. Yin argues that the most important issue when developing and justifying a valid case study is to ensure that the unit of analysis is 'the most likely to illuminate your research'. Another essential aspect is for the researcher to have 'sufficient access to potential data, whether to interview people, review documents or records, or make observations in the field' (2009, p. 26). Consequently, when selecting the case study area for this research it was important to look for an area within the UK, which had a high concentration of EU8 migrants. Accessibility was also an important criterion for choosing a site. It is under these conditions that various potential case studies were reviewed and discounted and with the North West of England subsequently identified as the most suitable place to conduct the research. In this respect, the selection of the case study site involved several stages.

First, the 2011 Census was utilised to identify regions of interest. Although the thesis aim explores rural areas of the UK as a whole, Scotland and Northern Ireland were initially eliminated due to the differences in their own census data collection, analyses and presentation (ONS, 2015). Therefore here, in the context of this study, 'Census' is referred to the 2011 Census of England and Wales. The North West of England was used as the case study region given the high percentage of EU8 nationals within the region (EU8 migrants comprise 8.3% of the population residing in the area – ONS, 2016) and the diverse range of rural settlements and population densities in the area (see Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs, 2013) (see Figure 3.1).

In addition, the selection of North West England was also underpinned by the fact that the researcher was already familiar with the area, having undertaken previous work with EU8 migrants and therefore helping to facilitate access to such groups.



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Figure 3.1. Rural-Urban Classification for North West (Source: ONS, 2017)

3.3.3. Research sampling

The rural space is of great significance to many individuals, including those who reside and/ are employed within it, as well as those who simply visit it for various reasons. In this respect, whilst it appeared to be crucial

to focus on EU8 migrants residing in rural areas (on the basis of the ONS rural-urban classification and on the basis of their own social constructions of the rural), it was also equally pertinent to explore and analyse the responses of those EU8 nationals located outside (the rural). Indeed, those migrants had their own representations of the rural as well as specific experiences and activities associated with their rural visits. It was therefore also imperative to include their views through the research process.

The sampling technique employed was a form of non-probability sampling, as the aim was not to produce a statistically representative sample or draw statistical inference, but explore, in depth, migrants' perspectives, experiences and practices. Most writers (see Bryman, 2008) on interview-based sampling in qualitative research recommend that purposive sampling should be conducted. Such sampling is strategic and entails an attempt to establish a good correlation between the research questions and the sampling frame adopted. Purposive sampling was therefore selected for this research as it is based on the knowledge of a researched population and the purpose of the study (linked to aim and objectives). To some extent the research also employed a form of convenience sampling. Although participants' selection was unguided, it was not random. As Lupton (1996) argues, convenience sampling is usually the product of such factors as the availability of certain group or individuals, who are difficult to contact, such as EU8 migrants. Therefore, some of the research participants were also approached through the use of informal contacts

and the networks of the researcher. It is important to note that this PhD aims to generate an in-depth analysis, therefore issues of representativeness were less critical than they would have been in quantitative research (Bryman, 2008).

Snowballing was also used as a supplement. As such, the researcher requested initial participants to identify other potential subjects who also met the criteria of the research. It was particularly important and useful to recruit interviewees from rural areas, as well as those who were from different than Poland EU8 countries. However, the disadvantage with snowballing was that a sampling frame created using this method alone may be prone to bias. This is because those who know each other may have similar characteristics (such as gender, age, place of residency, or country of origin) behaviours and attitudes or may influence each other in relation to the research. Those that are missed may have had quite different characteristics. As a result the sample may not be particularly diverse.

The subjects were selected because of specific characteristics. Given the challenges of recruiting individuals, a combination of non-probability, purposeful and snowball sampling approaches were adopted. Whilst this may lead to particular biases emerging in relation to the self-selection of individuals, the key selection criteria related to first their residence in the UK (urban or rural) and then country of origin. As such, a focus on 'within group' differences was less important in relation to the main aim of this study. It is also significant to point out in the narrative of the sample that

before the interviews have taken place the respondents were asked to specify whether they reside in a rural or urban area - since the aim of the research was to show EU8 nationals' perspective and give them a 'missing voice'. Based on migrants' responses the ratio here was 50-50 (urban-rural). However, it is important to note that when migrants' postcodes (of residence) were compared with the DEFRA classifications, they proved to be different (see Table 3.1). Although some migrants indicated that they reside in the rural, according to the DEFRA classifications, their postcodes fell into the 'urban' rubrics. This could potentially mean that EU8 migrants' definition of rural areas differs from the official one adapted by DEFRA. Notwithstanding this, an attempt was also made to select a variety of interviewees according to their age, economic status, occupation, education, marital status, family status and length of time in the UK.

Participant recruitment involved making contact with potential interviewees, usually in an informal manner to gain more trust. I did not feel that there was a need for me to gain 'access' or contact any 'formal gate-keepers'. I have followed a number of migrant-specific websites on social media and contacted individuals there, spoken to migrants employed in Eastern-European or Polish shops, or visited Polish masses in church. I have always explained my position as a researcher, what I do and why their voice is important to me. I had a great response from numerous migrants resulting in collection of the data within 6 months. My positionality was very important in this context – as a migrant myself, being able to speak Polish, some Russian, Czech and Slovakian, residing

in the area (North West) and having previous experience of doing research with EU8 migrants was very beneficial.

It is also important to note that a large number of the participants were contacted through the Internet, in particular different forms of Social Media. The choice of research methods was shaped by the characteristics of the EU8 communities in the UK (Census, 2011). Therefore, one of the primary motivations for contacting the potential research participants was their high Internet usage - both at home and abroad. As Janta, 2007 points out, Poles were the highest registered groups of Skype in Europe (Bendyk, 2009), and they also appear to be the fourth largest language group that undertakes blogging activities (Trammell *et al.*, 2006). Additionally, it is also interesting to highlight that just in 2007 the reports on the UK user traffic on Polish websites have increased twelve times since the 2004 enlargement. Janta (2007), also suggests that these high numbers are also reflected in the increasing figures of new websites and Internet forums for EU8 migrants in the UK. There are numerous sites related to a particular country as well as the region, county, or town the EU8 nationals reside in – many reaching traffic in hundreds of thousands of posts. Therefore, as part of my research strategy, I have purposefully joined numerous sites, such as '*Latviesi UK*', '*Poles in Liverpool*', or '*Slovak and Czech Association*' - and observed the traffic, posts, photographs and discussions added. And, indeed, participants were approached and recruited based the analysis of different social network sites relevant to the research area, such as '*Eastern Europeans and Poles*

in Lancashire'. Some participants were therefore recruited using informal contacts and networks of the researcher developed through the social media presence.

As a consequence of adopting this sampling frame(s), in total 60 individuals were recruited to participate in the research (see Table 3.1 below). The majority of interviewees were Polish (around 80% of respondents; n=48), along with others from Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic and Slovakia. This broadly reflected the make up of EU8 migrants within the North West as a whole (ONS, 2017). An equal number of male and female interviewees were recruited (50-50 ratio), and with a diversity of ages ranging from 18 to 64. Around one-third had children under 18 (n=19) and the majority were employed at the time of the research (n=54). Individuals had been in the UK for between one and 12 years and with around a third of interviewees (n=19) being in the UK for less than five years. This correlated with the level of spoken and written English: it varied between poor and excellent.

Table 3.1. *Participants' Characteristics*

Variable name	Group	Number Total	Percentage value %
Gender	Male	30	50.0
	Female	30	50.0
Mode of Employment	Full Time	37	62.3
	Part Time	17	28.3
	Unemployed	6	10.0
Age (Grouped by following Census, 2011 classification)	18-24	11	18.3
	25-34	32	53.3
	35 - 44	7	11.6
	45 - 54	6	10.0
	55 - 64	4	6.6
	65 - +	0	0.0

Marital Status	Single	28	46.7
	In Partnership	9	15.0
	Married	23	38.3
Children or dependants	Below age of 18	19	31.7
	Above the age of 18	9	15.0
Time in the UK in years	1 - 2	12	20.0
	3 - 4	7	11.7
	5 - 6	4	6.7
	7 - 8	14	23.3
	9 - 10	8	13.3
	11 - 12	15	25.0
Level of English	Excellent	12	20.0
	Very good-Good	16	26.7
	Communicative	26	43.3
	Poor	6	10.0
Residency in the UK (based on participants' own classification)	Rural	30	50.0
	Urban	30	50.0
Nationality	Czech	1	1.7
	Estonia	0	0.0
	Hungary	3	5.0
	Latvia	2	3.3
	Lithuania	2	3.3
	Poland	48	80.0
	Slovakia	4	6.7
	Slovenia	0	0.0
Education	Degree or equivalent	18	30.0
	A-Level	21	35.0
	Vocational Qualifications	21	35.0
Occupation (grouped by ONS Standard Occupational Classification)	Managers, Directors and senior officials	6	10.0
	Professional	9	15.0
	Associate professional & technical	2	3.3
	Administrative and secretarial	1	1.7
	Skilled Trades	6	10.0
	Caring, leisure and other service	9	15.0
	Sales and customer service	4	6.7
	Process, plant and machine operatives	9	15.0
	Elementary Occupations	6	10.0
	Rural - Urban (according to DEFRA)	Urban	37
Rural		23	38.3

3.4. Research methods and process

3.4.1. Interviews

As already highlighted above, the primary data collection method in this study was a qualitative one, called in-depth interview. In terms of the actual interviewing process, interviewing is regarded as a very powerful tool in qualitative research as it enables to researcher to investigate participants' views, perceptions, values and experiences that would be impossible to obtain through a different form of data collection. Interviewing, as argued by Hitchings (2012) is a form of interaction that allows an important degree of intimacy that can stimulate trust between the interviewee and primary researcher. With reference to the use of semi-structured interviews, whilst one could argue that a totally unstructured approach to interviewing can yield information with more qualitative depth, as the interviewee is able to discuss matters within their own frames of reference (May, 2001), due to the number of objectives and complexity of this study, some flexible structure was required. Given the need to focus on generating an in-depth exploration of EU8 migrants' perceptions, representations and experiences and practices in the rural, including patterns of mobility, it was felt that conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews would be most suitable in order to capture such issues. They welcomed elaboration and helped to probe into different concepts and ideas, and facilitating flexible dialogue (May, 2001; Denscombe, 2003; Bryman, 2007).

These interviews were carried out individually with 60 EU8 migrants who moved to the UK in 2004 (after the 2004 Accession) or after. In accordance with Boyce and Neale (2006), in-depth interviewing involves conducting rather intensive individual interviews with a relatively small number of respondents to explore their perspectives related to a particular issue, idea, or circumstances. Longfield (2004) aptly points out that the important advantage of in-depth interviews is the confidential atmosphere in which some sensitive information can be shared by the participants. Therefore, it allows interviewees to share details about their perceptions, personal opinions, preferences, values, experiences or behaviour in the safe, non-judgmental environment. Even though there was a list of pre-set questions, they may not always follow any specific order – this changed and was altered during the interviews. There are several advantages of such a technique of gathering primary data, and one of them is the idea of allowing a certain extend of flexibility and allowing to pursue of unexpected lines of enquiry during the interview. Such interviews still allow for its results and findings to be compared and contrasted, and divided into themes (Grix, 2001; Bryman, 2004). Therefore, the over-arching structure for the interviews was based around the research aim and objectives. There were four key themes – *i) definitions and representations; ii) mobilities; iii) rural – shaping migrants; and iv) migrants’ perceptions of shaping the rural space.*

It is also important to stress here that it was decided to conduct the interviews in a more informal manner in order to help the participants to feel comfortable and relaxed. This helped them to open up more and

become more talkative and reveal some stories, which were very important for the research. The interview process has taken between 45 minutes up to several hours.

It is also necessary to add that the researcher's proficiency in the West Slavic Language group (i.e. Polish, Slovakian and Czech; for reference see Sussex and Cubberley, 2006), most interviews (88%) were carried out in the migrants' native language, and additionally, at times, some questions and answers were repeated in English when linguistic expressions differed or to limit misunderstandings. When data collection in participants' native language was not possible, interviews were carried out in English (12%). A few Polish participants preferred the interview to be processed in English. One Latvian participant used both Russian and English to express her views. Following Sixsmith (1999), I believed that the interview process should be a dynamic relational interaction. The interview therefore was very much a social construct with the relationship between researcher and participant dyadic. On the majority accounts all interviewees were comfortable, open to answer any of my questions, offering further help if needed.

3.4.2. Photographs

In addition, participants were welcomed to bring photographs to either exemplify their points, to help them elaborate, remember situations or places that might have been of importance. Such use of photographs in the research and interviews' context is often referred to as '*photo elicitation*', which has been described as '*the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview*' (Harper, 2002, p. 13, cited in Bryman, 2008). It was hoped that the photographs that were part of the interviewees' collection could be used as a stimulus for questioning and expanding some of their answers. Harper (2002) argued that using photographs in interviews might be useful for a number of reasons; such as helping to ground the researcher's interview questions. It was also anticipated that the use of photographs would help to stimulate the participants to better remember places, people, events, places and activities that otherwise could have been forgotten (Bryman, 2008).

Although, the use of photographs brought some memories back (especially in relation to representations, definitions or rural engagements) and reflections about the trips that interviewees have taken in the rural, which in some cases brought quite deep quality material, some of them were not as successful as anticipated. In the case of this research, the reflections that interviewees made through the photographs did not really bring as much qualitative depth as was hoped. Interviewees used their photographs to exemplify their points, but did not feel the need to extend

the discussion to elaborate on the photos. However, it has to be highlighted that although some participants did not feel 'the need to talk too much about the photographs', they were happy to share them and proud that they were asked to support this research.

3.4.3. Transcription and analysis

Interviews were transcribed and written up within a day or two of taking place so that any particular nuances or impressions (of not only what is being said but also the way it has been said) were not forgotten (May, 2001). There were several benefits of recording and transcribing interviews. It helped to correct the natural limitations of my memory, it allowed more thorough examination of what respondents say. However, it has been recognised that the procedure is highly time-consuming, at times taking several hours. The average time of transcription of one-hour interview was five hours.

It is also important to add that all interviews carried in language different to English were translated by the researcher. All participants were offered the opportunity to view transcribed and translated version of their interview to confirm that they approve and did not wish to change anything. However, only two participants – one Polish male and another Slovakian female asked for translated transcripts, but they never reported any issues nor had further questions; just one interviewee emailed me the following

comments: *'I thought you did a really good job, and I have nothing to add here. This interview was a pleasure and let me know if you need my help or for me to answer any questions'*.

The data was analysed using thematic analysis in order to identify and extract recurring themes from the transcripts of interviews (Hart, 2011). The themes that emerged from the data were then coded and categorised based on the objectives and emerged themes. The coding will be performed manually to avoid becoming 'detached from the data'.

3.5. Positionality

Positionality is a crucial aspect of every research. As McDowell (1992) argued, it is important for the researcher to be able to recognise and take into the account own position, as well as trying to understand the position of the participants. Positionality has been referred to as a strategy that contextualizes observations and interpretations of the research (Cloke *et al.*, 2000).

When discussing rural research studies it is also important to reflect on the rural geographers themselves who perform the rural through their research – considering one's own positionality, selection of various methods, engagement with different subjects of rural research and its users, as well as implications of their research. Woods (2010) refers to rural researchers as 'active agents' in performing, producing and

reproducing rurality. Observing, recording and practicing rural geography are closely intertwined with each other and are all part of performing rurality (Woods, 2010).

The research was undertaken from different cultural insider (Ganga and Scott, 2006) positions, where the interviews were carried out between the researcher and participants sharing similar cultural, national (EU8 migrants), religious and linguistic heritage. Clearly, being in such positions had many advantages when researching migration by understanding spoken and unspoken language, as well as the idiosyncratic cultural references. As Easterby-Smith and Malina point out (1999, p. 84), 'the problem for researchers from one culture or context to conduct on another culture is that the outsiders' past experiences will not have equipped them to make sense of events in the same way that insiders would'. Aguilera (1981) further argued that a positive property of being an insider means that they are able to blend into various situations without disturbing social settings. Furthermore, they have a pre-existing knowledge of the context of the research (Bell, 2005), such as where to look for potential participants - especially when compared to outsider researchers, who may not have contacts within the social group and possess less knowledge of how '*membership*' is attained. The advantages of being an insider with regards to accessing the field 'more quickly and intimately' has been referred to as "expediency of access" (Chavez, 2008, p. 482). This was definitely the case in the context of this research – through being a 'cultural insider', I felt I had better access to different migrant groups, I was more aware of where to search for potential participants and how to gain

their trust.

Critics of the cultural insider position argue that member knowledge could be the result of 'subjective involvement - a deterrent to objective perception and analysis' (Aguiler, 1981, p. 15). DeLyser (2001) notes that greater familiarity can lead to a loss of "objectivity" and there is thus the increased risk of the researcher making assumptions based on their prior knowledge and/or experience. There is therefore the need to keep oneself distanced, which at times was hard to do, especially in instances when the research participants treated me as their family – trying to look after my well-being, making sure I was fed and keeping in touch after the research. However, I believe that in the context of this particular research, the positive aspects of being a cultural insider were far greater than any potential negatives.

3.6. Conclusion

As it has been alluded to in the above sections, the research and literature surrounding the rural, EU8 migrants, their mobility, and embedding practices, almost entirely exist in separation (Bell and Ward, 2000; Ryan, 2018) - meaning they have never been written about together. Matias *et al.* (2011) point out that the research surrounding temporary mobility has been greatly fragmented and most empirical research has concentrated on only specific types of movement in specific spatiality (Bell and Ward, 2000). By adopting a post-structural position, and placing a particular

focus on the importance of rural space, this research has generated new insights into the disciplines of human geography, migration and mobilities. Post-structuralist approaches allowed me to investigate a range of previously ignored socio-spatial phenomena by using chosen research methods of interviews and photographs.

This chapter has outlined the study's place in ontology, epistemology, and its methodological approach. It discussed and justified the methods employed in this research. It explored why a case study approach was the most appropriate approach for understanding the role and importance of rural spaces to EU8 migrants. It has further demonstrated the reasons for North West to be the most suitable (for the purpose of this research) case study area to examine. This was followed by reflections on positionality.

Chapter 4. Defining the rural: Perspectives of EU8 migrants

4.1. *Introduction*

This chapter fills an important gap in knowledge on the influences shaping EU8 migrants' perspectives on rural space, and with specific reference to imaginaries, materialities and experiences in the UK countryside. Whilst much discussion has taken place on the impact of EU8 migrants on local labour markets and / or access to services (Jentsch, 2007; Chappell *et al.*, 2009), no research has yet focused on the influences shaping EU8 nationals' definitions of rural space (Jentsch *et al.*, 2007). As such, a migrant-centered perspective of the rural is absent (Danson 2007, p.16; Rye, 2014). In a UK context, 'migrant lives beyond the workplace' have also received little attention (see Spencer *et al.*, 2007 for an exception; also Sumption and Somerville, 2009), and with even less reference to migrant lives in the UK's countryside. This chapter therefore responds to this gap in knowledge. In so doing, the study also contributes to a wider body of literature presenting a new view of 'rurality' (Cloke and Little, 1997; Little, 1999; Morris and Evans, 2004).

More broadly, this chapter reflects wider discussions in human geography - and indeed rural geography - relating to the ways in which rurality is theoretically framed (Cloke, 2006). Subsequently, this chapter is divided into three key sections. The first section explores the importance of rural imaginaries and representations, rural materiality, and embodied

consumption through everyday experiences, practices and encounters of EU8 migrants in rural areas. Reflecting recent calls for a re-materialization of the rural (Woods 2009; 2011), this chapter highlights the importance of the physical and material aspects of the UK's countryside in shaping participants' representations of rural space. In so doing, it also highlights the importance of the 'rural idyll' – as opposed to 'anti-idyll' imaginaries of the rural that have been reported elsewhere (da Silva *et al.*, 2016). EU8 migrant perceptions of rural areas in the UK being problem free and with deprivation denied (Woodward, 1996) are also discussed. Comparisons are made between the UK's countryside and rural areas in Eastern Europe in respect of the rural as social and cultural capital, and which signifies social mobility and 'moving up' as opposed to the rural as being problematic with the need to move out in order to 'move on' (Garapich, 2016).

In addition, a focus is placed on the importance of encounters in the rural (see Valentine 2008; Wilson, 2016) as opposed to the urban. Consideration is given to the different types of encounters – individual or collective; between nature and society; of humans and non-humans; and of subjects and objects (Braun and Whatmore, 2010) of relevance to shaping the participants' rural representations. Indeed, it is argued that both EU8 migrants' (mundane) working practices in production and consumption-related activities, as well as beyond work activities, shape their experiences of encounter with the rural, and their subsequent perceptions of the UK's countryside.

Section 4 of the chapter elaborates on work undertaken in relation to EU8 nationals in the UK countryside, their experiences 'beyond the workplace' and more broadly the ways in which representations of the rural are shaped. Section 5 focuses on the importance of i) rural imaginaries and representations; ii) rural materiality and iii) rural experiences, practices and encounters in shaping the participants' views of rural UK. The final section discusses the overall implications for participants' perceptions of the UK's countryside and highlights further areas for research.

4.2. Rural imaginaries and representations

For EU8 migrants, rural representations are formed on different levels. Rural representations are closely shaped and tied to an imagined rural world (Mischi 2009, p. 2). Scripted representations of the rural refer to how the rural is depicted in scripted contexts, such as in policy and planning documents (Halfacree, 2006). Such representations relate to the way the rural is framed within the process of production, and more precisely, the commodities of the rural that are exchanged for value. Imaginaries and influences may encapsulate impacts consisting of scripted representations, such as websites, leaflets, maps and booklets, and informal representations, including social media and friends' photographs. EU8 migrants highlighted the importance not only of other scripted representations of the UK's countryside, but also informal representations

in shaping their views of the rural prior to, and following, their arrival in the UK.

Lefebvre (1991) referred to the scripted representations as 'formal conceptions of space'. They are developed and voiced by a group of 'specialists'; including politicians, capitalists, planners, officials and developers. Formal representations of rural space are always 'shot through with a ... mixture of understanding ... and ideology' (Lefebvre, 1991a, p. 41 as cited in Halfacree, 2007).

With reference to scripted representations, media representations of the UK's countryside, and particularly those presented through television and film in both Eastern Europe and the UK, were noted as being of importance. Television has a significant function in helping to inform individuals about the unknown world with which they may have a little connection, or experience (Fulkerson and Lowe, 2016). For migrants who have never visited the UK before, or for those who reside in the urban areas, television-produced rural representations are often the first pictures of rural life that they ever encounter. Such representations, stay in the memory and shape their imaginations and understanding of what the rural is. In reflecting on the way rural representations play out, Jonasson (2012, p.19) makes an important connection to media: 'Staged performances of rurality are scripted and choreographed events that overtly act out particular representations of rural life. These include the portrayal of rural life in film and television programmes, dramatized reconstructions,

museums, farm parks, heritage sites and interpretative centres'. For those EU8 migrants who have never visited the UK prior to their arrival, or those who indicate that they have yet to visit the countryside in the UK, representations of the UK's rural on television frequently inform their first images of rural life:

I didn't think how an English village might look like, I just wondered about England, UK as a whole. I had an idea about the rural from Polish TV, I mean movies about Britain, I knew that there are these typical stone walls and it is green, but I never wondered for a long period of time, I never reflected on it earlier. I just knew it'd be different than home.

(Tomek, Polish male, aged 32).

To Jakub it was also the medium of film that first shaped his ideas of the rural in the UK:

To me it's the classics – Robin Hood and his Sherwood Forrest – it was my dream to visit this place since I was a child. Then of course Braveheart showing amazing greenery of Scotland. When I first visited the rural in the UK I thought to myself – it's exactly as it was on the movie! If not better! Very green, natural landscapes, windy and rainy – with its charm! (Jakub, Polish male, aged 28).

There are a number of movies reported by migrants that influenced their imaginings of the rural areas in the UK. These included the above, but also *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Darby O’Gill and the Little People*. The second quote (Jakub), in particular, suggests the importance of movies in shaping migrants’ rural representations in the UK. They do not only help them to imagine and to depict the rural, but also to build expectations before they visit. It is also important to note that after migrants’ encounters with the rural, the representations are found to be realistic. Television and film therefore have a significant function in helping to inform individuals about an unknown world with which they may have little connection (Fulkerson and Lowe, 2016).

While movies often focused on (and frequently romanticised) the landscapes of rural England, TV programmes also focused EU8 migrants’ attentions towards rural architecture, gardens and other material aspects of rural life:

There was a few TV series that I’ve seen briefly, like the ‘British Gardens’, or ‘Move to the country’ - so in my imagination the British countryside was this tiny place, with those fields around, amazing houses and looked after gardens and small villages where there are people, all going to the same pub. And since I moved here I’m realising that I wasn’t far from the truth! It’s small, has a characteristic old

architecture, greenery and the pubs are very important!

(Lukasz, Polish male, aged 34).

As Hughes (1991) argued, imagining destinations is an important part in shaping visitors' understanding and practices in those places. The greenery, and 'movie-like' landscapes of the countryside were mentioned in every interview, and were linked with a desire to visit the rural areas. For several migrants visual media, such as TV programmes and movies acted as the most important influence in shaping their imagined geographies and overall representations of rural places. They influenced migrants' expectations prior to their first encounters with the rural.

Beyond the significance of television and film to the participants, 'official' websites were also recognised as important in shaping their representations of the rural. Information found online gave migrants an idea of what the rural might be, what it looks like, and what they can expect upon arrival. For a number of migrants, such as Jakub, online material had helped them to make a decision to relocate from an urban to rural area:

I didn't have an idea of where I should go. I just knew I wanted be near the nature. So I have done it in the easiest possible way – went online, then on Wikipedia, on England and on the right you have photographs, and one of them was of the Lake District area, which was stunning. My friend and

decided to look it up, look at photographs and remembered that we know (seriously, barely knew this guy) a guy there and asked him whether he'd be able to give us a bed for one night. He agreed and we came. Found a job, a flat and here we are. I absolutely love it. (Jakub, Polish male, aged 28).

Furthermore, postcards and leaflets of the rural were influential in helping EU8 migrants to imagine the UK's countryside. Postcards, although not as popular as they used to be, have an important function as an effective means of generating visual representations of space (Milman, 2012). The postcards are documentary '*space-time snapshots*', which communicate complex assemblages of networks of rural space. For migrants who had never visited a rural area in the UK before, the postcards influenced their hypothetical imaginaries of the rural. They contributed significantly to the production and distribution of place and identity stereotypes (Cohen, 1995; Sigel, 2000) including idyllic imageries of rural spaces (Cloke, 1997).

Once EU8 migrants had visited the countryside, the postcards (Figure 4.1) and leaflets (Figure 4.2) subsequently served as a point of reference. As such, they were believed to be realistic representations of rural areas in the UK. For example, for Bozena, a postcard received from a friend (Figure 4.1), helped her to form her first ideas of the countryside in the UK:

I first found out about the rural in the UK before I even came to the UK (Figure 1 below), and fell in love with it after I

received a postcard from a friend, who lived in Wales. This postcard included exactly what the rural is: green, calm, picturesque, full of old heritage buildings, and sheep of course' (Bozena, Polish female, aged 52).

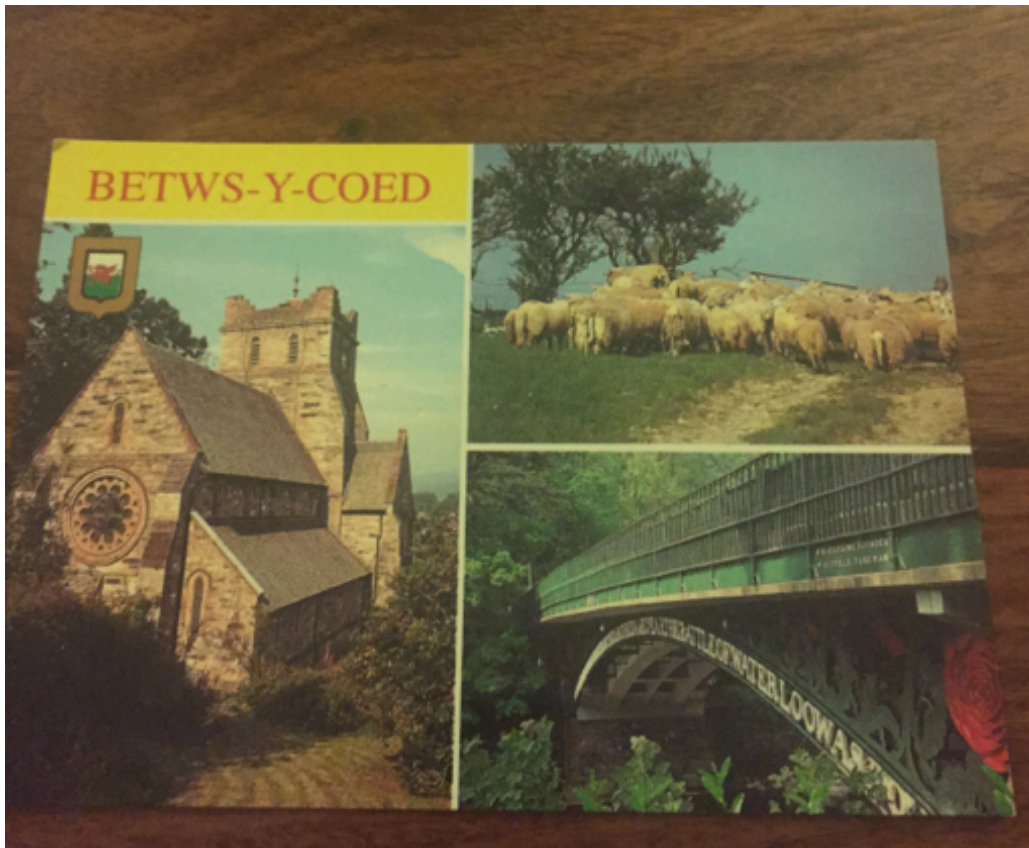


Figure 4.1. *A postcard as a scripted representation of the rural (Bozena, Polish female, aged 52)*

Similarly, Jozef's ideas of the rural in the UK were influenced by scripted leaflets left in public spaces:

I know about the rural from some advertisements – [...] in leaflets that are left in the hotel. These advertisements are

mostly on Scotland – it shows how beautiful it is. There are some local ones as well, as the Lake District, the National Park in Cumbria. I think they were quite realistic, they just show how beautiful it (rural) is (Jozef, Lithuanian male, aged 24).



Figure 4.2. Leaflets as scripted representations of the rural (Kasia, Polish female, aged 34)

Postcards and leaflets have several uses and functions, including visual communication (Sigel, 2000; Haldrup and Larsen, 2006), advertising (Kohn, 2003), aesthetic entity (Kohn, 2003), and souvenir artefact

(Kennedy, 2005; Markwick, 2001). They were either spotted in public spaces, such as shops, hotels or train stations or sometimes sent or brought as 'an invite' from someone who had already visited the countryside. These representations influenced EU8 migrants' imaginations of what the rural may consist of and look like. Later, when they visited the countryside, the postcards served as a point of reference and comparison with the 'real' rural.

Postcards and leaflets, official websites, as well as television and films, all served as a form of pictorial advertisement of the rural to EU8 migrants, and shaped their expectations of the activities that could be undertaken within the rural. However, these scripted representations extended beyond official policy and planning documents, as EU8 migrants also identified a number of informal representations that were important in shaping their imaginaries and representations of the UK's countryside. These informal representations consisted of photographs of others and information made available through social media platforms.

Photographs of the UK's countryside taken by friends or family were an important influence in shaping EU8 migrants' representations of the rural. EU8 migrants often reported seeing friends' photographs of rural areas in the UK as an important influence in shaping their representations of the rural. Postcards and photographs acted as physical additions to stories and descriptions given by friends and families. They helped to depict

different locations, landscapes, geographical and the material attributes of rural areas:

I didn't really think about representations much. My brother came here 8 years ago, so I knew from his photographs and stories how this looks like, so I wasn't that shocked. Although, I have to admit that when I first came here I was amazed at how beautiful it is (Marek, Slovakian male, aged 18).

Photographs had often been accessed through a range of social media, which has been growing in popularity in the past decade (Lundgren and Johansson, 2017). Facebook was reported to be one of the most significant social networking services (Dekker and Engbersen, 2014; Lundgren and Johansson, 2017) for interviewees in this research:

My friends came to the UK before I did, and they travelled to various rural locations around where they lived (Manchester). They always took many photographs and then shared them on Facebook. I looked at them with envy thinking that they must spend a lot of time waiting for the right location, weather, etc., to take such beautiful photos. The countryside always looked amazing. The greenery was breath-taking. Then I went with them and realized that it is actually better in real life than it is on photos! And special

places are around you! Everywhere! (Agata, Latvian female, aged 24)

As much as Facebook enables its users to share information, thoughts and photographs on a large scale, it also serves as a research tool when searching for ideas of places to travel to and tips for undertaking different activities once arrived:

My first idea of rural in the UK came from other people's recommendations on Facebook – you know, when people tag themselves in places and pictures. And then, when I notice that a place may be interesting, I just check it out online. (Magda, Polish female, aged 41)

The quotes above highlight the importance of social media platforms, such as Facebook, in shaping migrants' imaginaries and representations of the rural in the UK. Watching, analysing and 'liking' photographs shared by participants' friends had a significant value in shaping their rural representations and building expectations before their visit to the rural. Such representations are often depicted as idyllic, tranquil and romantic. However, it was not only the personal accounts of Facebook 'friends' that shaped migrants' rural representations. Facebook also allows its users to create groups and pages to connect and communicate with others in regards to their particular interests, themes, or subjects. Members of such

pages and groups can furnish them with information, tips or photographs.

These were also used by migrants to inform their representations:

I get my ideas of how something looks like, or what to expect from certain rural destinations from Facebook and Facebook groups. There are also some pages and groups where people recommend to each other where to go. There is one, called Poles visit UK. People share their experiences, photos of the scenery, mountains, and sheep. (Marcin, Polish male, aged 29)

and

I observe people online and what they share. But there are also open groups on Facebook I belong to – ‘Beautiful Great Britain’ ‘The Countryside Alliance’ or ‘In tents in the UK’ – my husband and I get ideas of what these places are, how they look like, what to look for or whether it’s worth visiting or not. People post photos, share ideas, invite others to participate – it’s great! (Magda, Polish female, aged 41)

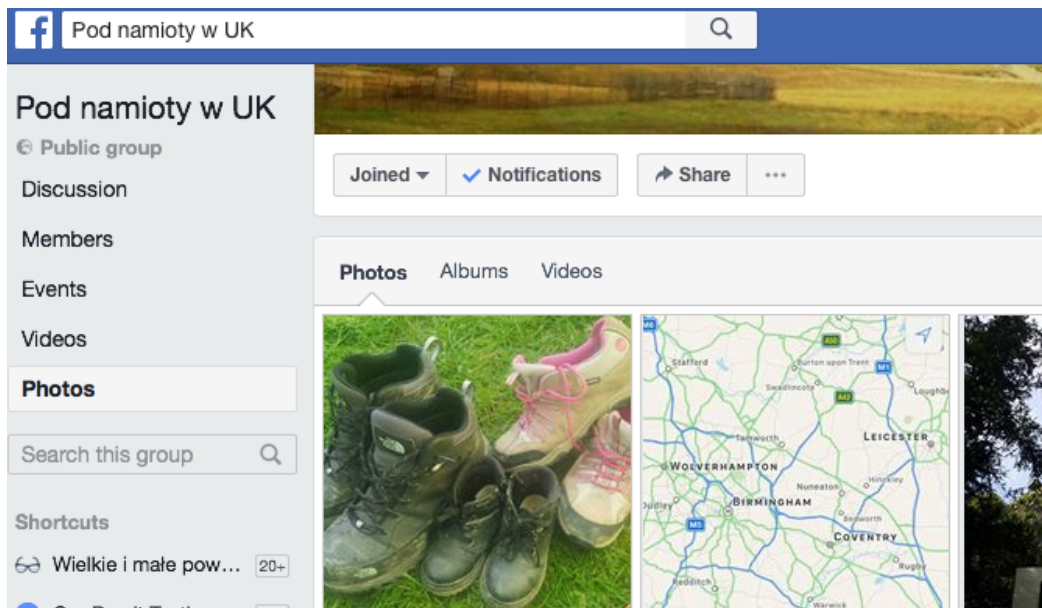


Figure 4.3. A Facebook page created by EU8 migrants (Magda, Polish female, aged 41)

The participants of this study indicated that Facebook was the most popular social networking platform; it was an important tool for learning about new places, sharing information, suggestions, opinions and photographs. Photographs, pages and groups shared by Facebook friends therefore play an important role in shaping migrants' representations of the rural in the UK, as well as their discovery of new areas and their characteristics.

In addition to social media, EU8 migrants also identified the importance of personal blogs and informal websites in shaping their imaginaries and representations of the rural in the UK (Figure 4.3). Authors and members of such websites and groups can upload other information in the form of notes, tips or stories. Hence non-pictorial material of this nature also influenced migrants' representations of the UK's countryside:

There are a few blogs that I always use – for example, there is a website put together by three men, it is called: thewalkingenglishman without any spaces: www.thewalkingenglishman.co.uk - they have all the walks there, through all the hills, mountains, including Yorkshire Dale and the Lakes. This blog is really great as everything is described, there are photographs, information on the level of difficulty, it tells you the slope's degree, how high the mountains are – really good, specific information. (Natalia, Polish female, aged 45)

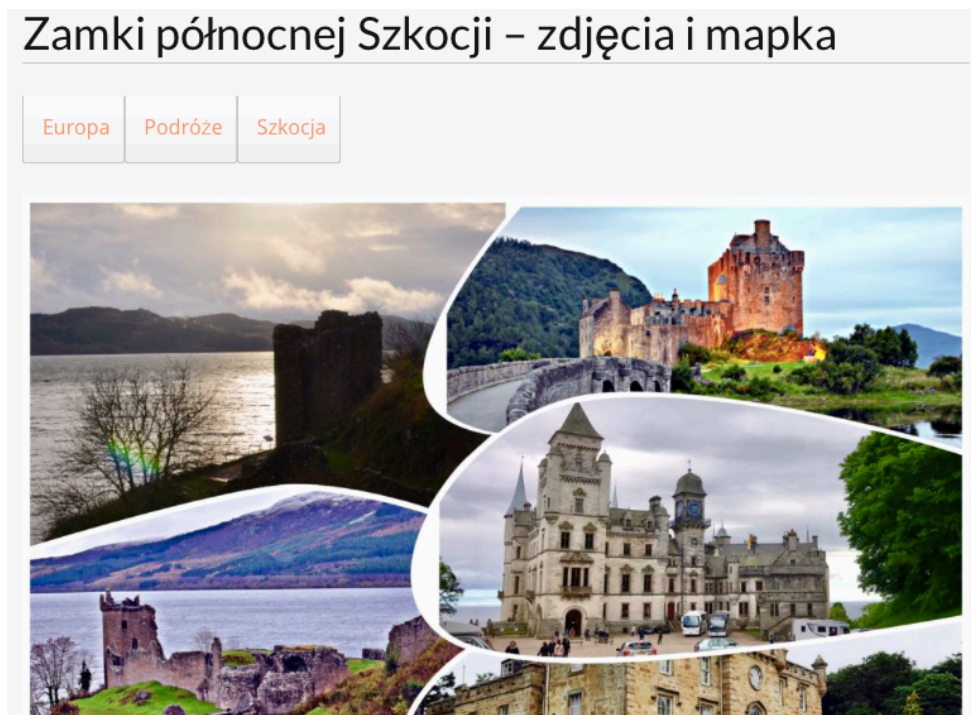


Figure 4.4. *Blog used to share information about places to visit in the UK, including the countryside (Natalia, Polish female, aged 45).*

These representations are created through online groups and websites, on which they are widely shared. Most of the times such groups have an 'open policy', which means that anybody has access to them and therefore they reach a wide audience and are popular amongst migrants. They become the tacit framework through which migrants interpret and discuss their own and others' experiences, opinions and actions (Moscovici and Hewstone, 1983). It is also important to note that representations are not permanent and they may easily change (Pearce *et al.*, 1996). For example, migrants can follow different 'friends' and blogs, or be members of more than one group, where they encounter alternative representations.

In summary, it is clear that rural imaginaries were developed by EU8 migrants' prior to visiting or moving to the UK's countryside and were shaped by a number of scripted and informal representations. But critically, through in-depth interviews it also became apparent that their imaginations of the rural were heavily focused around the material aspects of the UK's landscape, and its inscription through distinctive spatial practices (for example, rural production and consumption). Furthermore, and following Carolan's (2008) argument of rural space as 'more than representational', their overall perceptions were developed through their own activities and (everyday) experiences and practices of living in the UK's countryside.

4.3. Rural materiality

Hetherington (1997; 2003) refers to people and places as subjects and objects, and argues that the two are entangled with each other. If the rural is viewed through its materiality, these subject-object relationships lead to an argument that 'physical' ruralities are interwoven with people's understandings of rural space and their practices and roles in rural space. The findings that emerged from research resonate with the above philosophy. The construction of rural through its different materialities was clear among all research participants. Indeed, the materialities of the natural and built environment played an important role in shaping EU8 migrants' representations and overall definition of rural areas.

Rural materialities were often referred to and understood through a range of characteristic elements, such as: productive activities and agriculture, (low) population density and physical (in) accessibility, as well as consumption patterns (Moseley, 1984; Halfacree, 1993; 2007). Furthermore, describing and understanding the rural through the materialities of the natural environment has led to a dominant perception of the countryside as 'idyllic' space (Short, 2006; Rye, 2014). The pure, natural aesthetic appeal of rural landscapes was perceived as encapsulating intangible elements, such as fresh air, quietness and peacefulness. It was apparent that EU8 migrants strongly held such idyllic perceptions and with the physical and material attributes of the

countryside being of considerable significance when discussing their representations of UK rural life.

Rural scholars have explored the meaning of nature in the construction of rurality and the ways in which rural space is part of human - nature engagement. This includes research on flora and fauna's geographies, on non-human elements of the rural landscape, and on perceptions of natural environments and landscapes (Woods, 2006). Consequently, the rural is often viewed as 'a *place of nature*' (Woods, 2006, p. 24). The widely accepted association of the countryside with nature – at the very least - partially explains why rural places as well as their landscapes are treasured by modern society and why there is such an attraction with the 'rural idyll' (Woods, 2011).

The relationship between rurality and nature (Figure 4.5) has also led to the construction of moral geographies in which the countryside is regarded as a purer, finer and more appealing space than the city (Bunce, 1994; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998; Woods, 2006). Consequently, these various elements of the natural environment have been drawn into discourses by which actors describe and define their own 'rural identity' and recognize places as rural (Woods, 2006). As summarised by one interviewee:

I know I am in the rural when I see the fields, the mountains, the greenery, all the beautiful nature. We go (to) these rural areas to escape, to find something we can't get here (in

town). For someone who loves the nature so much and desires it to this extent it's necessary to go away. The fields, meadows, mountains and trees are my true love, rural is my true love'. (Natalia, Polish female, aged 45)



Figure 4.5. *The natural environment of rural* (Natalia, Polish female, aged 45)

Trees, fields and pastures produce the countryside as both a living and a working space (Woods, 2011). Indeed, to EU8 migrants, features of the natural environment were commonly reported in shaping their rural representations. These included reference to fields, meadows, lakes, mountains, trees, hills and hedges – all part of the rural landscapes (Figure 4.6).



Figure 4.6. *Rural Landscapes* (Jan, Polish male, aged 58)

To many interviewees, natural features are not only the attributes or components of the rural; they are synonymous with the rural. As such for many EU8 migrants, nature is rural and the two are described as inseparable. Some participants also compared rural scenery to biblical and / or sacred landscapes. The aesthetics of the rural were seen as an embodiment of poetry, such as Blake's famous hymn, *Jerusalem*:

When I think of rural in the UK I remember that song: 'And did those feet in ancient time; Walk upon England's mountain green? And was the holy Lamb of God On England's pleasant pastures seen? And did the countenance divine shine forth upon our clouded hills?' [...] – it is just

perfectly describing what the rural is. (Beata, Polish female, aged 38)

Trees, fields and pastures can be seen as creative agents in producing the countryside as both a living and a working space (Woods, 2011). As Cloke and Jones (2002, p. 86) document, 'trees can construct places and vice versa'. Trees and other elements of the natural environment can be significant landmarks for local identity, they can provide shelter and act as meeting places, or places of escape from the mundane lives or surveillance of rural communities (Woods, 2011). They can also act as boundaries.

Forests were also understood as an integral element of the materiality of rural UK. They were, however, seen as inaccessible, privatized properties:

I love the forests, and back home I used to spend a lot of time exploring forests, picking up mushrooms, blueberries... I can't really do that here. It's all fenced up. It's probably because they are protected, maybe they don't have as many forests here as we do in Poland. (Ola, Polish female, aged 24)

The pure, natural aesthetic appeal of rural landscapes is perceived as encapsulating intangible elements, such as fresh air, quietness and

peacefulness. However, there were notable differences between EU8 migrants who visited the rural and those who identified that they lived in the rural in respect of the extent to which they held such perceptions. For example, for those migrants who visited the rural, the perceived naturalness and scenic landscape was seen in a positive sense and with such individuals noting how this meant that the rural was a place of peacefulness or spaciousness. However, for those migrants residing in the rural, the '*quietness*', '*spaciousness*' and '*remoteness*' of the rural was often seen as a burden and an '*a-social*' quality (Rye, 2006). This was because some of the migrants, who resided in the rural and had poor access to transport or were relatively new to the area, which meant their social encounters were limited, at times felt isolated and lonely.

It is important to note that describing and understanding the rural through the materialities of the natural environment has led to a dominant perception of the countryside as idyllic space (Short, 2006; Rye, 2014). Certain plants are designated as 'garden plants' and may feature as such in imaginings of the rural idyll, as in the cliché of roses around the cottage door, or the notion of the 'country garden' (Woods, 2011). Hence gardens as domesticated nature inform EU8 migrants' perceptions of the rural and indeed relate to the stereotypical image of the rural idyll (Woods, 2011). However, and most crucially, it also highlights how EU8 migrants perceived rural areas in the UK to be affluent and 'looked after'. Gardens as representations of rural also indicate to EU8 migrants a sense of pride,

belonging and ownership of the rural. This was something migrants often aspired to:

When we went for our first walk here I was stunned and amazed with the beauty of the area. Their (people's) gardens made a great impression on me. I was actually shocked how much they look after their villages, their houses and gardens around them. Everyone is better, or trying to be better, than the other one – the flowers, hedges, decorative shrubs – really impressive! It is perfect. (Lucyna, Polish female, aged 64)



Figure 4.7. *Rural gardens – places of beauty and pride* (Lucyna, Polish female, aged 64)

Rural discourses of nature are framed by a taxonomy of flora and fauna that dictate appropriate forms of relationship between humans and non-humans, and establish the spaces to which particular forms of life belong (Buller, 2004; Jones, 2003). In relation to the materiality of the rural, EU8 migrants also indicated the importance of non-human actors, namely animals. To EU8 migrants, rural animals constitute rural areas and inform 'more than human' rural representations. Bozena's quote below is just one of many examples of how rural fauna shapes EU8 migrants' representations of the rural:

The first thing that come to mind when I think of rural (in the UK) are the animals. The sheep! And the Scottish cows – however they're called! But they should be admired for their beauty! And hares! Oh and birds! How could I forget birds? I love their tweeting, I even set one of my recordings as my alarm! All these animals.... they are part of the scenery.'
(Bozena, Polish female, aged 52)



Figure 4.8. *The importance of animals in shaping migrants' definitions and representations of rural* (Bozena, Polish female, aged 52)

Indeed, other EU8 interviewees also highlighted their perceptions of animals being inscribed in the rural landscape – as an inseparable part of the rural. Nevertheless, they also highlighted how rural locality was inscribed by human and non-human (animal) relations. Indeed, such perspectives of EU8 migrants confirm Woods' (2011) arguments that rural space is shared with non-human life, including both animals and vegetation, influencing ways of seeing the rural. As such, the relationship between human and non-human, or people and nature, is heavily stressed in discourses of rurality. Jones (2003) similarly comments, '*animals are central to how the rural is constructed in both imaginative and material terms*' (Jones, 2003, p. 283).

However, interviewees noted spatial differences when discussing the relative importance of flora and fauna. Whilst the significance of climate; soil fertility and accessibility was recognised, EU8 interviewees overwhelmingly perceived animals such as sheep and cows to be strongly associated with the northern areas of the UK, whereas the cultivation of agricultural land was inscribed as a more 'southern' practice. The north was seen as a relatively cold, hilly area with poor soil, making growing crops difficult (Campbell, 2006). Whereas the south was described as sunny, warm, '*with lighter colours of building*'. Through their observations, migrants noted visual differences between the 'rural south' and 'rural north' in the UK. Those characteristics between the north and south countryside were inscribed in EU8 migrants' definitions and representations of the rural.

In earlier sections, it was highlighted how migrants' encounters with nature and non-humans were deemed to be important in shaping their perceptions and definitions of the rural in the UK. But individual encounters with local residents were also significant in shaping their representations and definitions:

People were always telling me how good and nice the rural places here (in England) are, and how friendly local people are, so I moved here and they were right. People are so warm, even a person who does not know you says "hi, are

you alright?" It is different between Slovakia and England. People are smiling here. It is really nice. People make this place. (Aneta, Slovakian female, aged 28)

Encounters with others also meant meeting and (or) engaging in 'small-talk' with local residents. Such encounters were perceived as adding to the authenticity of rural space and shaping EU8 migrants' understanding and representations of the rural. Overwhelmingly, encounters with others in the rural were positive and this informed a widely held perception of the rural as convivial, pleasant and welcoming (Cloke and Johnston, 2005).

In addition to the natural environment, EU8 migrants also made extensive reference to the built environment when trying to define the rural. For example, stone walls were discussed by EU8 migrants as being a distinct and integral element of the natural environment and landscape, yet were also recognised as being human-made. Moreover, stone walls were perceived as an indicator that one was in the rural:

The moment I see the characteristic old stone walls I know I am in the rural. These stone walls were first made by the Vikings (I think!) and were made without the use of mortar or cement! It's incredible that they are still there! They add so much charm, they make the rural! To show you what I mean

I have a photograph and I think it best shows how characteristic they are! (Lukas, Latvian male, aged 26)



Figure 4.9. *Stone walls as an integral part of the rural in the UK* (Lukas, Latvian male, aged 26)

For EU8 migrants, stone walls, as well as hedges, had a binary role; they were not only integral elements of the rural scenery; but they also challenged the notion of the UK's countryside as being 'open' and 'accessible'. Whereas the rural is often contrasted with urban space as being spacious and allowing freedom of movement (Shirley, 2014), EU8 migrants perceived the rural in the UK as regulated, confined and often inaccessible. As such, it was clear that the complexity of land ownership in the UK (Hyder, 2016) was not familiar to many EU8 migrants (see Figures 4.10 and 4.11):

Here, in the rural I always feel like I'm in a very regulated area. I feel that it consists of fenced up, divided pieces of land - there is always either a stone wall or a hedge, that you can't get through. These stone walls surprised me – I wanted to climb a mountain and there were plenty of these walls and signs (which said) 'private road' and I didn't know if I (should) cross it – will someone shoot me? Or run after me with a rake? There are always some restrictions. Even when I'm in the practically unpopulated area of Yorkshire Dales, in the middle of heathlands – I will still be stopped by some stone walls! (Jan, Polish male, aged 58)



Figure 4.10. *Rural as inaccessible (1)* (Jan, Polish male, aged 58).

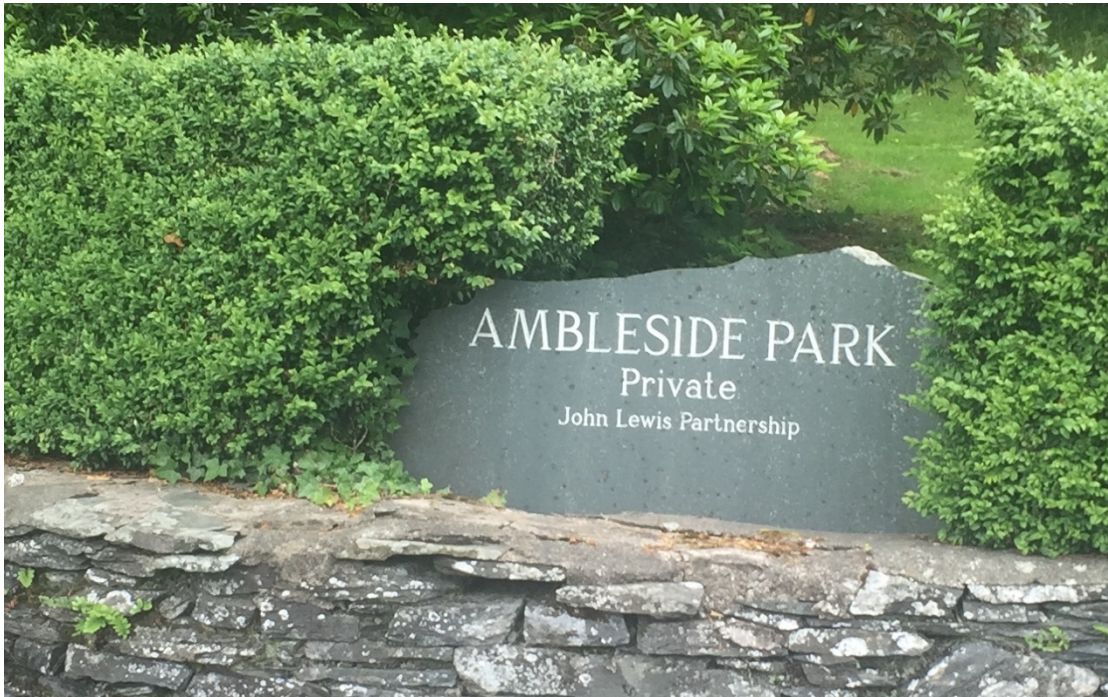


Figure 4.11. *Rural as inaccessible (2)* (Pawel, Latvian male, aged 48)

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged, concurring with Halfacree (2007), that conceptions of the rural are intrinsically interwoven with locality, social representation and experiences. They are coexistent rather than mutually exclusive. The quote and photographs above exemplify this point very well: they demonstrate how different materialities (here stone walls) combined with individuals' experiences can shape one's representations and overall definitions of rural space.

The association of the rural with nature is an effect of western culture's dualisms between the natural environment (and society and nature) and civilization that has informed the division of town and country in the media, in art and in relation to economic and social policy (Halfacree, 2006; Woods, 2011). Rural property was a further feature of the built

environment that informed EU8 representations of the UK's countryside (Figure 4.12). Stone cottages and rural country estates were described as charming, spacious, and inscribed in the rural landscape. Such perceptions corroborate Woods' (2011, p. 231) argument, that one of the most powerful components of the rural idyll is 'the image of the rose-covered cottage as the ideal country property'. As stated by EU8 migrants:

Every time I visit the rural I am amazed by its beauty and charm. The cottages are incredible, it's hard to believe that they are real and people actually live there. They are like a picture from an old book, or a movie! It is my dream to own a cottage in the countryside. Just like one on this photo:
(Paula, Polish female, aged 59)



Figure 4.12. *Stone house as rural idyll* (Paula, Polish female, aged 59)

Other EU8 interviewees also discussed how such properties were seen as a statement of wealth and affluence, with individuals reiterating their aspirations to become property owners:

I wish we could buy a house in the rural, but it's only a dream. Only rich people live in villages. We'll never be able to own a house in a rural village because we could never afford it! Whenever I hear that someone is moving to the countryside I always think: they must be rich. One day I'll move up too... One day... (Darek, Polish male, aged 33)



Figure 4.13. *Rural as affluent* (Darek, Polish male, aged 33)

'Rural heritage', the so-called 'time spaces' of the rural (Woods, 2011), such as churches, castles and ruins were also strongly perceived as an

integral element of the landscapes and materiality of the rural, and strongly informed EU8 migrant definitions of the UK's countryside. Nevertheless, more reference was made to public houses as being integral to their representations of the rural, as opposed to the church in their country of origin:

The church is a social centre of a Polish village. Each Sunday there is a main mass that most people attend, people drive there from their farms and after the mass they all come out and it's not like in the city where everyone goes straight home. People form groups and then talk. However, if at the mass there is a person that isn't from that village, the locals know straight away – they check out that person, their car, and so on... So church in Poland acts as a pub (does in the UK). Going to a pub is not a Polish tradition, church is. There are many pubs here (in the UK) where people don't even sit down, they just have a beer - very different than in Poland (Mateusz, Polish male, aged 34).

Finally, other infrastructures such as roads and signage were important to migrants when discussing the importance of rural materialities in shaping rural representations (Figure 4.14). Such infrastructure was seen as much better designed and maintained than in Central and Eastern Europe, making the UK's countryside a generally accessible place to visit.

However, this contrasted with their views of the rural being more regulated and inaccessible to explore once 'in the rural'.



Figure 4.14. *Signage in the rural* (Marek, Slovakian male, 18)

In summary, two important points emerged. First, aspects of both the natural and built environment were referenced and combined to inform a

view of the rural as a predominantly idyllic space. EU8 migrants' observations based around the materiality of the rural in the UK were predominantly positive and in the form of superlatives. However, not all EU8 migrants associated the rural as being constituted solely by the affluent. A minority did recognize problems of housing affordability and implied that the concept of the rural idyll might be compromised by rural poverty. Such a perspective is consistent with the work of Dymitrow and Brauer (2016) and Woods (2011) who identify that rural landscapes and clichés are often stereotyped concepts that may obfuscate issues and lead to issues of deprivation remaining unaddressed. Hence there is a need to further consider the implications of EU8 migrants' representations of rural UK as an idyll, both in respect of their own experiences and practices in the countryside, as well as those of others.

Second, for EU8 migrants, the importance placed on different physical and material attributes of the UK's countryside also changed over time. Initially, they described and understood the rural through a productivist lens, and where agriculture and related practices were perceived as being (or should be) at the heart of rural space. Such perceptions were culturally acquired and shaped through scripted media representations of the UK's countryside that they had seen on television/watching films before they came to the UK, as well as their own observations of rural areas in Eastern Europe. However, following time spent in the UK, and subsequent experiences and practices of work and leisure in rural UK, EU8 migrants

increasingly emphasised consumption-based attributes of the UK's countryside.

Whilst Halfacree (2006) argues that scripted representations of the rural often dominate individual experiences of it, this was not the case for many EU8 migrants as their definitions of rural space were often shaped by more subjective and informal representations. Furthermore, in following Woods (2010, p.409), it is important to consider that 'understanding of space is more than representational'. It is a lived practise, experience or process and therefore it is also crucial to further explore those experiences and practises that influence EU8 migrants' understandings of the rural. The following section analyses migrants' practices and encounters of the rural and the different ways in which they may shape their representations and definitions of rural space.

4.4. Rural experiences, practices and encounters

The different experiences, practices and encounters of EU8 migrants within the UK countryside also shaped their understandings and representations of the rural. Images, symbols, scripted and informal representations, as well as materialities can intertwine with the turmoil and emotions accompanying space as directly experienced and lived, and with 'everyday' lives often being incoherent and fragmented (Halfacree, 2006; 2007). In this respect, some EU8 migrant interviewees highlighted how

they used the rural as a place of escape. Nevertheless, a majority indicated how they adapted the rural as a meeting locale – a place of encounter, where they could meet others and experience the rural together. The rural was described as being a place where they not only engaged in activities of production (related to their employment in a number of instances), but also in relation to different forms of consumption.

Edensor (2006) provides a number of examples of how individuals '*perform the rural*'. The term performance is used broadly, and he points out that 'different rural performances are enacted on different stages by different actors – both human and non-human, as well as both residents and visitors' (2006, p.484). This means that performances can range between everyday routine practices and staged events. Such staged events may relate to both time (i.e. different times of the day, week or month) and place (i.e. specific locations such as mountains, footpaths, farmyards, heritage attractions and meadows - as indicated by the EU8 interviewees).

Everyday lives (Lefebvre, 1991) are often associated with dull, monotonous practices. Individuals often shape their understanding of the rural through their own mundane and repetitive practices and performances (Woods, 2011). This was also the case for some EU8 migrant interviewees, who indicated the nature of their production-based work as being '*mundane*'. Migrants held different positions across a range

of employment sectors in the rural within (but not limited to) agriculture, hospitality and transport, and largely linked to their length of residence in the UK, and proficiency in English:

I got to know the 'real' rural through my job. I work on two farms and with animals. I do everything. But I mainly deliver milk to private houses and help out my boss on his two farms. So I know about the farms from the inside and I can see others' farms, houses, roads and the village itself from the car or tractor. I do the same route every day and it is rather boring. (Artur, Polish male, 29)

These findings correlate with Rye's (2014) research on Eastern European migrants in rural Norway, where participants' understanding of rural areas was primarily developed through their daily activities in the agricultural industry, and with such perceptions rarely linked with consumption and even less with recreation (Rye, 2014).

Beyond the routine of work, and extending Rye's (2014) analysis, rural landscapes often noticed '*on route to and from work*' were also viewed as unique, exceptional and distinct, and served to inform EU8 migrants' representations of the rural. Hence roads – and different modes of transport – can act as material contexts for generating observations and representations of the rural based on an individual's practices of mobility (Edensor, 2007). As highlighted by Edensor (2007), the value in viewing

the road as relational, produced and constructed, demonstrates how landscape phenomenology (Hughes, 2014) provides a channel to theorise a road and the rural as a performative space. Broadly speaking, cars, trains and other means of transport act as material contexts and enrich understandings of the rural by facilitating performances and practices in rural space.

Thus rural surroundings and landscapes often noticed '*on route to and from work*' were viewed as unique, exceptional and distinct by EU8 migrants and shaped their representations of the countryside:

I am a driver delivering food to small stores across Britain, but mainly small areas, villages. The job itself can be boring, but the views on the way there are astonishing. I even like to get lost so I can explore all the nooks and crannies of the rural in the UK. Sometimes I just stop the car and look – it's breathtaking. I'll show you the photos I take from the car!
(Sebastian, Latvian male, 34).



Figure 4.15. *Rural work commute* (Wojtek, Polish male, aged 45)

Other EU8 migrant interviewees worked in different sectors, including, but not limited to, conservation, education and medicine. Consequently, through their work they developed different representations of rural space, based upon consumption-based activities and practices, rather than those just focused around production:

I learn a lot of new things at work. Work stuff too, but also about the village life – communities, their celebrations and little happenings. My job made me understand that there is a lot more to those villages than the beautiful greenery and landscapes. It is also the people and what they do. The history, traditions and celebrations. I never knew about all this until I came here, started working here and talked to the

locals. When we go to different meetings I get to see other beautiful churches, and castles, full of history. (Basia, Polish female, 35)



Figure 4.16. *More than a job – meeting a Lancashire Clog Dancer* (Basia, Polish female, aged 35)

In addition, whilst Spencer *et al.* (2007) usefully highlight how migrants' experiences beyond the workplace are greatly affected by the nature of their work, their working patterns, their remuneration and the type of work and people they work with, it is important to highlight how interviewees' experiences and practices in the rural were never just limited to employment. Thus EU8 migrants' definitions of the rural were also shaped

by consumption-based activities *beyond* the workplace and their engagement with leisure and tourism activities such as nature, heritage and food and drink.

A Polish saying was mentioned by a number of Polish interviewees: '*Podroze kształca*' – '*Travel broadens the mind*', which in direct translation from Polish means '*journeys educate (and/or shape)*'. Indeed, to EU8 migrants, the rural was understood through a range of experiences, in the form of conventional activities, such as walking or trekking, but also through more adventurous ones, including climbing or canyoning. These activities are more demanding and involve a different form of engagement and commitment. As Cloke and Perkins (1998) identify, this type of engagement with the rural environment goes beyond the metaphor of the 'tourist gaze' and becomes more of an embodied experience, which includes 'being, doing, touching and seeing' (Cloke and Perkins p.198, as cited in Woods, 2006, p.182).

The use of Pine and Gilmore's (1999) 'Four Realms of an Experience' model helps to illustrate how EU8 migrant experiences in the rural were constituted through the process of visiting, observing, learning and securing pleasure in activities in the rural (Stamboulis and Skayannis, 2003). According to the model, experiences can also be categorized into four realms: *education, aesthetics, escapism and entertainment* (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, p. 46)

Educational experiences involve active absorption. In these type of experiences, EU8 migrants may therefore be actively absorbed and engaged in a range of experiences as a mental state, Indeed, EU8 migrants visiting castles and churches can be categorised as enjoying an educational experience as they may learn about the rural and its history and heritage. Such experiences therefore broaden their knowledge in regards to the rural space:

We do a lot in the countryside, but my favourite is to book a proper tour, where we can all learn something – you know, about the history or nature. The countryside is so interesting! And through tours we can discover even more and appreciate it more and look closer! Appreciate the wildlife, birds, nature and understand their purpose. We get to learn in all from the inside, if that makes sense. (Teresa, Polish female, aged 34)



Figure 4.17. *Educational experiences - collecting the money for local birds*
(Teresa, Polish female, aged 34)

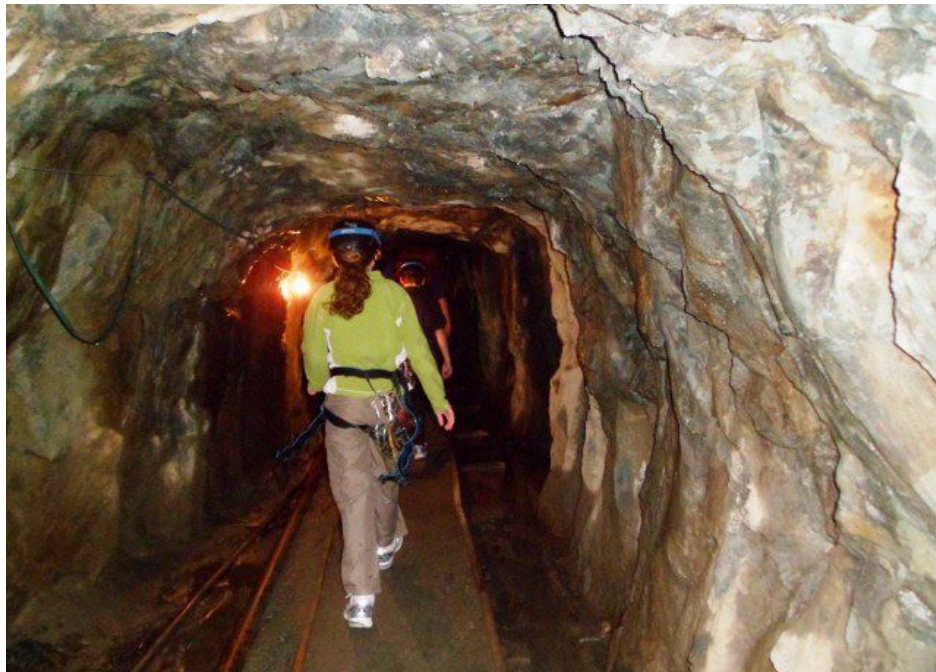


Figure 4.18. *Educational experiences – a group tour in Peak District Caves* (Irena, Hungarian female, aged 27)

In contrast to *educational* experiences, passive absorption experiences are those felt through the senses. They are referred to as *aesthetic* experiences, because the mind is fully engaged in the surrounding environment, but is not affected because it is not an educational activity (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Therefore, an example is EU8 migrants walking through a forest or passively visiting a heritage site, where they are not actively involved in the activity (Figure 4.19). 'The purpose of this experience is just to be there, being able to use the senses' (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p. 64).



Figure 4.19. *Aesthetic experiences* (Natalia, Polish female, aged 45)



Fig 4.20. *Esthetic experiences through walking in the countryside* (Kinga, Latvian female, aged 47)

Hence it was clear that EU8 migrants developed their knowledge and understanding of rural space through different types of aesthetic experiences. Passive participation, such as walks, picnics or cycling allowed EU8 migrants to be immersed in the rural. As such, the rural served as a place of rest, relaxation and escape from work, busy lifestyles, society and at times urbanity (Brittan, 2001; Park and Selman, 2011). Consequently, *esthetic* experiences were the most popular type of experiences identified by EU8 migrants that helped them to discover the rural (and its meaning). Such activities did not take long to plan or arrange, were relatively cheap and did not require the participants to be physically

fit or be fluent in English (as opposed to *educational* experiences). They were therefore the most important type of experience in shaping their representations of the rural:

I find out about the rural through my walks. What is rural then? Most of all calmness, isolation, distance from the busy world, from the chaos; beside these also fields and sheep, the rural landscape, which is an important element of the rural. (Kinga, Latvian female, aged 47)

Escapism experiences involve active immersion, including a high level of absorption and involvement (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). In this respect, this involved EU8 migrants actively engaging with the rural environment through extreme activities (Kafle, 2014):

Rural is place where I can escape, and be with the nature. And I explore it through activities, adventure! I like to climb a little, I like a little bit of danger, a challenge. We have done a Via Ferrata ('iron paths')—it was quite extreme, we needed professional equipment with steel cables and other fixed anchors; I have to say, it was quite high up! This was a half-day event, and then we did canyoning. Not canoeing, canyoning – when you have to wear a wet suit and you walk through a steep river, Torrent river – you walk through the water, jump, swim, dive. (Natalia, Polish female, aged 45)



Figure 4.21. *Escapism experiences* (Linda, Latvian female, aged 25)



Figure 4.22. *Escapism experiences - canyoning* (Natalia, Polish female, aged 45)

Hence for a number of EU8 migrants, the rural was understood as a place of escape, getaway and a platform to try new (extreme) activities. As Lyng (2005, 2008) identifies, the high levels of attentiveness and focus required for participating in such high-risk activities offers a powerful contrast to the mundane experiences of modernity. Such arguments therefore resonate with EU8 migrants, who frequently perform monotonous jobs, often below their education and abilities. Moreover, Goffman (1969) stated that *serious action* could be understood as compensating individuals for the deficiency of direct personal control and autonomy they are subjected to in their day-to-day working lives. Therefore, for the EU8 migrants, the completion of a new challenge provided strong feelings of physical and mental achievement and also helped to shape their understanding of the UK's countryside.

The fourth realm of Pine and Gilmore's (1999) model, *entertainment*, involves passive absorption practices, and where activities and performances such as concerts, and food festivals are experienced. EU8 migrants noted how on occasions they were spectators and consumers of rural products, food and culture. They were able to watch, listen to and taste different products of the rural, and which helped to develop their understanding and definitions of rurality. Such practices generally took the form of food and drink consumption (Figure 4.23):

I go with my wife to different happenings in the rural. We love them, mainly because we get to try new foods and come from farms. We call it 'the taste of country.' I think it's great

that people take pride of their places and want to share.

(Patryk, Polish male, aged 37)

and

To me rural is the greenery, landscapes, but also food. You know, local food, healthy food that is made there and often sold there too. There is a farm, for example, where we go to and they have their own ice cream shop! I love it when you can just buy meat from the farmers, or clotted cream, or jams – it's so delicious! (Mira, Hungarian female, aged 33)



Figure 4.23. *Passive absorption and consuming rural products as an entertainment experience (Patryk, Polish male, aged 37)*

The role of food in EU8 migrants' experiences of rural space is complex and multilayered (Frisvoll *et al.*, 2015). Food is not only necessary to meet basic physical needs, but it is also an integral component to the cultural consumption of the countryside and idealised rurality (Creighton, 1997; Crouch, 2006; Perkins, 2006; Short, 2006). It can also act as an entity that serves as an embodiment of rural culture or geography (Bessiere, 1998; Hillel *et al.*, 2013; Mykletun and Gyimothy, 2010; Sims, 2009, 2010; Vittersø, 2012). '*Local food*' is therefore a multifaceted subject; it is not only a means to replenish, but it can also be a source of cultural experience and a conveyor of meaning (Frisvoll *et al.*, 2015).

Thus, EU8 migrants also developed their representations of the UK's countryside through embodied consumption (Crouch, 2006). Different experiences allowed EU8 migrants to taste the rural (through local food and beverages), breathe and smell the rural ('*the rural is fresh air. I breathe it*'; Agata, Latvian female, aged 24), to hear the rural ('*the rural is the sound of birds*'; Natalia, Polish female, aged 45), and to feel and touch the rural.

In summary, through both employment and non-employment experiences and practices, EU8 migrants generated particular representations of the rural. Crucially, the material aspects of the rural, such as nature and landscape, rural heritage and mobility infrastructures, as well as different '*products*' of the rural strongly shaped such experiences, practices and

'performances'. Furthermore, whilst encounters with others were also important in shaping EU8 migrants' perceptions of the UK's countryside, on the whole these were less important. In addition, 'staged' experiences that were created specifically for the purpose of consuming the rural (for example, food festivals) were deemed by EU8 migrants to only be a partial reflection of 'real' rural life; esthetic experiences were therefore argued to be more significant, and based around nature and landscape.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter has developed a migrant centred perspective, exploring the influences shaping EU8 migrants' definitions of rural space. In so doing, it has presented a new view of rurality from the perspective of a rural 'minority' population, rather than the rural majority population (Rye, 2014). Alternative representations by rural 'others' such as EU8 migrants have been absent to date. This chapter has therefore highlighted how rural spaces are viewed by migrants as being much more than a place of employment or residence used to maximize economic gain. This is in contrast to previous studies on migrant representations of the rural, and where the rural is viewed instrumentally, and specifically as a place of production to increase one's economic position (Rye, 2014).

For many EU8 migrants, scripted representations of the rural extended beyond traditional policies and plans in shaping EU8 migrants'

perceptions, and with informal representations of the rural being at least as important. Yet such representations were strongly associated with material aspects of the rural. Such consumption practices were not simply limited to purchasing local products; rural-related consumption also involved leisure and recreation practices.

Beyond the importance of representations, the chapter also highlighted the ways in which varying material dimensions of the rural (the '*first rural*') shaped EU8 migrants' imaginaries (the '*second rural*') and their experiences, practices and performances (Bell, 2007). More broadly, this also reflects the re-assertion of materiality in the social sciences.

From a material perspective, various elements of the natural environment and landscape were cited as being important, along with key aspects of the built environment, such as stone walls and cottages. Both combined to inform a view of the rural as a predominantly idyllic space. This is in contrast to previously published work. For example, in Norway it was noted that such features of the environment were perceived more negatively through their correlation with de-socialised rural idylls and rural isolation (Rye, 2014). In contrast, EU8 migrant interviewees in this research overwhelmingly drew upon the materiality of the rural to develop representations of the UK's countryside as a utopian place - an oasis of calmness and peacefulness.

However, on a contradictory note, a consideration of rural materiality additionally highlighted how EU8 migrants perceived rural areas of the UK

to be heavily regulated (for example, with hedges, fences and stone walls restricting access onto private land) and heavily managed (for example, looked after villages and gardens). This leads into broader arguments over access and rights to the countryside. Although the rural served as an antithesis to the city, allowing peacefulness, relaxation and engagement with nature, it was still perceived by EU8 migrants as regulated and inaccessible. At times, migrants found it difficult to move through the countryside and were unsure of their rights when crossing rural fields and/or forests. This came as a surprise, as in Eastern Europe the countryside was perceived as being largely accessible to all, and with 'common land' being widespread (Bravo and De Moor, 2008).

With reference to the importance of migrant experiences, practices and encounters, although work and work-related practices were identified as being important in shaping EU8 migrants' representations of the rural (following Rye, 2014), '*beyond work*' experiences had the strongest influence on their perceptions of rural space. Indeed, EU8 migrants engaged with the rural mostly through their aesthetic experiences, which included passive absorption experiences and engagement with nature. Walking, cycling and picnics in the countryside allowed EU8 migrants to develop new representations of rural space. Moreover, EU8 migrants' beyond work encounters with the rural were also seen as extraordinary and '*reward-like*'. These experiences and practices therefore challenged the idea of the rural as mundane, dull and boring (Berg and Forsberg, 2003).

Finally, in terms of the importance of encounters, practices with local residents were very important for EU8 migrants and their understanding of the rural in the UK. Therefore, EU8 migrants' rural representations were strongly linked not only to the places they had visited and their experiences, but were also tied up with '*others*'. In this sense, their engagements with rural residents meant that they developed representations of the rural as being convivial in comparison to the city, and their countries of origin. EU8 migrants argued that rural residents were pleasant and welcoming, and this influenced their understanding of rural as safe and a '*family-friendly*' place. Unlike other studies (see Bowden, 2012), when defining the rural, EU8 migrants did not reflect on their encounters with those residing in rural areas as being '*othered*'.

Chapter 5. Motivations and challenges for EU8 migrant mobility in the rural

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter analysed unique definitions and representations of rural space in the UK from the perspective of EU8 migrants. Representations, as Halfacree and Rivera (2012) point out, are a crucial starting point for understanding in, out, and '*within*' rural migration. However, they (representations) are often unable to tell and fully explain the *story*, as they leave the *party* of the migrants' lives too soon. If these stories are not followed or explored further, then migration should be understood and referred to as unfinished. Indeed, migration towards and across rural areas is often vibrant, diverse and a well-researched field. However, the focus tends not to go beyond spatial relocation, with migrants' subsequent lives and experiences in rural areas in the UK much less explored, if not neglected (Halfacree and Rivera, 2012). Therefore, in order to fully explore rural mobilities, rural areas must be considered as more than just places moved to or from (Malkki 1992; Doel 1999). Further, we need to move away from reading the UK's countryside as gentle, timeless, and the antithesis of the dynamic city, because, as Newby (1987) argues, it is a persistent fiction (as cited in Goodwin-Hawkins, 2015). Subsequently, there is a need to develop a new perspective of the UK's countryside, which moves away from the traditional view of the rural as fixed, static and isolated, and instead to focus on the rural as constantly changing, inter-connected and bristling with movement, and shaped from

beyond as well as within (by EU8 migrants for example). In addition, it is important to highlight that we are already aware of the fact that mobility shapes the rural in many ways, and equally the rural itself influences mobility, however, what is not clear, and yet to be explored, is how such rural mobility experiences play out in respect of new, distinct groups in the UK, such as EU8 migrants.

Migration can be regarded as a bounded action – and with individuals quickly re-assuming the sedentarist norm – but such an emphasis can miss much of the deeper meaning, rationale and consequences of that (socio-) spatial relocation; all that gives any migration ‘life’ (Thrift 2004, as cited in Halfacree and Rivera, 2012, p. 101). Migration is a broadly researched field in the academic literature, however, further migration, including post-settlement mobilities, have not been given much consideration. This chapter will explore such issues, arguing for research to consider post migration mobility experiences, and to focus on migration and mobilities as intricately entangled. This chapter aims to provide a broader understanding of the EU8 migrants’ mobilities in the rural UK highlighting that migration (and mobility) is not over when relocation has taken place. Migrants’ migration processes are variable according to their capitals – hence Bourdieu’s (1986) and Kaufmann’s (2004) concepts are incorporated.

The geographical distribution of ‘new migration’ from EU8 countries differs from previous waves of migration, as it has been documented that EU8

migrants are the most widely spatially dispersed migrant group across the UK (see Rabindrakumar, 2008; Trevena *et al.*, 2013). There is a broad body of research in relation to numerous aspects of EU8 migrants' experiences in the UK. This includes research on the labour market (Anderson *et al.*, 2006; Currie, 2007; Clark and Drinkwater, 2008; Green *et al.* 2008; Drinkwater *et al.*, 2009; Drinkwater *et al.*, 2010), social experiences (Spencer *et al.*, 2007; Burrell, 2009; Galasińska and Kozłowska, 2009; D'Angelo and Ryan, 2011; Heath *et al.*, 2011; Piętka, 2011; Temple, 2011), access to housing markets (Robinson, 2007; Robinson and Reeve, 2007; Robinson *et al.*, 2007; Shelter, 2008; McGhee *et al.*, 2013b) and migration intentions (Garapich, 2006; White, 2011b; Trevena, 2012). However, so far very little is known about migrants' spatial mobility after their settlement in the UK. As Trevena *et al.* (2013) point out, this is (partly) because of a lack of research on such issues, and the lack of reliable data sources. To date, only a few studies have considered the geographical distribution of EU8 migrants in the UK (Bauere *et al.*, 2007; Boden and Rees, 2010), with internal mobility of EU8 migrants following their arrival in the UK being a particularly under-researched field (King *et al.*, 2008; Jivraj *et al.*, 2012; Trevena *et al.*, 2013). Nevertheless, recent research suggests that internal mobilities and international migrations are intertwined and therefore should be treated as complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

Consequently, this chapter aims to explore the manifold mobilities of EU8 migrants in the rural. It is divided into two broad empirical sections. First,

the chapter examines migrants' motivations for mobility in, out and within the rural. In particular, it focuses on the importance of perceived or actual discrimination-motivated mobility and the extent to which racial and discriminatory practices and processes of 'othering' are of relevance to EU8 migrants' motivations to be mobile in, out and within the rural space. In addition, the discussion highlights how EU8 nationals have come to avoid perceived or actual discrimination elsewhere (i.e. in 'the urban').

The second half of the chapter focuses on the importance of migrant capital in shaping mobility, and through introducing the concept of 'motility' (Kaufmann, 2002). Through a motility lens, the discussion initially explores migrants' access to mobility infrastructures and financial assets in the context of their motilities as well as mobility barriers. Furthermore, this section analyses EU8 nationals' knowledge and *skills* that influence their potential to be mobile in the rural. The final part of the chapter then discusses *appropriation*, which is linked to how individuals – here EU8 migrants - interpret and act upon their skills and access. In order to further understand migrants' motility, Bourdieu's (1986; 1994) theory of capital is also utilised as a heuristic tool throughout. Bourdieu's theory distinguishes between three forms of capital that can influence individuals' mobility practices: economic, social and cultural capital. By taking into consideration each of Bourdieu's forms of capital, the research helps us to further the understanding of different decisions and practices of EU8 migrants' rural mobilities.

5.2. Rationales for migrant mobility in the rural

EU8 migration to the UK after the accession of Eastern and Central European countries in 2004 has been described as one of the largest and most intensive migration flows in contemporary European history (Pollard *et al.*, 2008). While such flows of EU8 migrants to the UK were initially conceived as temporary and transient, over time these assumptions have proved to be incorrect (Trevena *et al.*, 2013). For over a decade, the UK has witnessed processes of EU8 immigrant settlement, family formation and development of new communities (White and Ryan, 2008; Ryan *et al.*, 2009; Tromans *et al.*, 2009; Ryan, 2011; Ryan and Sales, 2011; White, 2011a, b; McGhee *et al.*, 2012, 2013a; Trevena, 2012; Trevena *et al.*, 2013).

Statistical findings point to the fact that the initial settlement pattern of EU8 migrants in the UK is different from that of previous waves of migration. Unlike earlier commonwealth migration flows, which involved migrants moving and concentrating around a particular city or area, the post-accession EU8 wave has widely spread across the whole country (Bauere *et al.*, 2007; Pollard *et al.*, 2008; McCollum and Findlay, 2011; Jivraj *et al.*, 2012). It is important to stress that currently available statistical data for the UK does not generally lend itself to the analysis of internal movements of (im)migrants after initial settlement (Trevena *et al.*, 2013). A lack of reliable data is, therefore, one of the reasons behind the gap in knowledge in relation to the spatial mobility of EU8 migrants following their arrival in

the UK (Bauere *et al.*, 2007; Boden and Rees, 2010; Jivraj *et al.*, 2012). It has been argued, however, that the spatial dispersal of EU8 migrants is tightly linked with the fact that such migration flows have been predominantly economically driven (McCollum and Findlay, 2011; Jivraj *et al.*, 2012; Scott and Brindley, 2012).

Hence, given the fact that work was one of the main motives for EU8 nationals migrating to the UK (Jentsch, 2007; Trevena *et al.*, 2013), it is not surprising to find that in the context of this research, employment related mobilities to, from and within the rural were very evident amongst EU8 migrants. Such employment related practices in the context of the UK's countryside were very popular as the majority of interviewees either worked, or travelled to work or business related practices, in, out, or within the rural. Indeed, it has been reported how travel to work and commuting patterns have - in general - become increasingly geographically dispersed (Adey, 2012). Migrants' labour mobilities, however, were not as linear as envisaged. Travelling or commuting out of the rural to urban locations for work might appear as the most obvious mobility direction (Crow, 2010); however, EU8 migrants' employment-related mobilities were more complex. Migrants often travelled to rural destinations, as well as within the rural for work. Such movements were also multifaceted and often required the migrants using multiple types of transportation to get to work, and with such mobility often being time-consuming.

Education was another important reason for EU8 migrants' mobilities in a rural context. Although many previous studies have analysed the experiences of 'local' students and their decisions to remain at home (i.e. see Abrahams and Ingram, 2013), the research undertaken in NW England highlighted how a number of EU8 migrants travelled to access different types of education within and beyond the rural. Indeed, whilst much of the research to date has focused on 'live-at-home students' and the ways they 'stay' in place (e.g. Thomas, 2012; NUS, 2015; Pokorny, Holley and Kane, 2016), many EU8 migrants stressed how they actively commuted to different educational establishments to study whilst remaining 'in the rural'. A key rationale for such mobility was to stay close to friends or family, and to minimise accommodation costs. Beyond mobilities for their own education, EU8 migrants have also assisted their children to travel to school. Hence, it was evident that many EU8 parents and guardians committed time and energy to support the daily educational commutes of their children (mainly including nursery, primary and secondary school mobilities). As some lived in remote locations, they reported how they took their children to school through a variety of means, such as by car, by train, cycling or walking. Such patterns of mobility also challenge the misconception that EU8 migrants who are not working are immobile and fixed in the rural; rather they exemplify that, different levels and types of rural mobility exist. As such, the findings respond to the call for a 'new mobilities paradigm' to examine the present everyday state of 'movement, mobility and contingent ordering' transcending 'stasis,

structure and social order' (Urry 2000, p. 18), and including mobilities of everyday life (Halfacree and Rivera, 2012).

Another significant motivation for EU8 migrant mobility in the context of rural areas is related to tourism, leisure and recreation. Researchers of travel and tourism have recently sought to situate 'mobility at the heart of people's understanding of tourism' (Hall, 2005, p. 134, as cited in Adey, 2012). In this respect, whilst the existing literature reports economic migrants to be employed in the tourism and hospitality industry (Janta, 2007), there is a notable gap in recognising such migrants as domestic tourists. For EU8 migrants, tourism related mobilities were multi-directional and multi-layered. For those residing within and beyond the rural, walking, cycling, and driving were popular reasons for mobility in the rural. Such mobilities were relatively cheap and did not require special equipment or forward planning. For a number of EU8 migrants residing in urban areas, extreme mobilities in the rural allowed them to escape 'mundane' practices, work and everyday life commitments and negative experiences associated with the urban space. Their activities included using unconventional modes of transport, including hot air balloons, kayaks, or helicopters, as well as climbing and trekking. From a temporal perspective, most EU8 migrants' leisure and recreation mobilities involved day tripping. Those trips were popular amongst EU8 migrants for many reasons, but mainly because they worked long hours, and had only one day off. Such mobilities often depended on the migrants' mode of employment and therefore availability of free time, but also family and relationship status.

For example, those migrants who had children typically engaged in shorter and less physically demanding journeys. To follow Adey (2012), patterns, routines and times are different for each person and have to be understood with a degree of flexibility. Visiting friends and family (VFF) was another type of leisure and recreation mobility, and which EU8 migrants argued was one of the most important motivations for mobility in rural areas.

Beyond these motivations, there was also some limited evidence of mobility within rural areas for religious and charitable purposes, in order to take part in religious or fundraising activities. Hence overall, EU8 migrants' mobilities in rural areas highlight the multifaceted interplay between movement and place, and involved both 'routine' and 'non-routine' practices.

5.3. Discrimination as a mobility driver in, out and within the rural

The previous section briefly highlighted the three key and most popular EU8 migrants' mobility themes of employment, education and tourism. However, beyond highlighting the fact that migrants are mobile in the UK's countryside for different reasons and on various levels – employment, education and tourism - the interviews have also uncovered that many of those mobilities were motivated and shaped by either experienced or perceived discrimination, racialization and 'othering'. Therefore, this

section explores a broader dimension of migrants' rural mobilities, which relates to discrimination, and how this acts as a driver behind migrants' mobility in relation to rural areas.

Racism and discrimination towards EU8 migrants in the UK has been widely researched; however, there is a gap documenting discrimination as a mobility driver for migrants, especially after their initial settlement in a new country (for example, the UK). In this respect, the EU8 nationals who took part in the research reported discrimination as a primary reason for their mobility in the context of the rural, and which often occurred in conjunction with some of the other motivations for mobility outlined above. Hence, this section is divided into two main parts showing how discrimination serves to shape EU8 migrants' rural mobility. The first part of the discussion focuses on how perceptions and experiences of discrimination served to shape their mobility within the rural. In essence, it was apparent that a number of interviewees had become mobile as a consequence of discrimination and 'othering' in the context of particular spaces and places in the rural. Nevertheless, the discussion subsequently identifies how discrimination elsewhere – particularly in urban contexts – was generally perceived as being more problematic and how the rural was therefore viewed as a place of 'sanctuary'.

There is a wide literature documenting rurality conflating Englishness and 'whiteness', as well as the examples of the exclusion of ethnic minorities (in the rural) from village life on the basis of their visible difference from the

'white norm' (Matless, 1998; Garland and Chakraborti, 2006; Askins, 2009; Burdsey, 2013). A number of EU8 migrants who participated in the research, therefore identified that they had sought to avoid moving or even visiting particular rural locations because they feared discrimination. For example, Ewa (Polish female, aged 34) highlighted how she had relocated to a nearby town and commuted back to work in the village where she had previously resided, as she had become increasingly concerned that both herself and her African husband would not be accepted in the '*white, elite village*' in Cumbria. Such findings chime with the work of Chakraborti *et al.* (2006), who note the importance of visible diversity in shaping discrimination in the English countryside. Although it was her partner who was 'visibly different', she also felt at risk of discrimination, and was having difficulties blending in due to her nationality and accent. This point also links with the research of Koskela (2014), who introduced the concept of a migrant hierarchy in Finland. The research revealed how characteristics such as ethnicity, social position, including job, level of education and religion divide migrants into differently valued categories. Western and 'highly skilled' migrants were described as more 'desirable', whereas 'visibly different' and labour migrants were often seen as 'unwanted' amongst Finish communities. In this respect, the research in NW England corresponds largely with Koskela's (2014) findings, unveiling perceived hierarchies of migrants amongst different societies, mostly noticeable in the rural context. As a result, some EU8 nationals were changing their mobility practices in order to resist such hierarchies and fear of negative experiences related to them.

For a number of EU8 migrants, discrimination-motivated mobilities (and immobilities) in the rural were not only driven through a fear of being 'othered' or discriminated against, but also because of claims around personal experiences of discrimination that had affected their lives (and hence their mobilities):

I don't have a car, but I travel a lot. My daughter was bullied in school in our village so we moved her to another one, in a nearby town. It's a lot better. She loves it there, even though we have to walk to the train station, take a train there and then walk up to school. I do this journey four times a day. It doesn't take that long, trains are on time and it is a lot better now because she's happy and I'm not stressed. (Julia, Polish female, aged 26)



Figure 5.1. *Assisting children with their everyday school commutes through rural areas* (Julia, Polish female, aged 26).

Hence, the above example illustrates discrimination-driven mobility, and how a Polish migrant had moved her daughter to a different school in a neighbouring (more culturally diverse) town as a consequence of her claims around how her child had been discriminated against. Nevertheless, it is also interesting to note how the family had remained in their rural home and instead changed their mobility practices as a form of ‘coping strategy’. As a result of this choice, her (and her children’s) daily commute was substantially extended. According to Jamieson (2000), those migrants, who choose to change or extend their mobility practices, rather than move to a more convenient location, could be referred to as *attached stayers*, who are *tied to place* (Barcus & Brunn, 2009; as cited in

Stockdale *et al.*, 2017) whose relocation might be constrained or prevented by employment or housing availability, or by family or financial obligations. In this respect, our interviewee highlighted how she was indeed tied to place as her husband worked nearby, and they would struggle to find accommodation for a similar cost elsewhere.

Beyond these specific examples, the 2016 EU Referendum was consistently referred to as also shaping discrimination experiences in the rural. For a number of individuals, the result of the 'Brexit vote' came as a surprise and a shock. As Lulle *et al.* (2017, p.3) have highlighted: 'not only were nationalist and populist slogans sparked off among the British, but the revision of hierarchies of "whiteness" and "worthiness" provoked intense emotional reactions [...] and for some reason the "leave" vote has justified racism.' Hence whilst 'leave supporters' were celebrating 'freedom' from the EU and 'taking our country back', European migrants (apart from the Irish and those who held an Irish or British passports), who were denied a vote and yet were at the core of the referendum debate, also felt the nationalist atmospheres – but in a very different way – experiencing exclusion and feelings of betrayal, unworthiness and fear of discrimination, as well as distress towards their unsettled futures in the UK.

An example of discrimination in the rural as a consequence of the EU referendum, was cited by another interviewee - Dawid (Polish male, aged 29) - who identified how he used to buy groceries in his local village shop.

However, on the day after the 2016 referendum, he highlighted how the shopkeeper informed him that migrants were no longer welcome or allowed to purchase goods from the store. As a result, he argued that he had no choice but to change his shopping from the local shop to a supermarket in a nearby town, which in essence, influenced his daily mobility patterns. This shift, he maintained, was aimed to minimise human contact, where he could pay for his shopping using self-checkout facilities and avoid having to face similar situations. Mobility practices were therefore being transformed from being mainly rural focused to traveling to more urbanized areas, and consequently required more effort, time and planning.

Other EU8 interviewees highlighted how they had been asked whether *'they were packing yet?'* or who had been more explicitly told *'to go back to their [your] own country'*. Those instances took place in different locations, such as schools – amongst children, and also in places of employment – between workers, as well as in different places in the community (e.g. at the school gates). Nevertheless, some interviewees noted how they felt more 'exposed' and 'othered' given the small number of EU8 migrants living in such localities. Such feelings, it was claimed, intensified after media reports revealed that the majority of rural populations in England were 'leave voters', including those in the case study area in the North West of England (for example, see Becker et al., 2017). Migrants therefore expressed heightened concerns of being a target of discrimination or 'othering'. Therefore, in order to avoid such

feelings, uncomfortable comments or conversations, a small number reported minimising their rural mobilities:

I belong to a Facebook group of our village and straight after the referendum there was a lot of comments from the local people saying how happy they were and that now they have controls of their borders, no more migrants will come! I have also been asked as a joke (but I don't think it was a joke) by my neighbour whether we're are packing our bags. I felt deeply uncomfortable and decided to avoid people as much as possible. So I stopped going for long walks with my dog, and chose not to answer my phone in public – just in case they'd hear I'm from Eastern Europe. (Maria, Slovakian female, aged 29)

The above examples hence illustrate how a number of EU8 migrants had displayed elements of agency, expressing different forms of resistance against discrimination through changing direction, extending, shortening or even avoiding their rural mobilities. EU8 migrants, as highlighted by de Certeau, 1984 (Scott, 2013; Lulle *et al.*, 2017) had thus employed various tactics, which 'help(ed) them to inscribe displacements in the prevailing order for its re-organisation' (de Certeau, 1984, p. 37). Scott (1985) has argued that such tactics show resistance, and are strongly entwined with everyday encounters. Hence, changes in EU8 migrants' mobility patterns can also be viewed as tactics used against the processes of othering and

experienced and perceived discrimination. What we see, therefore, is the use of virtual mobility and the extension or narrowing of spatial mobilities by migrants as a consequence of discrimination or to avoid discrimination or othering.

Nevertheless, whilst a number of EU8 migrants were moving beyond certain rural spaces to avoid racism and discrimination (or the possibility of it), on the whole, and across the majority of interviewees, rural space was more likely to be used as an escape and / or a safety net from perceived or actual experiences of discrimination in more urban areas. As highlighted by two individuals:

We often go to the fields, or forests to take the kids and dog out. At least there I don't have to be paranoid about speaking my language. There is no one there to listen! I know when we talk to each other nobody will be turning their heads on us. And the nature won't judge us because we are from a different country! (Ela, Latvian female, aged 35)

and

We live in the – so-called - dodgy area of town, because it's cheap and closer to work for us – at least for now, until we save enough to move. We have to be careful here, so we don't get the abuse for being migrants. So in free time we

travel to the country – because we like the outdoors, it's quiet there and we don't get the abuse. There is more affluent and educated people, who I don't think would say anything bad to us – you know, like 'learn how to speak English' and so on. So we don't need to get paranoid about being migrants there. (Nikodem, Polish male, aged 35)

Hence the above examples show how to many EU8 migrants, the rural was regarded as a place 'to go to' during free time in order to avoid or minimise encounters or situations in the urban, which were perceived as increasing the likelihood of discrimination. Furthermore, the research confirmed recent work by Lulle *et al.* (2017, p.6), which has highlighted how levels of acceptance shifted with campaigns and media reports leading up to and during the 2016 EU referendum. (Brexit debates) *brought the hitherto relatively "invisible" European migrants into the spotlight; that is to say, their hitherto "invisible," "white," Europeaness was made visible by the vilification this time of Eastern European migration [...]* -now constructed as a "problem." *New hierarchies of privilege were exposed among "white" Europeans, reconfiguring divisions between "us" (British) and "them" (Europeans)* (Lulle *et al.*, 2017, p. 6).

Hence, EU8 migrants living in urban areas, but who were visiting the rural, indicated that an atmosphere of hostility and 'othering' had intensified during and following the referendum campaign. Consequently, they viewed the rural as a form of 'sanctuary', which they visited more

frequently as it was seen 'as safer' and 'more welcoming'. Indeed, some were actively looking to relocate to the rural:

After the referendum and everything we've heard on the news I worry all the time that somebody will damage our car, or we may receive threats. That's why we're thinking about moving to some nice village where there aren't many migrants. Or maybe where there isn't any at all, if that's possible. I think the situation might be a bit better there as the local people wouldn't be so sick or tired of seeing or hearing migrants. [...] And maybe it'd be hard to find a job there, but I don't see a reason why we couldn't just drive to work elsewhere. Maybe it'd for the best – we could be as anonymous as possible here, we'd just quietly lead our lives.

(Maria, Slovakian female, aged 29)

In overall terms, EU8 nationals therefore perceived rural areas in the UK as safer, not only in terms of perceptions of lower crime but also, in relation to issues of discrimination, racism and 'othering'. This also corroborates the findings presented in Chapter 4, which highlighted how EU8 migrants viewed the rural as 'idyllic' and problem free, secure and welcoming, especially in comparison to urban areas. Thus for urban-based residents, the English countryside offered an escape not only from mundane (everyday) workplace practices, but also from the fear of / actual experiences of discrimination.

5.4. EU8 migrants' motilities

Given that the above section has highlighted how only a minority of EU8 migrants had perceived or indeed experienced discrimination and 'othering' in the rural, this draws attention to the importance of individuals' own resources, dispositions and 'capitals', which were employed or drawn upon in different ways to facilitate their rural mobilities (or fixities).

Studies of migrant motilities and experiences are too rarely quoted when exploring mobilities. Within mobilities, 'migrant' and 'non-migrant' roles may be intertwined in many ways. However, such a perspective does not propose that migrants must be subordinated to other categories of mobile subjects; rather it allows (when relevant) the normalization of migrants and their motilities and experiences as an exceptional group.

In this context, Bourdieu (1979; 1986; 1991) has highlighted the importance of individuals' 'habitus', which is reflective of migrants' economic capital (i.e. disposable income), their social capital (their networks) and their cultural capital (existing in three main forms: embodied, institutionalized and objectified). Cultural capital in the institutionalised form relates to educational skills and achievements. Objectified capital signifies the possession of cultural goods. Embodied cultural capital concerns individuals' skills, tastes and values (Pinxten and Lievens, 2014). In particular, individuals may use their 'habitus' in different social and geographical settings to increase their symbolic capital. This, in

turn, can provide them with (differential) ‘agency’ or ability to be mobile. However, it is important to remember that habitus may change over time, based on an individual’s circumstances, experiences and practices in different rural spaces. Therefore, it is important to explore how an EU8 migrant’s habitus, in the form of their economic, social and cultural capital, shapes their potential to be mobile.

The potential to be mobile is captured by the concept of ‘motility’ (Kaufmann, 2002; Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004), which helps to further our understanding of movement of people and equally enrich the research on migration and mobility. The concept highlights how mobility capital is influenced and intertwined with other forms, including social, cultural and monetary capital, and how individuals’ potential to be mobile relates to three particular mobility ‘capitals’ – *access* to different forms of mobility; *skills* to use certain forms of mobility and *appropriation* – the way in which individuals’ values and dispositions may affect their use of different forms of mobility. Hence, the concept is useful to identify and understand the connection between ‘the possibilities of mobility in a particular area; the way people seize these opportunities according to their own capacities and actual mobility practices’ (Dubois *et al.*, 2015, p. 259).

Therefore, the following discussion highlights and analyses a number of ways in which migrants’ differential ‘mobility capitals’ were shaped by their own habitus and capitals therein. In this respect, the section first analyses issues of access that shape EU8 migrants’ mobilities in the rural – for

example, access to mobility infrastructures and financial assets that underpin their potential to be mobile. Subsequently, the discussion focuses on EU8 migrants' skills to plan and organise their journeys, focusing on the importance of their knowledge, and issues of time and spatial management, which they can improve over time. Finally, the focus shifts to issues of appropriation. This explores how individuals' values and past experiences, especially with regards to their relational mobility, shape their mobility in the rural. In addition, this section shows the importance of identity and the influence of habitus and cultural and symbolic capital on migrants' rural mobilities.

i. Access

Rural mobilities, however diverse, are inherently linked with access to mobility infrastructures and economic resources, which to different extents, condition one's potential to be mobile (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004). Access to mobility is often viewed and related to a variety of available services, equipment and conditions surrounding an individual at a given time and /or place (Kjærulff, 2011). The discussion that follows analyses migrants' mobility access and the constraints which impinge on their movement in, out and through the UK's rural areas.

EU8 nationals' mobilities to, out of and in the rural were strongly shaped by the access to different mobility infrastructures, and the access to those

was conditioned by their economic capital. Useful accounts of issues of accessibility and mobility in relation to transport are reported by Hansen (1959), Ingram (1971), Burns (1979), Pooley and Turnbull (2000), Kenyon *et al.* (2002) and McQuaid *et al.* (2004), however, there is little said about migrants' motilities and access to mobility infrastructures in the context of rural space.

The strongest influence shaping access is related to EU8 migrants' economic resources. Indeed, the availability of financial resources conditioned access to different forms of transport and their degree of mobility. Low earnings and relatively small disposable incomes had the largest impact on EU8 migrants' access to different infrastructures of mobility and their choice of transport. For example, only a small minority identified that the lack of a private car was a matter of personal choice (either for environmental reasons or because they believed that public transport links were sufficient). The majority noted that they were without a private car for financial reasons:

For now I walk two hours to work. I need to save up for a bike first and then a car – evolution! But first things first – I need to look after my family first and pay off our debts. [...] In terms of holidays - we don't go as often because the public transport is very expensive in the UK. Especially in the countryside. Main lines are fine, like you know Manchester or London. But try to go to Wales. Not only you need to take

three trains and then a bus, if there is one! You pay a lot more! And when you have a family, like I do, you just can't afford to go that often because you need to multiply the ridiculous price by four! (Maciek, Polish male, aged 32)

and

I'm so glad I have a car here in the village I live in. Although it's an old one, I feel lucky I can afford it and therefore I can avoid public transport. It is still quite expensive to drive, but cheaper than the bus or train. (Anna, Lithuanian female, aged 52)

EU8 migrants also believed that it was more expensive to use public transport in the rural than it was in urban areas. For that reason, whenever possible, they tried to use their own means, such as walking. This mode of mobility was particularly popular amongst families with children, for whom paying for public transport was costly, or for those with very low incomes. In total, just over half of the sample were highly dependent on public transport, such as buses and trains. Similarly, around 10% of the sample of interviewees used bicycles as their primary mode of transportation given issues of affordability.

For those who owned a private vehicle, such as a car or motorcycle (about 40% of the sample), this provided individuals residing in the rural with the

opportunity to be more independent and to travel further – for work or leisure. Consequently, limited economic capital often resulted in limited spatial and social mobility (Dupuy and Bost, 2001; Kenyon *et al.*, 2002; Froud *et al.*, 2005).

However, whilst poor access to mobility infrastructures, based on financial, temporal or geographical / spatial reasons acted as a barrier to mobility in and beyond the rural, this did not mean that mobilities did not take place. Rather, it simply shaped the type and length of trips they could undertake:

We have no car and trains are expensive, plus it takes time. And then if you do catch a train you feel tight and you have to watch yourself, or you'll be grounded (somewhere else) in the countryside overnight. If we had a car we'd go (to other places) more often, for sure. (Agata, Latvian female, aged 24)

and:

I work here, in this restaurant near the lake because it's close and I can walk to work. There was a better job available in Lancaster, not as seasonal as this one, but because of the shifts I'd have to work I couldn't take it. I would have walk a long way to the nearest bus stop, plus

buses don't really go at night and I don't have a car. (Dawid,
Polish male, aged 29)

Whilst the poorest households were therefore never totally immobile, there was evidence of the impact of a lack of economic, social and cultural capital on the spatial mobility horizons of EU8 migrants. For example, those with more limited social networks (given issues of recency in the rural) were less able to access different forms of mobility – including car sharing:

Because I don't have a private car sometimes I feel like a lower class citizen – I am limited to where I can go. For example, I can't socialise that much, like go to Salsa or a language class because I'd have to take a taxi or ask people for a lift, and it's difficult as I don't know that many people. It was harder at the beginning when I moved here and didn't know anyone, it got better now, but you're still dependant on others. I desperately need to save up for a car. (Aneta,
Slovakian female, aged 28)

However, for many migrants, the ability to access different forms of mobility increased over time, as their social links and cultural capital expanded. But the relationship was reciprocal in that access to transportation or mobility services in the rural also served to shape migrants' social capital:

Some of my friendships changed, or some just simply stopped...because of the distance and difficulties with transport links..... some of my old friends and I just stopped seeing each other. It was just too much work – walking to the bus station, waiting and then traveling for an hour, sometimes even more. Now my mobility has evolved, and so have my friendships. (Ewa, Polish female, aged 34)

This shows that different forms of capital – economic, social, cultural and mobility are often multi-directional, shaping each other to different extents, often based on experience, personal development or plans for the future. As shown above, motility – in particular access, shapes the social capital of migrants – by either helping them to develop new friendships and networks, that could later influence other capitals; or putting strains on relationships with others. Similarly, having good access to transportation, meant that EU8 migrants could either expand or acquire new cultural capital, by being able to attend different educational or vocational courses, or advance their knowledge and experiences by visiting different places. At the same time, poor mobility access often impinged on migrants' education, development and experiences.

Whilst access to mobility can depend largely on residential setting and the transport offering within a given area (Kaufmann, 2002), as de Lima *et al.* (2012) point out, there is a common belief that rural places experience and suffer from a lack of services, transport links and infrastructure and that this is particularly problematic for migrants, who

may lack the wider networks (sometimes due to perceived or actual discrimination) and alternative avenues to problem solving. However, only a small group of interviewees (who classified themselves as rural residents) felt that they had experienced issues with access to mobility, and in general, they felt that it was hard to be mobile in the rural areas in the UK. In this context, it is interesting to note that EU8 migrants did not generally compare access to different forms of mobility in the rural with that in urban areas (or *vice versa*); rather they took a more relational perspective comparing access to rural contexts in their countries of origin (also see Trevena *et al.*, 2013):

You can't really complain here about the transport or services. From what I can remember from back home, there was no transport to or from our village. Not even one bus. So we had to walk almost two miles to catch the bus to go to school. Local people here always complain, but that's because they have not experienced living in rural Slovakia! They have great linkages here, you don't feel trapped.
(Anna, Lithuanian female, aged 52)

and

I know it's not great, but at least it's something! There is always a way to get in or out of this place. If you don't have your own car then you are restricted to times the bus or train leaves, but it's not like you don't have an option. And even if

you miss the bus, you can always call for a taxi! It makes me laugh, because no one in the countryside in Poland would order a taxi. It's too posh. But not here. This is England.

(Kuba, Polish male, aged 58)

Thus EU8 migrants' views on access were generally positive, but also highly relational as access to mobility infrastructure in rural areas of the UK was perceived as being relatively unproblematic compared to the situation in their countries of origin. EU8 nationals therefore described the UK's countryside as fluid (rather than fixed) (Adey, 2010), open, and easily linked with other areas. Such perspectives were particularly evident amongst those, who had spent a considerable amount of time in the rural prior to moving to the UK, and who reflected on the lack of access, poor condition of roads and / or absence of signage 'back home':

I think it is easy to move here, to travel to places. It is almost impossible to get lost. The road signs are very clear, big, not damaged. The signage is great even in the most remote locations. The roads themselves are good too. It is safe to drive here, not like in Polish villages. (Rafal, Polish male, aged 43)



Figure 5.2. *Safe roads and clear signage as mobility enablers*

(Rafal, Polish male, aged 43)

In summary, whilst UK born residents have often expressed their dissatisfaction with reference to road safety and the poor condition of road surfaces, especially in rural areas (see Musselwhite *et al.*, 2010), EU8 migrants' views on mobility infrastructure and road safety was highly relational and compared to their countries of origin. Hence roads and signage acted as good access indicators and a further motivation for rural mobility. However, there is a danger in viewing access to rural mobility relationally and in a primarily positive light, as this could further contribute to the cultural 'screening out' of problems in the UK's countryside.

ii. Skills

Mobility skills include a number of different dimensions - *knowledge* (predominantly linked to linguistic skills); *time management* (interrelated with planning); and *spatial management* (through the employment of ICT; see Dubois *et al.*, 2015). Development and utilization of such skills are linked to individuals' cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

For EU8 migrants in the UK, knowledge was strongly related to the acquisition (and development) of necessary linguistic skills. As Houtkamp (2014) points out, language is an instrument of power, especially when living abroad, and different functions of language influence the movement of individuals in many ways. The most important function of language is that of communication, which positively affects an individual's mobility options (Houtkamp, 2014). For EU8 nationals in the UK, their English language proficiency levels therefore influenced different dimensions of mobility. In essence, it was important in acquiring information in relation to both, public and private transport:

When I first came here it took me a while to become independent and start going places. First of all I didn't know the system – even the bus timetable looked like some chemistry table, and second of all I didn't want to ask anyone just in case I wouldn't understand. My first bus trip alone was to work and I just stood behind someone and said: 'the

same' to the driver, hoping I'd be able to get to the next village. (Mira, Hungarian female, aged 33)

and

At the beginning I didn't know any English, so I didn't move as often. I was scared! What if someone at the train station asks me a question? Or if I misinterpret some information about the price of fuel or some directions? It was just too stressful. So language skills are helpful to move and the more you move the easier it gets. You can just go and ask. When you're new, everything is a challenge! (Agnes, Latvian female, aged 25)

To the vast majority of interviewees, English language proficiency was one of the most important mobility enablers, especially when related (but not limited) to the use of public transport. Most of the EU8 migrants in our sample noted that they did not initially have access to private transport when they arrived in the UK and therefore had used public transport services. In order to acquire the information necessary to move, they therefore relied on their linguistic skills. Some of the migrants with poorer linguistic skills were reluctant to ask questions, as they were afraid of othering or possible discrimination (this was particularly important in the context of the EU Referendum). Proficiency in English was also useful when purchasing private transport, such as a car, or a bicycle.

Consequently, for EU8 migrants to be mobile, the ability to communicate in English was crucial, especially in the rural, where they noted how the opportunity to seek help from other migrants was often less evident. Moreover, older EU8 migrants in the study particularly highlighted how they had found it more difficult to learn a new language, and how this had proved challenging (for shaping their mobility) given the lack of migrant networks (and social capital) in the rural.

Over time, most EU8 migrants noted that their English language skills had improved (to different degrees) and that this had positively shaped their ability to acquire information that enhanced their potential to be mobile. Over time (and with better English skills) migrants were thus able to ask questions relating to prices of different forms of transport, read public transport timetables and were generally more confident in being mobile. Hence, with a higher level of cultural capital (language), migrants' mobility practices were often enhanced.

As EU8 nationals travelled more frequently, their mobilities became more complex, involving different forms of transport, over longer distances. The types of trips undertaken also changed, as individuals felt more confident to travel to more remote rural areas, or to visit their friends in distant locations and thus expand their social capital at the same time. This confirms Erel's (2010) critique of the 'rucksack approach' in migration studies, which reifies cultural and social capital as being carried between countries, rather than also being developed 'insitu'. Indeed, it was clear

that migrants constructed and validated their cultural capital once in the English countryside, and through formalizing their skills through dominant institutions – for example, the Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency in respect of securing a driving license.

Knowledge as motility has different forms (Geslin and Ravalet, 2015; Dubois *et al.*, 2015), and for EU8 migrants, their potential to be mobile was also secured through awareness. Awareness is another form of the embodied state of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) as it relates to acquired knowledge and its incorporation into one's life or practices, in this case improving migrants' mobility. Awareness was a skill developed by migrants to research and acquire the necessary information on how to be mobile in the rural, and how to get to or out of the rural. Such knowledge provided migrants with crucial information of what forms of transport, both private and public, were available, including (transport) networks, schedules or journey details.

EU8 migrants who were public transport users had to become familiar with lines, schedules, and alternative routes and options in case of problems. Equally, those migrants who wanted or needed to drive, because they were employed as drivers, needed to know their routes, and become familiar and obedient with the Official Highway Code, new traffic rules and regulations, and GPS systems. Such cultural capital was developed by visiting official and unofficial websites, media, such as Television and Radio and receiving advice from friends. Interestingly, EU8 migrants also

acquired information from social media groups, such as *Polacy zwiedzaja UK* (Poles sightsee the UK), *Wielka Brytania Podroze* (Great Britain Trips) or the *Czech and Slovak Association UK*. Such advice related to the recommendation of destinations, routes, modes of transport, updates in relation to the Highway Code and information on car-sharing. As a result, EU8 migrants used embodied and institutionalised forms of cultural capital to help secure economic capital (for example getting a better paid job) through enhancing their mobility options.

Following Dubois *et al.* (2015), a second influence shaping the mobility potential of EU8 migrants relates to their *time management skills*. Possessing good time management skills means having the ability to *organise and anticipate trips by scheduling appointments in advance* (Dubois *et al.*, 2015: p.264). Time management motilities were particularly important to many EU8 migrants in the UK, including those with heavy workloads, those who were juggling more than one job, and those with antisocial working hours (which subsequently had an impact on their mobilities). The research findings almost mirrored recent ONS (2017) data revealing that half of (working) EU8 migrants (50%) in the sample worked more than 40 hours per week (compared to a third of UK nationals (32%). Therefore, in order to ensure timely arrival and a lack of absence - whether it was traveling to, from or through the rural to work, EU8 migrants noted that they had little option except to develop good time management skills:

I live in the city but work in the rural. Because I start at 6 am there are no buses to get me there on time. I need to save up for a bike and then a car – evolution! But for now I walk and it takes me two hours to get there, and two back - so I need to leave my house around 4 am. I walk near the A580 road, then I turn and then one more time to the right and walk through the fields, which I really enjoy, especially in the morning. I've been working there for about two months and have been walking since. I don't mind this. But I really do need a bike. Mainly because of the time I waste. (Maciek, Polish male, aged 32)

and

I really have to be organised because I do a lot. I have two jobs. I also like to hike in the Lakes whenever I'm free. I have a car, but I'd be stuck in traffic during rush hours, so I catch the bus. But it's not that simple – first I drive to the centre, then catch the bus and then walk for 10 minutes. Keeps me fit! The bus is OK as I can read or respond to emails using my phone – I don't waste any time! When I go climbing I then drive or share a car with friends. (Aneta, Slovakian female, aged 28)

EU8 migrants' rural mobilities were often multi-modal, especially in remote locations - with little or no public transport available, and therefore, this again required good time management and organisational skills. Those who were reliant on public transport or indeed their social networks planned their mobilities in detail, as it often took more time and was frequently conditioned by external factors beyond their control (i.e. someone's illness; or changes in timetables). For many migrants, especially those whose daily commutes involved being mobile in the rural, the lack of or limited economic capital often meant that they worked more, which required them to plan ahead. Such planning and time management practices were different from those of non-migrants' as they were arguably more complex. In essence, migrants' rural mobilities required them to plan according to their level of cultural capital, including their (often limited) awareness of available mobility options and their linguistic skills, as well as duration in the UK.

In addition, over 30% of the sample had children below the age of 18, which meant that besides work, time management also included family responsibilities and childcare. However, for many migrants, work duties, their remote location or family obligations were not treated as barriers, but were a driver for developing good organizational skills:

We travel a lot because we know how to! I would say that we have good organizational skills as a family. No choice really - three children and we both work full time. We have no other

family here, they are all back in Poland, so no-one to help us with the kids or the house. I work days, my husband does nights and we just swap to take care of the house and kids. We always plan in advance our short and long trips and it's not that hard. You just need a good system. (Marta, Polish female, aged 47)

Time management skills were evident amongst EU8 migrants traveling to, from and through the UK's countryside. Although it may not be apparent, migrants' good organisational skills were a part of their embodied form of cultural capital, which in turn helped them to, inter alia, maximize employment remuneration. Despite their heavy workloads, antisocial hours, and other educational and family commitments (that are often more evident in the lives of migrants, than non-migrants), EU8 migrants thus developed coping strategies and skills that helped them to become more efficient and make the best use of their free time.

Mobility skills also manifest themselves through spatial skills, which, again, are shaped by one's cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977; 1986), and as Dubois *et al.* (2015) argue, involve spatial orientation, the ability to read maps, signage, or technology to navigate, and having spatial confidence in unfamiliar places. Some individuals have developed their spatial skills by demonstrating a good sense of direction, and through simply 'knowing' their way around new places (Vincent-Geslin and Ravalet, 2015). In this respect, many EU8 migrants argued that they had good spatial orientation,

which made them feel confident in their rural surroundings. However, they did not entirely rely on their spatial skills, and used other skills to help them navigate within and beyond the rural. Indeed, in order to enhance their spatial mobilities, EU8 migrants frequently used different mobile applications in the UK - primarily Google Maps, but also National Rail, Train Line, and traffic information and updates (Figure 5.3). Such technological applications were utilized for driving, everyday mobilities such as work or education, but also for walking, cycling and leisure related movement in the rural:



Figure 5.3. *Mobile phones and navigation applications to facilitate mobility*
(Danuta, Latvian female, aged 55)

Every time I go somewhere, even to the next village I just put the Sat Nav in Google Maps on my phone and just go. It's amazing because even in the most remote rural locations my phone will find the route, even if I'm offline. (Danuta, Latvian female, aged 55)

It is important to recognize that the technological and navigational tools used by EU8 migrants appeared not to differ markedly from those used by non-migrants (Hui, 2016). However, variance was more apparent in the frequency of use. EU8 migrants who participated in the research highlighted how they used navigational equipment very frequently, sometimes daily – even for short trips to the local shop. This was particularly evident amongst those migrants who had not been in the UK for a long period, and who possessed few linguistic skills. They did not feel comfortable or confident enough to travel or walk by themselves without the help of navigational tools. As such, EU8 migrants preferred to trust technology rather than expose themselves as migrants in the rural (for example through the use of 'broken' English), and for some as a strategy to avoid discrimination through minimising any direct contact with non-migrants (see earlier).

Spatial skills were also acquired using online maps and interactive websites, where EU8 migrants could acquire the necessary information to be mobile. Such websites allowed individuals to plan routes, familiarize themselves with planned journeys, and to memorize directions prior to

traveling. They also provided such information to other migrants who they felt might want to 'follow in their tracks':

I don't know how people travelled before without the Internet and Google maps! Before I go anywhere I go online. In fact, I even get my ideas of where to go with my friends, what to visit from the Internet! I just Google it, see images and then check the routes, maps and go. On the Internet I can see how the road looks like, where to turn, what specific signs to look for. (Mateusz, Polish male, aged 34)

and

We always plan our trips, our stops using Google Maps. It is so useful! I think we have once created a map of the most beautiful castles in the UK and then followed the route! [...] We share our routes and maps with friends. I also post them on my blog – to give people ideas. (Aga, Polish female, aged 48; also see Figure 5.4)

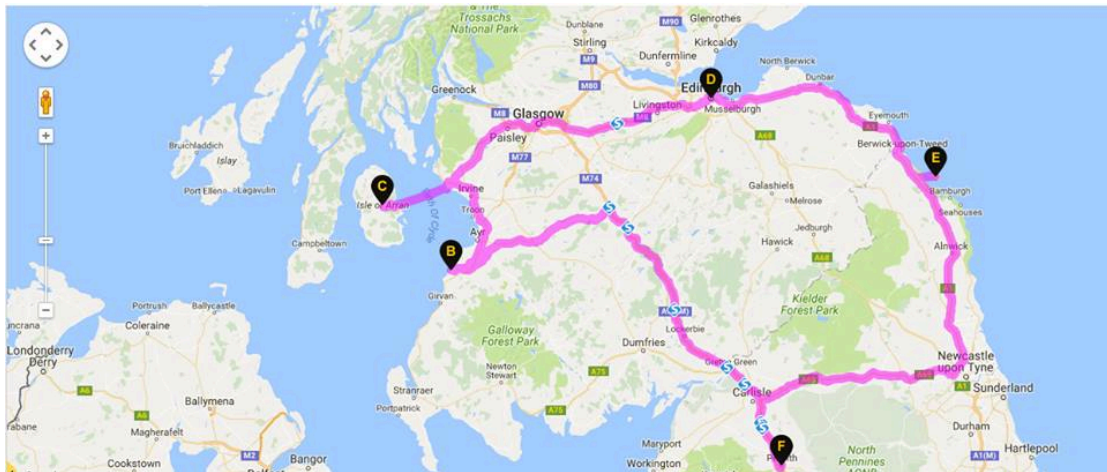


Figure 5.4. *Trip planning using Google Maps* (Aga, Polish female, aged 48)

Although not as often, paper maps, such as Ordnance Survey maps, and the AA Road Atlas were also used by some EU8 migrants to aid their rural mobilities. Physical maps were primarily used prior to their journey – i.e. in the planning stage. EU8 migrants who identified themselves as experienced walkers or climbers also used physical maps as a secondary tool (after a mobile phone or specialist navigation) to help them navigate across different routes.

To summarise, there was a considerable plurality in the spatial skills developed by EU8 migrants for securing rural mobility. This is unsurprising, given that mobilities may be conditioned by a number of different physical and psychological skills (Church *et al.*, 2000, Dubois *et al.*, 2015). Although the types of capital that EU8 migrants used to facilitate their mobility in some instances did not differ markedly from those

of non-migrants (Hui, 2016), the majority developed and employed specific and critical skills that helped them to become rural mobile subjects.

iii. Appropriation

The final facet of motility is *appropriation* (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004), which is referred to as ‘the evaluation of the available options vis-a`-vis one’s projects’ (Flamm and Kaufmann, 2006, p.169). In relation to this chapter in particular, appropriation is understood as the different ways in which EU8 migrants choose what to do with their skills, access (discussed above), priorities and preferences associated with mobility in rural areas in the UK (Shliselberg and Givoni, 2017), and how to overcome mobility challenges.

Beside the typical markers of appropriation highlighted by Flamm and Kaufmann (2006), such as rapidity, individual preferences, safety and independence, EU8 migrant interviewees indicated the significance of three other factors which are focused on below: i) *functionality*; ii) *cost* and iii) *the physical environment*. In terms of the former, for Marek, the most crucial aspect was the purpose of the trip and assurance of arrival:

The most important thing to me is that I get somewhere I need to be as smoothly as possible and on time – such as work. It’s like traveling with a purpose. I don’t care that much about the price or speed (it is still important, but not as

much) as long as I get there on time – so I choose my own car as in this instance it's the best option. But when I go to college I take the train, because of the traffic in the morning and problems with parking. So I guess the choice is made based on the purpose and then you choose whatever suits you best. (Marek, Slovakian male, aged 31)

Functionality therefore, mainly related to the ease of use of mobility infrastructures and links, and most importantly, guaranteed timely arrival at a chosen destination to either fulfil migrants' obligations (such as employment and / or family commitments) or to satisfy their desires (for example, tourism related mobilities). Language skills and knowledge, as well as economic capital also informed such decisions.

Additionally, Flamm and Kaufmann (2006, p. 179) have noted how individuals may wish – through individualised appropriation – to '*portray a certain image of oneself to others*' by highlighting their identity through the use of particular forms of mobility. However, some EU8 migrants indicated the reason for choosing a particular mode of transport was the opposite - to hide their identity in order to again avoid discrimination or 'othering' in the rural:

We never took public transport here to explore the area or go on little trips in the countryside. I speak to my kids in Polish and I don't want people turning their heads or telling us 'to

learn English' or 'go back to your own country'. I want to avoid unpleasant situations that happened in the past to me and I don't want my children to be subjected to any fear - especially now after the referendum. Better safe than sorry.

(Kasia, Polish female, aged 32)

Hence, whilst hiding their identity was not of primary importance to EU8 migrants when making decisions regarding rural mobility, it was still a significant aspect in shaping their means of mobility. One could argue that such examples were not rural specific, however, as already noted, some interviewees felt more susceptible to discrimination and 'othering' in the countryside, because of the conflation of the rural idyll in the English countryside with 'Britishness'. Consequently, some migrants tried to avoid potential negative experiences by using private (car) transport.

Beyond functionality issues per se, EU8 migrants also outlined the importance of cost and time. Cost referred to the most financially attractive solution in terms of choice of mode of transport, decisions regarding destination choice, and distance and length of stay:

Before I make a decision to go somewhere or not, or even to take a new job or not, I take into consideration many things, but the most important for me is the cost of it and whether it would make sense (financially) for me to go there. For example, that's why I don't want a job any further because

I'd have to catch the train and it's just too much money! I'd spend most of my earnings on transport! We also go on day trips because hotels are quite expensive here and I don't earn that much. (Damian, Polish male, aged 31)

Cost as a form of mobility appropriation is highly related to EU8 migrants' economic capital, and was important to many EU8 nationals, given that many had economic motivations for coming to the UK (see Porter, 2013). Thus, costs of transportation were imperative when making a decision on whether or not to be mobile. For example, in order to minimise train fares, some migrants would choose earlier and / or elongated journeys', whilst others walked or used bicycles for at least part of a journey. Economic capital and skills – including language and knowledge thus informed mobility decisions based around cost.

In relation to the physical environment, this also served to shape the potential to be mobile for EU8 migrants. In this respect, the most commonly reported physical environment barrier, apart from distance to mobility infrastructure in the rural, and which shaped decisions about mobility, was poor weather conditions (Figure 5.5):

Weather in the UK is definitely our biggest constraint. We like to spend our time actively, usually trekking or climbing. But when it's raining or when it's windy it's dangerous, you

can slip and hurt yourself. Also, in the autumn/winter time the days are shorter. There is no light, and again, walks take time, so it might be dangerous. So yes, weather is definitely a barrier. (Nataila, Polish female, aged 45)



Figure 5.5. *Weather as a mobility constraint* (Rafal, Polish male, aged 43)

However, in the context of the above section and quote, it is important to note that poor weather or physical conditions were not perceived by EU8 migrants as a great issue or constraint to mobility, as they have viewed this matter relationally – meaning they compared this to experiences and conditions ‘back home’, which were often a lot more problematic. For example, some interviewees reflected on low road safety standards in

their countries of origin, especially during winter months, when the temperatures fall below -20°C.

Weather was not only a mobility constraint, but also influenced the choice of type of transportation, length, distance and time of EU8 migrants' mobilities. One could argue that there were mobility seasons amongst most migrants, particularly in the residential and tourism and leisure mobilities. For example, EU8 migrants predominantly travelled and moved to the rural areas in the late spring and summer months, due to convenience and safety concerns. During the autumn / winter months, mobilities had still taken place, however, they were not as frequent as during the spring and summer seasons. The warmer months offered better weather conditions and longer days (due to the increased sun-light), which meant that EU8 migrants' daily trips to the rural took place more often, and lasted for a longer period of time. One could argue that such findings do not differ from the experiences of non-migrants, however,

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter has shown how 'the process of migration (and mobility) does not stop after physical movement to another country' (Meeus 2012, p.1779), but is carried on in and across a new place of residence. The chapter initially explored rationales for migrant mobility in, out and within the rural. The most popular motivations for EU8 migrants' rural mobilities were outlined, including employment, education and tourism. In the

respect of the last motivation, it was identified that EU8 migrants who participate in tourism mobilities, should arguably no longer be seen as migrants, but as domestic tourists, who simply have a different cultural background. Nevertheless, such motivations for mobility were heavily shaped by perceived and actual experiences of discrimination. This was evident both within and beyond the rural, but with the majority of interviewees highlighting how the rural served as a 'space of sanctuary' for many. Interestingly, virtual mobility was also referred to as a mechanism in the rural for overcoming perceived and actual discrimination and this arguably warrants much further research.

The latter half of the chapter subsequently drew attention to the importance of mobility 'capitals' and indeed the prominence of migrants' dispositions and capitals (following Bourdieu, 1986 and Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004). Such capitals were illustrated as influencing EU8 migrants' mobility practices in important and distinctive ways. In summary, access to public and private mobility in the rural, linguistic and organizational / time management *skills* (to acquire information and to secure mobility efficiencies) and issues of appropriation (namely functionality, cost and the physical environment) also served to shape the mobility of EU8 migrants.

Chapter 6. Shaping the rural

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapters analysed EU8 migrants' imaginings and representations of rural areas, as well as their mobility (and fixity) practices in the rural. In so doing, they drew on Halfacree's three-fold architecture model of rural space (2006) – and based themselves on Lefebvre's (1991) trialectic of social space – to highlight some of the key ways in which EU8 migrants were constructing the rural. Consequently, this chapter focuses on the third key element of Halfacree's *Production of Space* model – namely, '*Lives of the rural*'. *This aspect explores* migrants' production and re-production of rural space through their everyday lives in the rural, and the outcomes and values that also emerge from their engagement with the rural. As Merriman (2012; cited in Milbourne and Kitchen, 2014) points out, viewing migration through a critical mobilities lens has further developed thinking about mobility as being a part of an 'alive event' (Halfacree and Rivera, 2012). In a rural context, such events offer new opportunities for 'thinking' (imagining and / or defining the rural), 'being' (mobilities in the rural) and critically – in the context of this chapter - 'doing' (shaping the rural) (Anderson and Harrison, 2010, p. 19).

Arguably, existing perspectives on rural spaces and communities therein, in the UK, remain under-developed, and often either obscure, or disregard the practices and experiences of minority and / or ethnic residents (as well

as ethnic visitors); this can serve to exclude such individuals from rural life (Grarland and Chic, 2006). In the context of England, rural communities are often described and interpreted as being 'neighbourly', with individuals portrayed as having strong feelings of local identity, accompanied by a deep sense of belonging. Nevertheless, such perspectives need to be challenged through a focus on migrants living or visiting the rural. Rye (2014) notes that what is missing, in particular, is the perspective of migrants on rural areas in the UK, who are often marginalized. In addition, through drawing on the work of Grimsrud (2011), Rye argues that an approach, which focuses solely on middle class rural life-style migration, fails to take into account consumption or work-related migration to rural areas, which may vary according to origin, gender, age, class and other social characteristics. Therefore, this chapter recognises EU8 migrants as a distinctive set of actors in the rural, highlighting the importance of EU8 migrants to rural space and the ways in which, through their everyday practices, as well as their representations and mobilities, they are re-shaping the contemporary UK countryside.

In this context, the chapter broadly draws upon one key element of Liepins' conceptual framework of *Dynamic Communities* (2000a; see Figure 6.1) – that of *People*. It focuses on how individuals in the rural – in this case, EU8 migrants – engage with, and subsequently shape, the UK countryside. The model is therefore useful in helping to recognise and acknowledge diversity and change in rural societies (Liepins, 2000a; 2000b), as opposed to viewing rural communities as uniform and static.

The model provides the basis upon which to analyse EU8 migrants' perspectives on how they feel they impact rural communities, and *vice versa*. In the last 15 years, rural spaces across the UK have been affected by new migrant flows, especially those from EU8 accession countries. Polish migrants are the largest group amongst EU8 nationals, and have been recorded in every local authority area across the UK (Jentsch, 2007; Jentsch *et al.*, 2007; Pollard *et al.*, 2008). Thus, EU8 migrants are broadening the demographic and cultural diversity of the rural (Jentsch, 2007; Jentsch *et al.*, 2007). Involvement in a (rural) community can vary according to migrants' dispositions, as well as their individual circumstances. For example, differences between individuals, such as migrants' characteristics including age, occupation, marital status or length of stay in the UK, may shape their degree of involvement in rural community activities. Therefore, the diversity of *people's* actions, relations and positions are often noticeable in the variety of identities that are operationalized and mobilised within rural communities.

However, it is not only the rural communities that EU8 migrants believe they have an effect on; they also perceive that they are equally being shaped by rural space, in respect of their own practices, representations and imaginations of the rural. This chapter analyses EU8 migrants' influence on rural space and place through Oldenburg's (1982; 1999) theory of place. This offers a different, but useful perspective on the importance of *third place* and which can help to highlight EU8 migrants' perspectives on how they feel they impact different aspects of rural space,

and *vice versa*. As such, the chapter will explore how EU8 migrants shape the *first place* of the rural (home), the *second space of the rural* (work) and the *third place* of the rural, namely community.

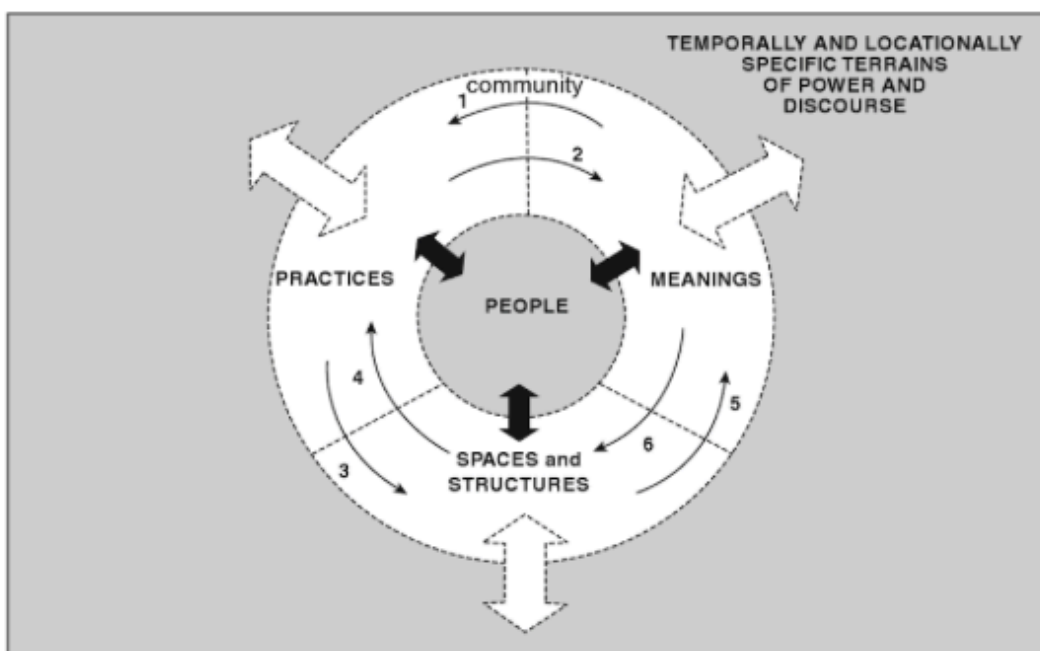
Oldenburg's work draws attention to the importance of both relational processes, and the activities of individuals which may have a more 'territorial basis' (i.e. a place-based sense of connection) (Bryden, 1994; Mattson, 1997; Silk, 1999). It therefore elucidates both territorial locations and relational processes – as well as 'lived' and 'imagined' (rural) communities - that are particularly significant for EU8 migrants, who either reside in or visit the rural.

Furthermore, Ryan's (2018) concept of differentiated embedding – and which comprises 'relational' *embedding* (the role of the networks); 'territorial' embedding (place-specific actions) and 'ambiguous' embedding (uncertain attachment due to a number of encountered obstacles or lack of power) – is also drawn upon to explore migrants' differential engagement with rural space and place. Indeed, the concept highlights how migrants may feel more or less powerful depending upon the nature and extent of their embeddedness in different features of the rural (Hess, 2004; Ryan, 2018). In this respect, Hite (2005) draws attention to how embeddedness can range from 'hollow' (low levels of frequency, short duration and limited trust in others) and 'functional' (increased trust and social confidence), through to 'full' embeddedness (high levels of ease, trust and commitment).

6.2. EU8 migrants as key agents in the rural

In the following two sections (6.2 and 6.3), particular attention is given to the extent to which migrants feel they perceive they are able to shape individuals in the rural, as well as particular rural places and spaces. Liepins (2000a, p.28) notes 'how notions of identity, place and space shape the forms and practices of communities at different times and locations'. Hence EU8 migrants can be viewed as a distinctive set of actors in the rural and who act upon – and are shaped by – the dynamic nature of (rural) community. In this respect, Liepins' (2000) model of 'Dynamic Communities' (see Figure 6.1) explores the cultural and material dimensions of community, whilst also recognising the importance of broader social relations and processes (Phillips, 1998; Liepins, 2000a, 2000b).

Figure 6.1. *Liepins' model of 'Dynamic Communities' (Liepins, 2000a)*



However, Liepins' model only focuses on people residing 'inside' the (rural) community; hence a modified approach is developed, which identifies how other individuals who are 'external' to the community – for example, EU8 migrants as rural workers commuting to rural areas / or who are visiting as tourists - are also important, given their practices in rural space. Such recognition reflects how the rural is shaped by a variety of EU8 'actors', both territorially and relationally, and how they can serve to either enable or constrain rural change. In addition, the ability of EU8 migrants to shape the rural will vary according to the degree to which they are embedded in the rural (Ryan, 2018; see later). For example, EU8 migrants may shape the rural through their actions as residents or as 'rural sojourners' (Halfacree and Rivera, 2011) – ranging from commuting into the rural for work on a daily basis, to tourists 'consuming the rural'.

i. EU8 migrants sustaining the rural

With reference to the Dynamic Communities model (Liepins, 2000), the main aspect of rural community which EU8 migrants (both those living in and those visiting) highlighted in respect of their actions shaping the rural related to **sustaining** a rural community:

People (EU8 migrants) are usually young, they often start their family here, so they have children and therefore the ageing population in the rural is becoming less of a problem.

(Aneta, Slovakian female, aged 28)

and,

I think we often change the face of the rural. Not only that many Poles or Lithuanians moved to the rural and work on farms, but also in a way that we often visit those areas. [...] Even the visitors to the countryside are foreign. I often hear when I speak to the locals: 'Oh it's nice to see some young faces here'. (Dominik, Lithuanian male, aged 48)

Hence EU8 nationals believed that through their presence in the rural they, to a significant degree, had helped to counter issues of ageing and depopulation (also see Jentsch, 2007). Indeed, recent ONS statistics reveal that despite an overall decline in the number of births in England and Wales, births to women born outside the UK have increased. Poland and Lithuania are in the top ten countries of birth for parents born outside the UK, with Poland being first since 2010 and Lithuania seventh (Haines, 2017). As a result, EU8 migrants strongly perceive that they shape the rural demographically.

A number of EU8 nationals, specifically those who were younger, felt they had more power in shaping the rural community. They felt that because of their (productive) age they were perceived as more 'valued' migrants, and therefore more welcome, and especially in rural areas characterised by low population growth. This was also important in the context of the 2016 EU referendum held in the UK, as EU8 migrants felt they increasingly

needed to justify their presence and 'usefulness' in the UK, especially in rural areas. Hence, through such feelings, they were arguably developing a form of 'functional' embedding, characterised by a 'purpose' in actions, such as moving in or staying in the rural. However, the concept of territorial embedding was also of relevance: there were a few instances in which some migrants felt '*out of place*' in the rural and '*too young to be living there*' (Andrea, Hungarian female, aged 19). As such, they perceived urbanized areas as offering more activities, and the opportunity for engagement with people of a similar age.

ii. EU8 migrants - community involvement, conviviality and reciprocity

Beyond brief discussions relating to their demographic impact on the rural, EU8 migrants also perceived that they shaped the English countryside through their involvement in community and with those living in rural areas. The extent to which such involvement had taken place varied according to a number of factors, including migrants' cultural and social capital, the extent to which they were 'embedded', passivity, fear of othering, and / or their agency. Such issues are elaborated below.

EU8 migrants' imaginings and meanings of rural areas have already been explored in Chapter 4, where it was noted how many migrants viewed the rural as idyllic, being characterised by the conflation of *Englishness*, *whiteness* and *conviviality*. In the discussion, it was highlighted how EU8

nationals perceived non-migrant rural residents to be pleasant and welcoming, and how this served to influence their understanding of the rural as a safe and a 'family-friendly' place. Such imaginations subsequently shaped their motivations for visiting and (for some) moving into the rural. Indeed, the popular image of rural dwellers as a close-knit, caring community persists, and expectations of finding such a 'rural idyll' not only draw people to rural to live, but also serve to shape their behaviour whilst they live there (Little and Austin, 1996).

Viewing the rural and its communities as friendly and convivial helped EU8 migrants in creating new bonds and relationships with other local residents. EU8 migrants' noted how their encounters with (other) rural people had been largely positive. This had meant that, over time, they had developed understandings and practices of conviviality (especially in comparison to the city and 'back home'). Migrants reflected that local residents were friendly and welcoming, and that this had shaped their view of the UK's countryside as safe and a '*family-friendly*' place:

My understanding of rural places in the UK was influenced by the locals I have met on my trips there. People were always really friendly, really nice, asking questions, helping with directions. I decided to move into a village, because of many reasons, but people were definitely one of them.

(Iwona, Polish female, aged 30)



Figure 6.2. *Making new friends in the rural* (Iwona, Polish female, aged 30)

and

*When we first moved here we knew very little about the area.
But then I met some lovely ladies in my child's school and
they told me where they were hiring in the village - and now I
have a job!* (Monika, Polish female, aged 48)

Such experiences, and relations with the rural non-migrant population, meant that many had further developed social ties and new friendships (Figure 6.2). For some, this had led to new career opportunities and / or gaining a better understanding of systems and structures in British societies (Ryan, 2018). This also links to Bourdieu's (1986, p. 51) theory of social capital, which is the aggregate of the possession 'of a *network of more or less institutionalized relationships*'. In essence, the existence of relationships (or networks) is not a '*natural given*', but is linked to endless

efforts, and enacted in different exchanges. To EU8 migrants, rural local communities were much more than just spaces with cultural, social or economic components, in which they resided. Migrants were often in active and dynamic relationships with others, and their differential experiences within the English countryside often shaped opportunities, and future steps (also see Papademetriou 2003; Jentsch, 2007).

In the case of the example discussed above, it is clear how common interests and frequency of social engagement enabled Monika to grow deep, trusting bonds with her colleagues, and which further reinforced her functional embedding and created new career prospects. Such experiences and relations therefore help EU8 migrants to relationally embed in the rural, albeit at the same time friendships and networking were not unidirectional, benefiting just EU8 migrants. They worked both ways – EU8 rural migrants became important to other rural residents by creating useful networks, through the expansion of social circles and through developing deeper social bonds. In line with Bourdieu's (1986) theory, this could be seen as part of the process of social capital exchange, where networks bring benefits to both parties.

In addition, it was evident that EU8 migrants had different types and degrees of involvement in the rural community. For instance, there were examples of migrants providing support to those perceived as being in need:

I like to help people so I do it as much as I can. For example I help with the food bank for the poor – I collect it and then bring it to church (Figure 6.3). I sometimes join my other friends, who in the winter months go out on the streets and give the homeless a hot coffee and sandwiches that we make ourselves at home; we also give out socks underwear and if needed sometimes help looking after their wounds (Figure 6.4). My other friend often collects money for charities and does challenges – like climbing a mountain. (Iwona, Polish female, aged 30)



Figure 6.3. *Food and other items collected for the poor (Iwona, Polish female, aged 30)*

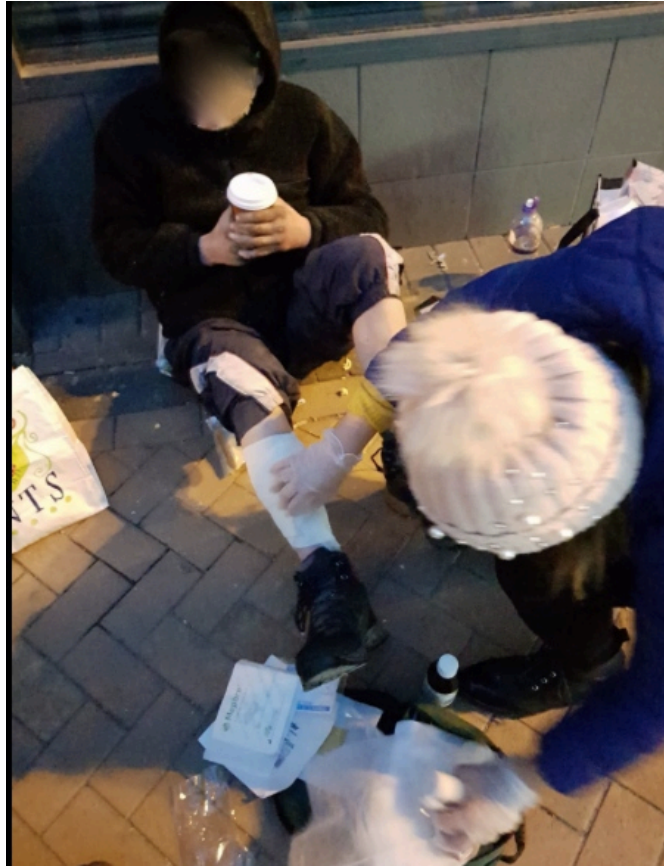


Figure 6.4. *Supporting the poor and homeless on the streets* (Iwona, Polish female, aged 30)

EU8 migrants offered help and support to other rural residents for a number of reasons. Some EU8 nationals wanted to prove their value as 'good migrants', or felt the need to 'do something nice' and 'give back' to those who they perceived were less fortunate than themselves. Other motivations also included loyalty and obligation towards others in rural communities and feelings of duty and commitment, exemplifying both functional and full embedding (Hite, 2004). In addition, those migrants who identified that they had provided informal reciprocity to others, reported increased trust and sociability towards other (migrant and non-migrant) rural residents and were arguably more deeply embedded in the rural.

However, it is interesting to note that many EU8 migrants had provided help to others as 'silent actors', meaning that they did not belong to a specific group or formally recognised body or organisation, and had not shared their actions publically. For some, the reasons behind this was that they wanted to give '*something back*' to their rural community, but at the same time did not wish to draw unnecessary attention to themselves as migrants, in order to avoid being 'othered' in the rural, thus reflecting some of the arguments set out in the previous chapter:

I don't like people knowing where I'm from. Not that I'm ashamed of my country; I just don't want them to be saying that there is more and more of us here and the place is tight already as it is, so we should go back to where we came from. So it's better to stay quiet – do what you have to do and just stay quiet; and then they don't know and they can't say anything. (Ewa, Polish female, aged 34)

Another explanation for such behaviour related to a 'self-help' and 'self-sufficiency' culture amongst migrants, which correlates with Sherman's (2006) work, which identified how those experiencing rural poverty were more likely to be self-sufficient and to seek informal support.

The self-sufficiency theme amongst EU8 migrants in the rural was also reported in the context of work environments:

We just take things as they are and work with them. We don't like to bother people. We, as a nation, have been through a lot, and I think we have learnt to accept everything, to be appreciative about what we have, just be happy we have a job, house and a safe environment, the rest will somehow settle itself. That's our mentality. (Wojtek, Polish male, aged 56)

In turn, a need for self-sufficiency contributed to a lack of engagement by the majority of interviewees in rural community life and local politics. This was due to a number of reasons, but mainly relating to language barriers or negative political experiences and / or a lack of trust in government 'back home'. This meant that EU8 migrants were less likely to participate in local elections (Driver and Garapich, 2012) and subsequently in respect of shaping (local) political structures of the rural:

What's the point with voting, when it comes to big things our say doesn't really matter anyway and decisions are made for us without consulting us. Like Brexit. It's like back home. The politicians do whatever they want without considering the position or feelings of the minorities. You don't have money, or you're not powerful – then you don't count. Also, I don't

think it would matter for us to join the political scene in the rural as there aren't enough migrants here to support me. The locals would never vote for a migrant! (Dawid, Polish male, aged 29)

Some EU8 migrants also felt let down by local and national politicians and because of the perceived lack of support, they chose to disengage in the political process. As Ryan (2018), points out, such negative experiences can lead to reverse embedding (or dis-embedding). Thus, the research highlights how EU8 migrants do not simply continue to embed over time; on the contrary, it is apparent that life events – such as disappointment or disillusionment – may result in ambiguous or even reverse embedding (dis-embedding) in different rural contexts.

Moreover, it is perhaps not surprising to identify that there were differing degrees of involvement in rural community life by EU8 migrants. For example, not all migrants were able to create social bonds:

I live here alone. I work all the time on the farm to earn as much as I can and give it to my wife and kids who still live in Poland. My English is not very good and I only know my boss, so I don't want to stay here. I don't particularly love this place or my job. I don't really feel connected to any of it.
(Sebastian, Polish male, aged 34)

Bourdieu (1986, p. 52) argues that the existence of relationships, or even networks between individuals, is not a '*natural given [...] but a product of endless efforts and investment*' in people creating different bonds that might be found useful in different ways. This is evident in the example above: for Sebastain (and for many other migrants), a lack of involvement in rural community life and / or the presence of limited networks can be attributed to a number of factors, such as poor language skills and engagement in full time employment. This meant that those such as Sebastain had limited time and opportunities to pursue their own hobbies or to become engaged in local initiatives.

It can be postulated that if EU8 migrants in rural areas have more possibilities for conviviality – i.e. conversations with a purpose – then this may provide enhanced opportunities for shaping the rural. Conversely, if they have fewer opportunities – for example, through a lack of time or lack of English language proficiency, then this may lead to individuals withdrawing from rural life (keeping 'themselves to themselves'), and resulting in their ability to shape the rural becoming more restricted. Hence, possibilities for conviviality – strongly shaped and conditioned by levels of embedding and the extent of migrant's social capital – informs (rural) 'place shaping' activity.

A further reason for EU8 migrant non-agency and passivity in the rural was their fear of being 'othered' (see Garland and Chakraborti, 2006; Burdsey, 2013; also Chapter 5). As such, a fear of being othered often led

to their passivity in rural 'structures':

To be honest, I don't take part in any happenings here, formal or informal. I'd rather stay out of it. I don't want to be seen or heard and then pointed out for my poor English or that I am a migrant. Especially now, before the Brexit vote, where you hear about so much hate towards migrants. I didn't happen to me, or my family, but you never know.
(Anna, Lithuanian female, aged 52)

and

I don't think we impact on any official changes here, like at work, or politics, and I don't think we should. It is not our place to say or to change things here. We are still migrants, if we want people to like us, we should stay quiet and just take things as they are. (Bella, Hungarian female, aged 31)

Robinson and Reeve (2006) maintain that both social and physical environments, within which experiences of individuals may be rooted, help to negotiate and position migrants within structures such as politics or the economy. However, as much as EU8 migrants felt they shaped the economy of the rural, they did not feel they had any significant impact on the political structures of the English countryside. Moreover, some felt that it was not their place to shape the rural or its political structures. Prior to

the 'Brexit' referendum in 2016 – and indeed during the phase in which this research was undertaken - EU8 nationals' feelings of uncertainty and concerns regarding fears of being 'othered' intensified significantly. By not being able to vote or openly express their views, some migrants – in line with Bourdieu's (1986) discussions on unequal power relationships between different groups - felt politically disempowered and therefore tried to avoid unnecessary attention that could have exposed their *otherness* in the form of accent, poor language or political views.

6.3. Places of the rural – Home, Work and Community

The previous section has highlighted how EU8 migrants - as a distinctive set of rural actors – have a differential ability to engage with and impact upon other individuals in rural communities, as well as being shaped by the actions of others. However, what is also required is a focus on different aspects of rural place, and how such features are shaped / are shaping EU8 migrants in the English countryside.

6.3.1. Home

In the context of Oldenburg's (1999) framework, *The First Place* is that of the home – a place of people's (in the case of the focus of the PhD – EU8 migrants') residence. It is characterised as offering a safe, predictable

environment which fosters family relations (Oldenburg, 1999). In the context of this research, *home* could be seen as the micro-space of the rural.

The first place of the rural – *home*, was to many EU8 migrants the closest, the most subjective and personal area that they felt they had an influence on, and were influenced by. Unlike other rural spaces, migrants were able to shape their personal spaces from the moment they moved in. *Home* was particularly important to those migrants, whose embedding might not have been as deep in the rural due to poor language skills and a lack of knowledge of the local area. *Home* was a place on which EU8 nationals could put their ‘stamp’ and express their identity through activities such as decorating, by installing TV in their native language, or through gathering and displaying mementos and items brought from their country of origin (also see Burrell, 2016; White, 2017). Such mementos were part of EU8 migrants’ cultural capital and were a form of relational embedding. Given that a number of interviewees had pre-conceived ideas about the rural (i.e. the need to ‘take care’ of such environments – see Chapter 4), some shaped the outside space of their home and gardens to ‘fit in’ or to augment ideas of the English countryside as a *physically attractive* and *looked after space*. Indeed, interviewees argued that they had positively impacted on rural areas by regenerating and renovating redundant housing and / or housing that was in poor condition:

We buy old houses and make them up - one room after another. So we help the villages to look nicer too! I also know some people who rent houses in the rural. And they also paint them, and look after them because they want their places to look good too. (Zuzana, Slovakian female, aged 45)

and

I think that migrants change places, sometimes even whole streets. They often live in areas where no one, especially English people, wants to live in, because those areas are poor, often deprived. But for migrants it's cheaper - to buy or to rent a house in a poor looking street. When they decide to stay longer, than for example just for the summer, they look after the houses – clean gardens - front and back; clean these dirty widows, put some curtains in, paint the gate, the house – I've seen it! Go to Morecambe, to the North and go to these villages and ask where Poles live – you'll see for yourself! (Sylwek, Polish male, aged 42)

It is interesting to note that EU migrants believed that the impacts they had made through their investment in rural housing went beyond a contribution to the rural economy; they also perceived that they were changing rural communities aesthetically. Individuals emphasised how they had made a

positive impact on the built and natural environment of rural areas through an array of activities at a variety of different scales – from the home though to rural community and beyond:

We take pride that we live here, so we want the village to look good! We participate in beach cleaning, or decorating the village with plants in the summer. So it looks beautiful, you know. But that's not all. We also help to clean the church, especially for Christmas and Easter. We came up with this idea – we wanted give something too, we wanted to show that it is important to us. The church is not Polish only, but only Poles showed up for the cleaning. I also know that there is a group of Poles that look after the cemetery, especially the old and forgotten graves. Every year on All Saints day they go there to lay flowers and pray. (Paula, Polish female, aged 59)

and

I always look after my possession - the garden – front and back, the house. So it all looks inviting and so the other people in the village can see that we care. It is very important back home to look after your place. I always plant beautiful and colourful flowers to brighten up the house and the street (Figure 6.5). (Anna, Lithuanian female, aged 52)



Figure 6.5. *Beautification of ‘first places’: Anna’s front and back garden.*
(Anna, Lithuanian female, aged 52)

Hence, for many EU8 migrants, the meaning of *home* extended beyond the physical building of the place of residence – as often the whole village or area were understood and treated as *home*. In the respect of *home*, territorial and relational embedding were of the great importance – as it did matter *where* and *with whom* they shared their *first place* of the English countryside.

Reciprocally, *‘home’* also shaped EU8 migrants in different ways. For example, for some interviewees, *home* was the primary reason behind moving to the rural and therefore changing life trajectories:

I ended up here because we couldn't find a house elsewhere in the city, in Manchester. My sister already lived here and she told us when a house came up there for rent. So we moved here because of the importance of 'home' and it changed everything – kids' school, my work. But it was for the better. (Maja, Polish female, aged 25)

Consequently, the first place of home offered stability and permanence, and was also important to EU8 migrants in providing a safe and stable environment, especially for those relatively new to an area or who feared being 'othered' and / or becoming the subject of racism and discrimination in the rural:

I have only moved here recently with my family, and I only feel comfortable at home. Where I can speak my own language, watch Polish TV and I don't have to worry that someone will tell me to 'learn to speak English' or 'go back home'. Because I think, 'but I have my home – it's here'. Nothing like that happened yet, but with Brexit coming soon you hear all sort of stories. My home feels safe and I can be whoever I want to be. (Kasia, Polish female, aged 34)

Thus, to many EU8 nationals, *home* was a place that offered familiarity, safety and freedom - where they could speak their native language and cultivate traditions without fear of being judged, racialised or othered,

especially in the context of the EU referendum. Hence, home was treated as a safe place and 'a refuge from the outside world' (White, 2017, p. 173). In addition, for those participants, who lived with families, partners or close friends, *home* also served as a place, which fostered inter-personal and family relations (Oldenburg, 1999) and the cultivation or development of their social capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

However, for those sharing a *home* in the rural and / or living in a rented accommodation, home was not always positive. For a small minority of EU8 migrants who participated in the study, home was sometimes a place associated with a '*lack of privacy and personal space*' (Damian, Polish male, aged 31). Hence, *home* shaped the choice of places in which migrants spent their free time. At times, '*poor living conditions*', high rent or property prices meant that individuals spent their time outside the home and indeed outside the rural and shaped desires to move to more urbanized areas, where it was felt that there would be more choice in respect of both accommodation and services.

6.3.2. *Work*

The UK's rural economies are seen as an important segment of the national economy as a whole (Chappell *et al.*, 2009) and work settings can be referred to as *second places* (Oldenburg, 1999). *Second places* are particularly important to many EU8 nationals in the UK, as the majority are

economic migrants (see Pollard *et al.*, 2008) - meaning they spend a considerable amount of time in work environments. Migrants who participated in the research felt they contributed to rural *second places* in a number of ways - by providing labour (for example, in farming and hospitality industries) and through paying taxes and taking part in consumption-based activities in the rural. Such contributions have already been widely reported. However, what has been largely absent to date is a migrant perspective on the importance of such issues (see Rye, 2014; 2018).

Within this context, EU8 migrants initially noted that they provided support to key rural sectors such as agriculture, hospitality and food processing by filling labour shortages:

I am not too sure but I suppose that English people, especially farmers and business owners, appreciate our help with picking fruit and hard-work on farms so I think migrants fill the gap in employment shortages, especially for the jobs where there is no one to make them. (Ewa, Polish female, aged 34)

But crucially, EU8 migrants did not only influence *second places* by simply filling vacancies; their everyday presence / visits to the rural were also deemed to be helpful in stimulating further employment opportunities, and therefore expanding rural second places:

There was a clear gap in the area. There were many young European people and they needed a place. So, as a result, there was the opening of the café in Windermere - 'Café Italia. It was opened by a guy from Poland. 12 years ago, when I came here you'd never be able to have a coffee and a desert after 6pm or in the evening! (Beata, Polish female, aged 38)

and

My friend and I, ten years ago, opened a company that delivers products to Polish and Eastern European shops. Many of which are in rural areas, such as Bowness (Figure 6.6). We have started small but now employ many people, both local and migrants, and collaborate with many companies too. We have been successful and we definitely contribute to the economy. (Szymon, Polish male, aged 30)



Figure 6.6. *Production of rural second places*, (Szymon, Polish male, aged 30)

The above examples illustrate how EU8 migrants shape the temporality of rural production and 'empower(ed) (their) self-identity through competing claims of what the rural is or ought to be' (Crouch, 2006, p. 361). However, EU8 migrants' production of *second places* in the rural was arguably more complex than for non-migrant residents. Even though EU8 migrants felt that rural space offered opportunities to develop their entrepreneurial practices, they first had to possess certain characteristics, which included the ability to speak English, have knowledge of the local area, as well as the market for particular products, and have established links with potential shareholders / stakeholders. In this respect, being relationally embedded also played an important part in migrants knowing the right *people* in and beyond the rural, and which subsequently fostered *second place* production.

Rural *second places* were also driven through migrant consumption practices in relation to leisure and tourism. Migrants, as already explored in previous chapters (Chapter 4 and 5) were active domestic tourists travelling to and visiting many rural locations in the UK. Such activities increase demand in rural economies (Chappell *et al.*, 2009) and as a consequence help to sustain the rural economy:

We, and people we know, travel to certain rural locations on purpose – to keep the small businesses going. Up North we have recently experienced massive floods. People, who reside in those small rural villages and towns are worried about their income so they encourage people to visit as much as they can. The road to Grasmere was closed for the past month and as a consequence three shops were closed down. It is so so sad. When I saw the flooding on TV I cried a lot – it's tragic for those people who live there and for the businesses. A man from Bowness was talking on TV, almost begging people to keep returning, to keep visiting, to not forget about them. And we don't. As long as it's safe – we visit those places and spend money there (Figure 6.7). (Natalia, Polish female, aged 45)



Figure 6.7. *Supporting small rural businesses* (Natalia, Polish female, aged 45)

By traveling and being domestic tourists, EU8 nationals felt that they created local demand and therefore helped businesses, such as restaurants and hotels, to thrive. A number of participants reported that they had viewed menus translated into their native languages, with 'traditional' food from their country of origin being served in rural restaurants owned by UK born residents, as well as national beverages such as Czech beer or Polish vodka being sold in shops or bars. These experiences made them feel acknowledged and valued as customers. This again, had a positive influence on processes of territorial embedding, which meant that they were more likely to return to such places or recommend them to others.

EU8 migrants felt that the workplace gave them a structure and a 'function' in rural society, which helped them to develop their belonging and territorial embedding:

Rural space is very important to me for many reasons, but the main one is that it gives me work. It is the main reason why me and my family moved here. Because of work people know me here - I work in the garden shop and I feel important. (Dominik, Lithuanian male, aged 48)

and

I am here because of my job. I don't have many friends because I work all the time and my English isn't good, but I have my family and that's enough. I like living her (Sylwek, Polish male, aged 42).

Having a job gave migrants some sense of stability and to some extent – belonging in the rural. But Rye and Andrzejewska (2010) identify that EU8 migrants, especially those who work on farms, are often structurally disempowered. Their research illustrated that informal institutions (such as those established amongst employers at the farm level), favour employers (over employees), and often override formal institutions in respect of dictating rules and labour regulations. According to their Norwegian study, EU8 farm workers were frequently the subject of marginalisation and disempowerment. For example, their wages were also lower than the

actual remuneration for most Norwegian-born hired farm workers. This was also the case for many EU8 migrant participants in the research, and especially for those employed as farm workers or in smaller (hospitality) enterprises:

I know we earn less than the national minimum, but it is still a lot more than what we'd have back home for the same job. I am grateful I have a job, that's why I won't say anything. Another reason is that I don't really speak English that well, if I get sacked for arguing with my boss, who else would employ me? (Pawel, Latvian male, aged 48)

Indeed, some participants were openly aware of the fact that they worked longer hours or earned less than their UK-born co-workers, but did not problematise such underpayments, and preferred to avoid situations in which they would have to challenge their employer. This was partially due to the fact that they viewed the rural in England (including working conditions and remunerations) relationally, which meant that they often compared pay and working conditions with those back home, which they perceived as being considerably lower than in the UK. Further influences compounding *second place* disempowerment were noted as language barriers and knowledge of work-related law and regulations (also see Grzymala-Kazlowska (2016) and Ryan (2018)).

Migrants also expressed their annoyance and frustration towards many other EU8 co-workers in respect of disempowerment processes, arguing that they exacerbated problems by freely working longer hours and purposefully exceeding the norms set by their employers:

I used to get so angry with other Poles or Latvians working in factory. Get this – this factory was one of the biggest employers here (Cumbria), but the job itself was hard - physical and long hours. Anyway, when I first started there it was alright as it was just at the beginning in 2004. Then the mass migration arrived – there it was mainly Poles and Latvians. And I think they wanted to impress the bosses, so they worked longer than they should have and twice as fast! They were killing themselves, but there were even months when they doubled the numbers of production! So of course, we were all expected to do the same! A lot of English workers got annoyed and left. A lot of other Poles were pushed out because they couldn't cope! (Sylwek, Polish male, aged 42)

In summary, by exceeding their targets and working longer hours, migrants have often disrupted existing work patterns and routines, and consequently have influenced rhythms, tempos and norms of rural production (Lefebvre, 2004). This has also – sometimes unintentionally – served to exacerbate feelings of hostility between migrant and non-migrant

workers and impinged on perceptions and practices of 'othering' and migrant embedding in rural space.

6.3.3. Community

Third places exist outside the home (*first places*) and beyond work spaces (*second places*). *Third places* are defined as public places where individuals gather together to meet and interact informally. There are different forms of third places, as 'third place is a generic designation for a great variety of public spaces that host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals' (Oldenburg, 1999, p. 16; Oldenburg, 2002). As such, it is a core setting of informal public life. Moreover, Oldenburg argues that third places perform a crucial role in the development of societies and communities, helping to strengthen citizenship and thus are 'central to political processes' (1999, p. 67). It is interesting to note that to aid the analyses of such places, Oldenburg (1989; 2002) provides some specific characteristics *third places* should consist of. These include the presence of 'neutral ground' where all individuals are welcome, including people of different socio-economic backgrounds. Oldenburg also identifies that conversation and engagement is welcome in such spaces and that they are easily accessible to all with no barriers to entry. They are a 'home away from home', fostering a positive atmosphere conducive to members becoming 'rooted' there.

Oldenburg (1999, p. 45) argued that 'individuals may belong to several formal organizations, but if they have a third place it is apt to make them feel more a part of the community than those other memberships'. This was the case for many EU8 migrant interviewees who noted how they engaged in practices that supported community-based activities in rural communities, such as local festivals, galas and community events. Through their actions and engagement they therefore perceived that they contributed to rural places and community life:

We live here, not cohabitante or just survive. We have lives and we care about the place we live in, so of course we care about the place too! When there is a gala every year I help with organization. We walk together in a parade and celebrate rural living. It may sound funny, but it really brings people together. (Bella, Hungarian female, aged 31)

and

Whenever there is a happening in the village, like in my son's school – always I try to help. I love the village life, communities and everything that comes with it. Usually I bake cakes for everyone – I'm good at it! Last year we even entered the Scarecrow festival; the kids were over the moon! (Monika, Polish female, aged 48)



Figure 6.8. *Village Gala and Scarecrow Festival* (Monika, Polish female, aged 48)

Halfacree and Rivera (2012, p. 104) have noted how newcomers to the rural often have considerable involvement in organising village festivals or children's activities. Thus the help, support and participation of EU8 migrants in social activities, could be interpreted as EU8 nationals' attempt to (re)create a communitarian spirit and match local life to their images and representations of the countryside, as containing close knit communities where individuals work and celebrate life together (Cloke and Milbourne, 1992).

But EU8 migrants' contributions to third places in the rural varied according to the extent to which they were differentially embedded. Individual dispositions and characteristics, such as ability to speak

English, or family status frequently informed the extent to which embedding in different third spaces was taking place:

Not all migrants living here help out with happenings. But there are many that do. I think those migrants who have kids in school help because they know who to speak to. Also, a very important thing is that somebody can speak English! I speak to other residents so I always ask. But I know a Polish lady here, who doesn't speak a word in English beyond 'hi' and 'bye' so she can't even offer any help. (Iwona, Polish female, aged 30)

It was often the case that those migrants with better English language skills were more proficient to communicate with other rural, non-migrant residents, which meant that they did not just attend such social activities, but were able to offer help, or bring their own suggestions on how to better or improve those gatherings.

Supporting the rural community meant that the embedding was largely place-specific, as migrants did not feel they would have similar opportunities and/ or experiences as in urban areas. They felt that rural space offered a better opportunity to '*stand out (from) the masses*' (Danuta, Latvian female, 52) and therefore engage with others and make friends. However, for some migrants, such *standing out* had negative connotations as some were worried that this could lead to 'othering' or even racialization. But for many migrants, active participation meant that

they were able to build networks and rapport with other rural residents, which also meant that they developed relational embedding (Ryan, 2018):

We do a lot here, you know take part in happenings, go for Zumba classes, cake baking for coffee mornings, etc. I meet a lot of interesting people and make many friends. Well, my whole life is here – my house, my friends, my business, and kids' school. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. (Maja, Polish female, aged 25)

Such forms of relational embedding by EU8 migrants opened up new opportunities, as through friendship groups and new social networks they were able to gain important information about different activities that were taking place and recognise potential benefits (for themselves and for the community) from involvement in such activities. In addition, when discussing the significance of *third places* and community, it is important to highlight the importance of the Catholic Church to EU8 migrants. Often churches and parish halls were seen as a resource through which EU8 migrants could engage in different forms of community interaction. The church served as a site at which migrants became relationally embedded, through meeting people (for example, through charity work, through collecting money and / or through participating in celebrations or events):

Each year, before Christmas, we come and clean our local church. There are more foreigners there doing it than the locals. Church means a lot to me and I go every Sunday. I also volunteer as an accountant for the whole diocese. I

... speak to a lot of priests and many said that since our arrival the churches do a lot better – they are busier and younger!

(Agata, Polish male, aged 26)

Thus in the absence of a (Catholic) church, EU8 migrants traveled and engaged with church communities and services elsewhere. As such, this illustrates how processes of territorial embedding in the rural were place specific and often dependent on the presence or absence of religious, as well as educational institutions:

I am happy here, because this place gives me everything I need. We have a Roman Catholic Church here – not the Anglican one! So that's a massive bonus. My kids have their school here. There's a library nearby and you can request books. And in the big library in Kendal they even offered free English classes! I didn't go, but I know people who did. It's nice to know that they are doing something like that for us. It's not like we're hated everywhere. (Beata, Polish female, aged 38)

Hence, services such as language classes – make a positive contribution to processes of territorial embedding and the development of belonging and attachment to particular places (Ryan, 2018). EU8 migrants acknowledged and appreciated services which had been tailored to their needs, and which also made them feel that their presence in the rural was acknowledged, and to some extent accepted – at the very least – by local

service providers. Indeed, some EU8 nationals expressed that they felt 'looked after' and 'valued' (Cyril, Polish male, aged 28) and this contributed to perceptions (reported earlier) of the rural as a convivial and welcoming place.

Territorial embedding in *third places* was also developed in relation to material aspects of the rural. Consequently, EU8 migrants noted how they were involved in a number of 'beautification' activities. Not only did they partake in formal communal activities based around creating a more attractive rural community (for themselves and others including visitors and non-migrants (such as taking pride in the cleanliness of the villages) – but in a number of instances they also – without prompting – developed their own individualized (and informal) activities based around looking after places of worship (for example), or burial grounds. Hence such 'beautification' of rural communities can be linked to notions of the importance of the rural idyll and Halfacree's (2010, p.104) observation, that migrants' activism 'can come from a sense that the imagined and desired rural remains to be realized'.

The importance of material aspects of the rural was also evident in migrants' reflections on how they felt shaped by the *third place*. With reference to *soundscapes* (Brunce, 1994; Jepson, 2015), a majority of interviewees noted the importance of quietness, peacefulness and tranquillity on their mental (and at times physical) well-being:

When I go to the rural and spend time with nature, everything stops. All my worries go away. I feel free, feel happy and fulfilled. It's a break from the city, from work, but it almost has a different dimension. It's like a catalyst. Every time I go the countryside it changes me. I am calmer, less stressed and I feel like my batteries are re-charged again.

(Magda, Polish female, aged 41)



Figure 6.9. *Therapeutic rural space: Magda's frequent trips to Cumbria*

(Magda, Polish female, aged 41)

Hence, the natural environment of the rural often had therapeutic value and provided migrants with something that other (non-rural) places could not offer – it positively shaped their mental and physical health (Figure 6.9).

In summary, the *third place of the community* was particularly important to EU8 migrants in terms of how they felt they shaped the English countryside and its communities – in respect of their ‘beautification activities’ and in terms of their practices of conviviality. However, their ability to use and shape *third places* was conditioned by their level and type of embedding in the rural and led to some developing and utilising their own *alternative (fourth) places*. Such *fourth places of rurality* were different from third spaces described previously, and were often in the form of football clubs, Saturday schools taught in native languages (Figure 6.10), religious groups (i.e. Polish Church) or events (see Temple, 2011). Such places were not exclusive to migrants; however, local residents rarely took part or visited such places. Such organisations were initially set up to foster a ‘*Polish*’ or *Eastern European way of life* (Temple, 2011) and to demonstrate or showcase the skills of Eastern European migrants.



Figure 6.10. *Polish Saturday school – meeting with parents and children*
(Edyta, Polish female, aged 32)

However, fourth places may also be viewed as problematic: in essence, through creating *alternative places* in an attempt to avoid 'othering' (for example), EU8 migrants may inadvertently be contributing to their own marginalization, challenges of social integration, and increasing the risk of living parallel lives (see Svendsen, and Svendsen 2008, p. 608 for a further discussion).

Finally, it is important to highlight that, for Oldenburg (1989, 1999), it is not that certain types of venue constitute a third place; rather they exist when venues exhibit particular characteristics. In other words, not all community spaces are third places. According to Oldenburg, *third places* should offer the opportunity for developing feelings of inclusiveness and belonging associated with participating in a group's social activities. Therefore, some migrants were not able to partake in *third places'* activities as their level of embedding was not deep enough. This meant that for various reasons, including the lack of proficiency in the English language or previous experience, absence of certain knowledge, such as where to find information, some EU8 nationals were unable to feel as equals to those migrants and non-migrants whose embedding was deeper.

In their attempts to avoid othering, EU8 migrants also created '*alternative places'* in the rural – one could argue they could be referred to as '*fourth places'*'.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter has explored '*Lives of the rural*' – by concentrating on migrants' production and re-production of rural space. The chapter added value by identifying the types of rural spaces and places that EU8 migrants have shaped – and have been shaped by – and how this varied according to their agency, dispositions and degree of embedding in the rural.

Initially, through drawing on Liepins' framework (2000a), it was highlighted how EU8 migrants are a distinctive set of actors in the rural, who contribute to sustaining rural communities and how they shape others through their actions. Furthermore, Ryan's (2018) concept of 'differentiated embedding' highlighted how this varied according to their agency and dispositions.

The discussion subsequently highlighted the importance of home as a 'first place' for EU8 migrants, through which they could embed in the rural and contribute to the renovation and sustenance of infrastructure in the English countryside. The research also uncovered how migrants perceived they were shaped by the first place of the *home*, which apart from providing accommodation, offered a safe environment, especially for those who feared racialization or discrimination.

With reference to the *second place* of the rural – *workplace* – *interviewees* noted how they shaped the rural in the UK through production and consumption activities, but which varied according to issues such as engagement, power, self-sufficiency and perceived othering (which was perceived as being particularly important in the context of the EU referendum).

Subsequently, the discussion highlighted how EU8 migrants impacted on *third places* – *i.e. rural community*. In particular, the Catholic Church and other material aspects of the rural were particularly important in embedding processes and in respect of the ways in which migrants sought to shape rural community. But for some, this was not enough or indeed such infrastructure was often absent. Hence for some, alternative ('fourth') places were also developed as part of territorially embedding in the rural, but which may serve to inadvertently undermine or marginalise such individuals, if not combined with engagement in other third spaces.

Chapter 7. Conclusions

7.1. Introduction

Goodwin-Hawkins (2015) argues the rural has too often been discussed as 'still', 'fixed' and 'held' in contrast to urban dynamism. To follow this argument this study presents the rural as not only mobile, but also a changing space. This study explores the previously ignored lives of EU8 migrants *beyond* the workplace (Vertovec, 2006; Spencer *et al.*, 2007; Pollard *et al.*, 2008; Sumption and Somerville, 2009) and the ways in which they construct, inform and shape the nature of different rural spaces; and how such spaces impinge upon migrants' experiences, identities and spatial practices. The study is unique as it offers a new view of the UK's countryside from the missing perspective (Rye, 2014) of EU8 migrants, who either reside and / or visit rural space.

The overarching aim of this study was developed in order to explore **the importance of rural space to the EU8 migrants**. This was addressed through the following research objectives:

1. To establish how EU8 migrants define and develop particular representations of the rural.
2. To critically explore the ways in which rural space shapes/informs EU8 migrants' mobilities (or fixities).

3. To explore how EU8 migrants perceive they are shaping / re-shaping the rural.

4. To analyse the experiences, activities and decision-making processes of EU8 migrants in rural space, and how this may vary according to migrant dispositions, including their social, economic and demographic characteristics

In addition to the above, because of the unique timing of the research during the final months leading up to the UK's EU Referendum vote, colloquially referred to as 'Brexit', an additional objective was added:

5. To explore whether and to what extent EU Referendum had shaped EU8 migrants' understandings, representations, mobilities and engagement with rural communities and place.

The thesis began with an introduction (Chapter 1) setting out the research topic and drivers that shaped the study choice, the aim and objectives. This was followed with Chapter 2, which presented in a critical review of literature relating rural space and migration studies, namely: i) the conceptualization of rural space; ii) mobility and fixity in the rural (and with a particular focus on the UK); and iii) influences shaping the rural.

Chapter 3 subsequently discussed how through the adoption of a post-structural hermeneutical approach, the study involved the development of a qualitative research design, and which involved conducting 60 interviews (plus a further 20 follow-on interviews following the EU referendum) with EU8 migrants residing in the North West of England. The interviews were supplemented by participants' own photographs which were used to exemplify and draw attention to their patterns of mobility / immobility.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 presented the empirical findings from the research. Chapter 4 responded directly to the first and fourth research objectives. It analysed EU8 migrants' understandings, definitions and representations of the UK's countryside, with a specific focus on Halfacree's (2006) 'threefold architecture of rural space'. Chapter 5 responded to the second and fourth research objectives, and examined migrants' rationales for mobility and their differential access to mobility through using Kaufmann's (2002) motility concept. The final empirical chapter (Chapter 6) subsequently responded to research objectives 3 and 4 by exploring the different ways in which EU8 migrants perceived they shaped rural spaces in the UK but also how they were also being shaped in different ways through their activities and interactions in the rural.

Hence this chapter (Chapter 7) brings together such findings and draws out the wider empirical and theoretical implications of the research. It also includes further reference to the implications of the EU Referendum on EU8 migrants living and visiting rural areas of the UK. A number of

methodological reflections are also elaborated, including the limitations of the study and possibilities for future research.

7.2. Empirical and theoretical reflections

This section presents and synthesizes the empirical and theoretical findings of the study, including the wider implications for the disciplines of rural studies, mobilities and migration. The section also draws out and synthesizes the key points from follow up interviews with EU8 migrants carried out after the EU Referendum vote in June 2016.

i. The importance of a migrant centred perspective on understanding rural space

The research provided an up to date (yet often ignored) migrant centred perspective on the UK's rural spaces. In particular, it illustrated EU8 migrants' experiences 'beyond work' and the influences shaping their understandings, representations and definitions of rural space. The findings highlighted how EU8 migrants consider the rural in the UK as an important space, and which moves beyond a focus on its possibilities for employment and residence. This differs from existing studies (for example, see Rye, 2014), which suggest that the rural is perceived instrumentally - as a place of production – by most EU8 migrants.

In addition, the research also outlined the ways in which varying material dimensions of the rural (the '*first rural*') shaped participants' imaginaries (the '*second rural*') and their experiences, practices and performances (Bell, 2007). Material elements of the rural are of considerable importance in shaping migrants imaginaries and practices - and incorporated both the natural and built environment, including features such as the greenery, stone walls and rural cottages. Together they served to inform migrants' perceptions of the UK's countryside as a 'rural idyll' - a peaceful and tranquil place. This view contrasts with the previously published work, in which features of the rural environment have been portrayed less positively and linked to de-socialised and isolated rural idylls (again see Rye, 2014). Moreover, whilst Woods (2011, p.22) has argued that the rural idyll is often related to notions of national identity, this was not necessarily the case for EU8 migrants in the UK countryside. Indeed, the UK countryside for many EU8 migrants was described as '*home away from home*', and thus rural space was being used in a different way - in essence as contributing to their 'newly acquired heritage'.

EU8 migrants developed their representations of rural space in the UK through their 'esthetic experiences' (see Chapter 4). These mainly consisted of engagement with nature and passive absorption experiences, such as cycling, walking and picnicking in the UK's countryside. Their rural encounters were described as *extra-ordinary* and *rewarding*. EU8 migrants' experiences therefore challenged the concept of the rural as mundane, dull and boring (Berg and Forsberg, 2003).

However, EU8 participants' representations were also strongly associated with their encounters with the local residents. Such encounters were described as positive and pleasant, and making them 'feel welcomed'. They also shaped migrants' understandings of the rural as convivial, especially in comparison to urban areas in the UK and / or their countries of origin. Rural areas of the UK were thought of as safe and pleasant and as a '*family-friendly*' place. Furthermore, when defining the rural, EU8 migrants did not reflect on their encounters with those residing in rural areas as being '*othered*', and which has been reported more widely by Garland and Charkraborti (2006) in respect of ethnic minority settlement in the English countryside.

In addition, it also emerged that EU8 nationals' views of the rural as idyllic were largely relational as the UK's rural spaces were often compared with those in their countries of origin. Although visually the rural resembled their utopian visions and broadly perceived as the antithesis of the city, its material aspects, such as hedges, walls and fences also shaped EU8 migrants' understandings of the UK's countryside as highly regulated and managed. At times they found it challenging to move through the countryside and were unsure of their rights when attempting to walk or cycle across rural fields and/or forests. Such regulation came as a surprise to EU8 migrants, as in Central and Eastern Europe rural space was perceived as being largely accessible to all, and with 'common land' being widespread (Bravo and De Moor, 2008). In this context EU8 migrants'

perceptions connect with broader arguments over rights and access to the rural, and which were investigated in more depth in Chapters 5 and 6.

As already noted, EU8 migrants perceived rural spaces in the UK to be idyllic, not only because of their observed aesthetical and therapeutic features, but also because of their relational perspectives (Heley and Jones, 2012). This is important. Whilst there has been some consideration placed on the importance of 'relational rurals' (see Heley and Jones, 2012), and which includes a focus on trans-rural and embodied rural perspectives (Askins, 2009), much less focus has been given to migrants' direct comparisons of different rural spaces linked to their own experiences and representations. This research addressed this gap. For example, it is important to observe that even though younger research participants noted the recent economic and social development of both urban and rural areas across Central and Eastern Europe in recent years, most still believed that moving out of the rural in Central and Eastern Europe meant 'moving up' (in the social ladder) (for example, see Garapich, 2016). However, this was clearly not the case in respect of the UK's rural spaces. Here, the rural had symbolic and cultural capital for EU8 migrants and served to attract many younger interviewees. Furthermore, older interviewees also reflected on historic issues of poverty and deprivation in the rural 'back home', whilst living in the rural in the UK was perceived not only as 'unproblematic' but also 'desirable'. Such differences in the 'cultural cache' of the rural were related to a number of different aspects, including the visual and material features of rural space,

the availability and quality of services in the rural, and access to mobility. As such, the UK's rural spaces were frequently understood as spaces, which offered a 'stress free' and desirable lifestyle with a number of opportunities. However, such a positive, idyllic and problem-free portrayal of the rural can also serve to 'screen out' problems in rural areas, including hiding poverty and deprivation. This was also a key finding which emerged from Chapter 4.

In overall terms, the research therefore emphasizes the importance of not ignoring, but giving voice to new minority groups in rural spaces in the UK – such as EU8 migrants - and who may present a more nuanced narrative of the UK's contemporary ruralities. In turn, this can also aid the development of alternative theoretical frameworks for researching and understanding rural in-migration.

ii. The importance of a migrant centered perspective on shaping rural spaces

Whilst the research (mainly outlined in Chapter 4) focused on EU8 nationals' perceptions of rural space, the thesis also explored how migrants felt they shaped / re-shaped rural space and its communities through their actions and activities. Such a perspective is also largely absent from the existing literature.

First, through the modification of Liepins' (2000a) model of rural space and communities (see Section 6.1) the findings drew attention to EU8 migrants as a distinctive set of actors in the rural. The (theoretical) value in modifying the model - by exploring the importance of the concept of 'differentiated embedding' (Ryan, 2018) along with Bourdieu's (1986) 'capitals' approach - was that it helped to uncover the differentiated ability of EU8 migrants to engage with and shape / be shaped by the rural. In this respect, it was apparent that EU8 nationals could influence some features of rural to a significant degree because they were more deeply embedded.

Through moving to and staying in the rural, EU8 migrants strongly felt that they contributed to sustaining rural communities in the UK. In addition, they recognised their influence on the *people* of the rural through their active engagement with rural communities, including the development of conviviality and informal reciprocity. In this context, Ryan's (2018) concept of differentiated embedding was important in exploring the differential ability of migrants in shaping aspects of rural community. It was found that such abilities varied according to their agency, capitals and dispositions. In particular, those EU8 nationals, who had better English skills, knowledge and experiences of living in the rural perceived their influence to be greater. Conviviality and informal reciprocity, including helping others (migrants and non-migrants) in need (as 'silent actors') were particularly important during the period leading up to (and following) the EU referendum. Indeed, on one hand interviewees felt they needed to show their 'worth' and 'usefulness' as migrants in the rural; but on the other they

also noted how they sought to avoid drawing attention to themselves in order to minimise the possibility of being 'othered'.

Beyond EU8 migrants' perceptions on how they shaped rural communities they also felt they had an influence on other aspects of rural life. This was illustrated through the use of Oldenburg's (1982; 1999) concept of place. In this respect, the research offered a different, yet valuable, perspective on the importance of '*first, second and third places*' of the rural to EU8 migrants along with their perspectives on how they felt they shaped different aspects of such places and *vice versa*.

With reference to the *first place of the home*, this was seen as a key micro-space of the rural, and which was being shaped - and equally shaping - EU8 migrants. Participants felt they contributed to the renovation and infrastructure of rural property – and which often matched their visions of the idyllic countryside in the UK (see Chapter 4) (Cloke, 2003; Halfacree, 2010). The research also uncovered how migrants perceived they were shaped by *first places*, which apart from providing accommodation, offered a safe environment, especially for those who were not able to develop relational ties with local residents and / or feared othering or racialization. Hence *home* was of a particular importance to EU8 migrants whose embedding was less developed because of poor proficiency in English, or who had little experience and knowledge in relation to their local area and / or services. It often served as a place of sanctuary, offering stability and familiarity (for example, see White, 2017),

especially in times of personal and political distress (in this context, the 2016 EU Referendum).

In terms of the importance of *second places* of the rural to EU8 migrants – *work* (Oldenburg, 1989; 1999) – interviewees highlighted how they felt they shaped rural economies through both production and consumption activities and their participation in such practices. Production practices were often more initially complex for EU8 migrants than for UK born residents, as they first needed to acquire certain skills and knowledge, including the ability to communicate in English, to gather necessary research on the local area (and its market and products), and to establish connections with potential stakeholders and shareholders. Therefore, the possession of social, cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986), alongside the extent to which they were relationally embedded (Ryan, 2018) was of great importance, as such characteristics helped to foster *second place* production. In addition, it is also important to note that interviewees practices of production, such as exceeding working norms, (including working longer hours, as well as opening their own businesses in the rural) helped to shape the temporality of rural production (for example, see Thompson, 1967 for context).

Finally, in terms of *third places* of the rural - *public community places* (Oldenburg, 1982; 1999) – EU8 migrants highlighted how they were active engagement in a whole suite of community-based activities, such as taking part and organising galas, festivals and parades. The degree to

which EU8 migrants shaped such community activities was again largely conditioned by the possession of different capitals and their level of embedding (Oldenburg, 1989; 1999; Ryan, 2018). In relation to shaping, and indeed, being shaped by the third places of the rural, the Catholic Church played an important role (especially for EU8 migrants from Poland) as it served as a site at which they felt belonging to a group and became relationally and territorially embedded. This was evident through meeting people via charity work, participating in different church events and activities often related to looking after places of worship or burial grounds. However, it is also crucial to note that according to Oldenburg (1989, 1999), *third places* should offer: inclusiveness, safety and belonging, and providing free participation in a group's social activities. In this respect, not all EU8 migrants had access and / or the ability to partake in *third place* activities as their level of embedding was not deep enough due to a lack of English language skills and absence of cultural capital, such as knowledge of where to find information.

Consequently, some EU8 migrants identified how they were unable to partake in rural community life and feel as equals (to those migrants and non-migrants whose embedding was deeper). In response, they created '*alternative places*' (or *fourth places*) in the rural – these included Polish (or other language) schools, clubs and associations. Such *alternative places* in the rural were created in order to allow migrants to feel included, to express their identity and to avoid possibilities of othering. However, in this respect, it is also crucial to note that such actions potentially have

negative consequences for integration and embedding and may serve to increase the potential for racialization.

In sum, by focusing on how EU8 migrants shaped / were shaped by the UK's rural spaces, the research extended both Liepens' (1999) model and Oldenburg's concept (1999) of 'Three Places' through offering a migrant-centred rural dimension and by proposing a new type of 'place' (alternative places). The research also identified the importance of 'differentiated embedding' (Ryan, 2018) in respect of their abilities to shape different types of rural spaces and places.

iii. Discrimination as a mobility driver for EU8 migrants

Chapter 5 of the thesis also set out a number of new empirical insights of relevance to research on mobilities through exploring the mobility practices of EU8 migrants in the context of the UK's rural spaces. Several issues are of relevance in this respect. First, the study highlighted how 'the process of migration (and mobility) does not stop after physical movement to another country' (Meeus 2012, p. 1779). Hence the research broadened our understandings of migrants' mobility practices after their initial relocation from their countries of origin. Indeed, it set out and discussed the complex rationales behind practices of traveling to, out and within the rural. The main reasons for interviewees' rural mobilities included employment, education and tourism. Beyond everyday motivations for

being mobile (such as work and education-related mobilities; see Viry and Kaufmann, 2015), tourism - along with its linked rural consumption practices - was also a primary stimulus for migrants' rural mobilities in the UK. Interestingly, the existing literature has almost entirely separated these two types of movements – i.e. mobility for tourism and mobility associated with migration (see Bell and Ward, 2000; Hall and Williams, 2000; Matias *et al.* 2011). Hence the study illustrated that EU8 nationals who actively take part in different types of tourism-related mobility, should no longer be seen as migrants, but as domestic tourists, and who simply have a different cultural background.

However, beyond highlighting the fact that the interviewees were often highly mobile in the rural for different reasons, a critical point which emerged from the research was that migrant mobility was often driven and shaped by either experienced or perceived discrimination, as well as perceived processes of othering and / or racialization. Examples of racism and discrimination towards EU8 nationals in the UK have been widely reported in the literature (for example see, Kofman *et al.*, 2009). But at present there is a clear gap documenting discrimination as a mobility driver for migrants. The research therefore filled this gap by highlighting the importance of perceived and actual discrimination and processes of 'othering' as a motivation to EU8 migrants' travelling in, out and through the rural areas of the UK.

Two key themes emerged in relation to discrimination-related mobilities;

the first theme highlighted how a number of EU8 migrants had sought to avoid moving or even visiting particular rural locations because they feared being othered or racialization (or indeed suggested they had already been subject to such practices). The second theme focused on how rural space could serve as a 'safety net' from such experiences. Therefore, changing routes, modes of transport or destinations were developed as coping strategies and tactics to avoid or minimise the possibility of discrimination. In this respect, it is also important to add that EU8 migrants stressed that the 2016 EU Referendum intensified such fears and experiences, and which meant that discrimination and othering motivated mobilities became more evident.

However, it is important to highlight that on the whole, and across the majority of the research participants, rural space was more likely to be utilized as a 'place to run away to' rather than escape 'from' as it served as a safety net from perceived or actual experiences of discrimination in more urban areas of the UK. The research has shown how discrimination elsewhere – particularly in urban contexts – was generally perceived as being more problematic and how the rural was therefore viewed as a place of 'sanctuary'. In overall terms, EU8 nationals therefore perceived rural areas in the UK as safer, not only in terms of perceptions of lower crime but also, in relation to issues of discrimination, racism and othering. Hence such research findings confirm those presented earlier in the thesis (Chapter 4), which highlighted how EU8 migrants viewed the rural as 'idyllic' and problem free.

iv. The new application and development of a motility framework to understand (differential) migrant mobility

This research has also provided a new perspective on the mobility potential of migrants (and in this case, EU8 migrants' (rural) mobility potential). This was undertaken by utilizing and extending the concept of motility (Kaufmann, 2004; Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004) and through the use of Bourdieu's 'capitals' (1979; 1986; 1991). The concept of motility (involving access, skills and appropriation) helped us to understand how EU8 migrants' mobility capital was developed, influenced and intertwined with social, cultural and monetary capital (Bourdieu, 1979).

For EU8 nationals, mobility access was inherently linked with the availability of mobility infrastructures and their economic resources (Bourdieu, 1979). Indeed, it was clear that low earnings and limited financial resources influenced migrants' degree of mobility, their access to different services and forms of transportation. For example, for the majority, a lack of private car was conditioned by affordability rather than a matter of personal choice. The research has also found that other forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) also shaped migrants' potential to be mobile. In particular, EU8 migrants' social and cultural capitals were influential on their spatial mobility horizons. For example, those with fewer social networks were, on average less able to access different forms of mobility and partake in car sharing practices. It is also important to note that EU8 migrants' views on access were largely positive but at the same time they

were highly relational. Access to mobility infrastructure in rural areas in the UK was again compared to the situation in their countries of origin and was perceived as being rather unproblematic. According to the interviewees, the UK's rural areas were fluid (rather than fixed) (for example, see Adey, 2010), and easily accessible and open. Such perspectives were predominantly evident amongst those, who had spent a substantial amount of time in the rural of their country of origin prior to moving to the UK, and who had experienced a lack of access, poor state of roads and / or absence of signage. However, such relational and positive views could again be seen as masking issues in some rural areas of the UK relating to mobility deprivation and access to transportation.

With regards to *skills* as another form of mobility capital (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004) the findings highlighted how *knowledge*, *time management* and *spatial management* skills were of relevance to EU8 migrants. In this respect, the research illustrated the importance of migrants' cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) in relation to the development and utilization of such *skills*. For interviewees, knowledge was linked to (and conditioned by) English language proficiency. Communication is regarded as the most vital function of language as it strongly affects an individual's mobility options (Houtkamp, 2014). In essence, EU8 migrants' linguistic skills were therefore important in acquiring necessary information in relation to both, public and private infrastructures and available transport services.

Skills for enabling EU8 migrant mobility also included the utilization of

different technological and navigational systems (primarily Google Maps). Although the employment of ICT and digital navigation systems to support mobility is not migrant specific (Hui, 2016), there was a clear variance apparent in the frequency of use between migrants and non-migrants. EU8 nationals who participated in the research stressed the importance of navigational equipment to frequently assist them with short trips, such as visiting a local shop or for daily work commutes. This was mostly evident amongst those interviewees who had not been in the UK for a long period of time and who possessed limited linguistic skills. Such individuals often lacked confidence or even feared traveling or walking by themselves without the support of navigational tools. As such, many recently arrived EU8 migrants preferred to trust technology to support their self-sufficiency (in mobility terms) and to mask their 'otherness' as migrants and / or rural outsiders.

The research has also brought new insights in relation to the final facet of motility - *appropriation* (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004) and '*the evaluation of the available options vis-a-vis one's projects*' (Flamm and Kaufmann, 2006: p.169). Interestingly, beside the usual markers of appropriation, such as individual preferences, safety and independence (Flamm and Kaufmann, 2006), interviewees indicated the importance of three new factors which shaped their potential to be mobile – *i) functionality; ii) cost* and *iii) the physical environment*. It was found that functionality was primarily related to the ease of use of mobility infrastructures and links, and most importantly, guaranteed and timely arrival to a chosen destination to either

fulfil migrants' responsibilities (including employment and / or familial obligations) or to respond to their desires (for example, tourism and leisure related mobilities).

For some EU8 migrants, appropriation of choosing a particular mode of transport had an additional function in terms of hiding their identity in order to avoid discrimination or 'othering' in the rural. This finding contrasts with Flamm and Kaufmann's (2006, p.179) suggestion that individualised functional appropriation is often used by individuals who wish to represent a specific image of ones self to others and as a result receive additional attention. One could argue that such examples were not rural specific, however, as already noted, some interviewees felt more vulnerable to discrimination and 'othering' in the countryside because of the conflation of the rural idyll in the UK's countryside with 'Britishness' (see Garland and Chakraborti, 2006).

Beyond the significance of functionality to migrants' appropriation, the research has also identified how cost also played an important role in shaping EU8 migrants' mobilities. Cost dictated the choice of mode of transport and decisions linked to destination choice, distance and length of stay. It was clear that cost, as one of the facets of mobility appropriation, was highly related to interviewees' economic capital and was important to many EU8 migrants given that many had economic motivations for coming to the UK (see Porter, 2013).

The physical environment (mostly concerning weather) was also indicated as an important part of EU8 migrants' appropriation. It was reported that poor weather conditions were often referred to as a mobility challenge in general (Kaufmann, 2002). However, EU8 migrants' past experiences, especially with regards to the importance of relational mobility meant that might remain highly mobile in the UK throughout the year.

Hence, the research illustrated how motility encompasses inter-reliant entities linked to access to various forms and degrees of mobility, competence and the appropriateness of specific mobility choices (including non-action). All elements of motility are essentially related to political, social, economic and cultural processes within which mobility takes place (Kaufmann, 2002; Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004; Dubois *et al.*, 2015).

7.3. Recommendations emerging from the thesis – policy

The thesis findings are useful in informing different types of audiences, including those within and beyond academia. As Millard (2014) points out, it is important for the research to engage with various levels of policymaking. Hence this part of the chapter provides recommendations for national, regional, sub regional and municipal policy-makers. In this respect, the research could be understood as '*an active agent in defining and shaping the policy research inquiry*' (Jensen and Glasmeier, 2010, p. 82).

i. National

The research follows the calls of Singleton (2009, p. 39) that '*whenever possible, the perspectives and insights of migrants should be included in framing the development of policy recommendations*'. Hence at a national level, the findings of EU8 migrants as an important group of actors in the UK's rural spaces, and who increasingly shape the sustainability of rural communities, can be used as an additional tool to understand migration trends and rural population complexity. Findings presented in this research, in particular in Chapter 4, show EU8 migrants' relational understandings and perceptions of the rural in the UK in a highly positive light, as being 'idyllic', desirable and problem free. Such views could contribute to hiding and obfuscating issues of rural deprivation and poverty (see Cloke and Milbourne, 1992; Shucksmith, 2000; Milbourne, 2004), and in essence, could lead to such matters remaining overlooked and unaddressed. Furthermore, the research has also indicated some key migrant-specific challenges of mobility and also in respect of perceptions and experiences of discrimination in the rural. Therefore, this research not only raises awareness of such issues, but can also be used to inform the ongoing development of a number of rural anti-poverty and anti-discrimination campaigns and the work of respective government and non-governmental organisations. These include the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) – in particular, the Rural Policy Team and the Rural Communities Policy Unit (RCPU) with regards to developing anti-poverty strategies and policies in the rural; the Rural

Services Network; Centre for Rural Economy and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation working around issues of discrimination, rural deprivation and poverty. There are also a number of other devolved government administrations such as the Scottish Rural Parliament and Scottish Rural Action; the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG); and the Northern Ireland Assembly – in particular, their Committee for Agriculture and Rural Affairs that could find the research useful in developing their plans and policies.

A recent Green Policy Paper focused on planning argued that:

‘Communities should be given the greatest possible opportunity to have their say and the greatest possible degree of local control [...] bringing communities together, as they formulate a shared vision of development.’ (Mabbutt, 2018)

However, not all members of communities have an ‘equal say’. This was evident in terms of the spatial context of the research in the UK (North West England) and in terms of timing (prior, during and after the EU Referendum, 2016), which served to heighten perceptions and experiences of othering and discrimination according to some interviewees. Therefore, this research offers the potential to inform the work of the Home Office and the Migration Advisory Committee in relation to issues of civic integration and social cohesion, and issues around citizenship and rights.

ii. Regional

Historically, regional policy has involved the regeneration of economically disadvantaged and deprived areas by encouraging new businesses and industries to invest and locate there (Davies, 2008). Statistical findings reveal that the initial settlement pattern of EU8 migrants in the UK is different from that of previous waves of migration, as they are more widely spread across the whole country (and being reported in each region) (Bauere *et al.*, 2007; Pollard *et al.*, 2008; McCollum and Findlay, 2011; Jivraj *et al.*, 2012). The majority of migration has also been predominantly economically driven (McCollum and Findlay, 2011; Jivraj *et al.*, 2012; Scott and Brindley, 2012). Thus the research has highlighted how EU8 migrants, beside bringing diversity to rural areas, also shape the temporalities of employment, providing the resource for businesses to operate extended hours in many instances (for example, in the service and hospitality sectors). Such findings may therefore help to inform regional and sub-regional approaches (see next section) to economic development and regeneration – but which may crucially be shaped by migration and settlement trends in the future. Therefore, at a regional level, the findings could be helpful to the regional strategic migration partnerships (such as the North West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership), and organisations such as the Cumbria Equality and Diversity Partnership and the 38 regional councils of Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) in shaping their activities and their work with other key economic agencies.

iii. Sub-regional

The research presented in the thesis may also contribute to sub-regional policy development. In particular, it illustrates the challenges of mobility in different rural areas, and for particular groups of individuals who are 'silent actors' in the rural, such as EU8 migrants. It has been illustrated how EU8 migrants often search for information online, on social media and use mobile phones and navigation applications to help them move. Therefore, such information is useful for those involved with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in England, including those focused on economic development and transport planning in the context of rural areas. Indeed, the research has shown that there is a clear need for a provision of information in migrants' native languages and an increased presence of transport authorities information online to help facilitate mobility.

iv. Local / municipal

The research highlighted EU8 migrants' various degrees of involvement in rural community including the provision of informal support and help to others in need (as 'silent actors'), and without publicly sharing their actions, or belonging to a specific group or formally recognised organisation. Therefore, the importance of EU8 migrants in providing local reciprocity and support to others in an austerity climate should not be under-estimated. Such information may help to shape the work of local

authorities and voluntary sector organisations in harnessing migrants' actions in more effective ways. In particular, there are a number of organisations whose actions could be informed through this research, for example, The Trussell Trust coordinating food-banks; the 'Do-it' Trust, supporting small charities and voluntary groups; and other organisations such as the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), Volunteering England, Volunteer Scotland, and Volunteering Wales. In addition to the above, the findings could also enhance the role of EU8 migrants in local decision-making bodies such as Neighbourhood Planning Partnerships and Neighbourhood Development Forums in England.

Moreover, as noted by Singleton (2009), a large number of reports on migration in Europe, particularly in the UK's rural areas, are conducted and presented in a reactive way – responding to and covering *negative 'scare' stories* often linking the presence of migrants with issues relating to economic problems, health and security threats. These findings – of migrants as silent actors in the rural – could be used to inform the work of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), who promote an ethical approach to reporting social concerns, including migration. This could further influence plans for integration and social cohesion, and once again have a potential role in neighbourhood planning arrangements in due course.

In summary, it is clear that organizational leaders, as well as national (and international) policymakers need to increasingly develop an integrated and

interdisciplinary perspective in respect of their work. Hence the research set out in this thesis provides an example of how issues concerned with migration, rurality and mobility can be considered 'in the round'.

7.4. Research reflections and directions for future study

Reflexivity in relation to the research process is a necessary part of writing. *'This reflexivity looks both "inward" to the identity of the researcher, and "outwards" to her relation to her research and what is described as "her wider world"'* (Rose, 1997, p.309). Therefore, with the aim of the study being focused on an exploration of the importance of rural areas to EU8 migrants, the research methodology that was developed had to reflect such a focus. Hence this part of the chapter reflects on methodology and data collection processes, as well as limitations encountered during the research process.

i. Multi-voice approach

The research was undertaken from the perspective of EU8 migrants'. As a result, relationality played an important part as the interviewees often compared definitions, representations, experiences and practices with their home countries. For example, the views of the UK's rural areas or access to mobility were largely positive, especially when contrasted with

memories and experiences from their countries of origin. It is acknowledged that EU8 migrants' presence in the rural areas is still relatively minor in comparison to the host population, and therefore it would also be interesting and beneficial in the future to use a multi-voice approach, which also takes into account the perspectives of non-migrant populations on some of the key issues raised in the thesis.

Such representations and understandings of the rural by EU8 migrants can then be compared and contrasted with UK born residents to establish similarities or differences. This would provide an even greater level of depth to the research and subsequently help to inform policies and practices of integration, and *help to establish a common language on the rural*. A multi-voice approach may also include the perspectives of policy makers and practitioners – national to local – and who are involved in activities such as economic development, transport, settlement and integration.

ii. Language

As already stated in the Methodology section (Chapter 3), the fieldwork involved the collection of 60 interviews (plus an additional 20 follow up interviews) with EU8 migrants; of which the majority were Polish. In total, 80% of the participants (48 individuals) were Polish, followed by 4 Slovaks, 1 Czech, 3 Hungarians, 2 Latvians and 2 Lithuanians. Given

the researcher's proficiency in the West Slavic Language group (i.e. Polish, Slovakian and Czech; see Sussex and Cubberley, 2006) most interviews (88%) were carried out in the migrants' native language, and additionally, at times, some questions and answers were repeated in English when linguistic expressions differed or to limit misunderstanding. When data collection in participants' native language was not possible, interviews were carried out in English (12%). Pavlenko (2006, p.27) has pointed out that for those who are bilingual '*languages may create different and sometimes incommensurable worlds for their speakers who feel that their selves change with the shift in language*'. Therefore, those interviews that were carried out in migrants' second language might not have dwelled as deeply as those that were.

Hence to enhance the quality of interview material, and in order to minimise misunderstanding or misrepresentation, future research could further employ native speakers to allow participants to express their voices, views and opinions in a deeper way. Nevertheless, this would need to be done carefully as there is a danger that using multiple researchers or translators as researchers could compromise consistency of approach to the research.

iii. Geographical location

With respect to methodological reflections, it is important to discuss the geographical location of the case study. The research strategy

incorporated the use of a case study approach as it offered an inclusive investigation of real-life experiences and events (Yin, 2009). Based on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA, 2011) Rural-Urban classification, the North West of England was chosen as the case study area because unlike other regions of the UK, there was an evident 'spread' of EU8 nationals across a broad spectrum of different sized rural settlements with various population densities. However, it is important to highlight that one case study is not representative of all regions in the UK. Therefore, it would be beneficial and interesting to carry out the research in other geographical regions and locations across the UK to have a wider geographical perspective and to examine whether responses of EU8 migrants would differ. For instance, if the research was carried out in rural areas with 'tight' labour markets and / or facing considerable infrastructure pressures (e.g. housing, services etc.) there could be heightened tensions and an increase in the number of incidences of migrants reporting challenges of integration and / or social cohesion. However, on the other hand, if the study was conducted in more remote locales, reports of sustainability (appreciation of migrants moving, having families and therefore influencing the number of natural increase) and informal (and formal) reciprocity may be more evident. In addition, it would be interesting to repeat the study examining the importance of urban spaces to the EU8 migrants – and then subsequently comparing urban and rural-based responses.

Furthermore, it is important to add that that the majority of research participants were Polish and the relatively small number of other nationalities included could be criticized for potentially blurring distinctions between migrants shaped by their countries of origin. Therefore, if timing was more generous and the study was replicated, it may be appropriate to carry out more interviews with other individuals of EU8 countries (beyond Polish nationals). This would potentially help to illustrate further variation within the EU8 research group. For example, the importance of the Catholic Church may be diminished for other EU8 migrants and re-shape findings on of self-help and conviviality. It is possible that findings on shaping third-places and the production of alternative places in the rural (see Chapter 6) may also vary according to different EU8 groups.

In addition, it would be interesting to replicate the research with other migrant groups (i.e. non-EU8) migrants to examine the importance of rural space, including their understandings, representations, perceptions and mobility practices and the extent to which they feel they are shaping the UK countryside. In particular, it could be beneficial to conduct the research with migrants from Bulgaria and Romania, to compare the processes of differentiated embedding (Ryan, 2018) and to establish whether they feel they are more discriminated against through a 'politics of belonging' (Antonsich, 2009) given that they are a newer migrant group to the UK. Equally, the research could also be conducted with migrants from long-standing EU member states, and who joined the EU before 2004.

iv. Timing

The timing of the study must also be reflected upon as it clearly influenced the research process. The fact that the research was being conducted during the period of the EU Referendum in the UK provided the opportunity to undertake follow up interviews with around 1/3 of the sample. What this highlighted is that perceptions of discrimination, racism and othering were heightened and which it was claimed impinged on migrants' mobility and embedding practices. Nevertheless, the overall response was that '*not enough time has passed yet*' and therefore it was too early to make an informed judgment on the influence of the referendum on migrants' understandings, mobilities or engagement with rural spaces and places. Nevertheless, given the on-going discussion of the UK's future relationship with the EU, it could be beneficial to return to the field and explore once again whether the perspectives of EU8 migrants have changed in any way.

v. Other areas for further research

Although it was not the primary focus of this thesis, the findings revealed the prominence of faith, and the Catholic Church to EU8 (and especially Polish) nationals in the UK. The Catholic Church was particularly important in exploring issues of belonging, identity, and community involvement, especially in the context of rural areas. Indeed, it was clear that religion had an impact on many migrants' lives, and their decisions - such as

choosing Catholic schools for their children or changing work patterns so that they could attend mass. More research is therefore needed in this area and how the presence or absence of a Catholic church in a rural community shapes processes of integration, settlement and belonging.

The study (mainly outlined in Chapter 5) of migrants' mobilities, motilities and different forms of capitals could also be extended. It is no exaggeration to suggest that an entire thesis could have been dedicated to this subject matter. One of the directions for future study could be conducting separate research on EU8 migrants as domestic tourists and their travel practices and experiences in the UK. Another strand of research could involve a further exploration of patterns, experiences and complexities of EU8 migrants' mobilities relating to employment, and to compare whether they differ from other migrant groups or non-migrants.

The research in Chapter 6 could also be developed further on EU8 migrants' differentiated embedding practices and extending investigations on migrants' development and use of 'alternative spaces' in the rural. Another research project could further uncover the breadth of issues that relate to migrants as silent actors in the rural, their informal reciprocity practices and levels of community involvement.

7.5. Concluding remarks

The overall aim for this thesis - to examine the importance of rural space to EU8 migrants in the UK – was met through developing a migrant centered perspective (which is currently absent) and involving 60 in-depth interviews (and 20 follow up interviews). The first key finding related to the UK countryside as being perceived by EU8 migrants as a largely idyllic, utopian, therapeutic and ‘problem free’ space, and which was based on a highly relational perspective. Nevertheless, this may serve to exacerbate the ‘screening out’ of problems in the UK’s rural areas, such as issues of poverty and deprivation.

A second key finding was how rural areas in the UK served as a platform for shaping migrants’ mobility practices. In this context, the research offered new, rich and diverse understandings of migrants’ mobility practices and motivations, whilst uncovering issues of perceived and experienced discrimination and othering. In addition, it also offered a new application of the motility concept (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004) including the importance of access, skills and appropriation – and which were shaped in interesting and distinctive ways for EU8 migrants.

Third, the research generated new insights into how EU8 migrants perceived they shaped, and were shaped by different aspects of rural space. Crucially, the research identified how EU8 migrants have become increasingly involved in rural community life and have provided formal and

informal reciprocity and support to others, often as 'silent actors'. The findings also offered a new application and development of Oldenburg's (1982; 1999; 2002) theory of place through a focus on 'home', 'work' and 'community', as well as uncovering EU8 migrants' development of 'alternative places' as a result of their 'differentiated embedding' (Ryan, 2018).

In essence, the research has provided a voice to a group of individuals who have been rather neglected to date in debates over the rural in different parts of the UK. The study has also developed and extended a number of relevant literatures, namely those focused on rurality, mobility and migration, as well as a number of theoretical and conceptual frameworks (for example, Halfacree's (2006) trilectic of rural space; Kaufmann's (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004) concept of motility; Bourdieu's (1999) theory of capitals; Liepins' (2000) 'Dynamic Communities' model; Oldenburg's (1982; 1999) 'Three Places' framework and Ryan's (2018) 'differentiated embedding' approach). Additional research would therefore be valuable to deepen our understanding of the breadth of issues this study has uncovered and to further refine and develop empirical, conceptual and theoretical approaches to the (appropriate) 'placing' of international migrants in the context of a differentiated rural space.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Example of an interview

Interviewee (B) lives in the rural, works in the rural and spends her free time in the rural.

- Paulina (P:) *So the first part of the questions was set to establish how EU8 migrants define the rural and what it means to them (O1)*

- P: *First of all, do you reside in urban, or rural area?*

B: Definitely rural.

- *And according to you, what do you think the rural is? Where do you think the boundaries are?*

- P: *What does it consist of?*

- P: *What characteristics separate rural from non-rural?*

- P: *What terminology best describes rural?*

Rural areas in Poland and in England are very different. I don't have experience from living in the rural from Poland as I come from a quite large town (XXX). The main reason why I came, why I moved here, to England, Cumbria, was the beauty of the landscape – I think this was my main motivation for moving here. I find the area I live in as beautiful, picturesque, scenic. It is important to note here that Cumbria, Lake District differs from other rural areas in the United Kingdom primarily because of its charm, but also mountains. I associate rural areas with calmness, peacefulness, maybe even stillness. I associate it with some kind of order – everything has its place here; fresh air; extremely beautiful views;

herding sheep. There are also negative things that come to my mind when I think of rural spaces – for example, very expensive and inaccessible public transport.

I also have to add here that Lake District isn't your 'typical' countryside – yes, sometimes you can see the farmers driving their tractors or Land Rovers, or sheep, who walk on the streets and make people slow down or even wait for them to cross the road.

- P: *What does it mean to you?*

- P: *Why might it be important to you?*

It was, when I first moved here, and still is now very important to me. I needed that break. I needed to escape and almost run from my chaotic, busy and demanding life style. Rural England was the best place for me. It was like an oasis of peacefulness, of stillness. I could slow down and feel that I am alive again. Everything that happens in the world, I don't know – terrorist attacks, all evil that takes place somewhere (there) – it's away from you. The rural area I live in makes me distance myself from the world, from the problems, from the world's issues. You leave your house and you see the fields, you see the sheep, you see almost a biblical landscape – all this calms me down, it makes me feel safe and at peace with myself and the world. When I think of rural in the UK I remember that song: 'And did those feet in ancient time; Walk upon England's mountain green? And was the holy Lamb of God On England's pleasant pastures seen? And did the countenance divine shine forth upon our clouded hills?'

and it goes on and on – you know which one I mean? (P: *yes, of course*)
Anyway, I think it is just perfectly describing what the rural is. For me the rural works like some kind of catharsis – relief, which builds the inner peace within me. The rural space, the nature of it, works like an everyday therapy for me.

Rural areas are very important. This place allows me and probably many others, who live here, to escape from the chaos. I also see rural areas as the Green Lungs of England. I think that the British society is connected with the countryside – it is important to them; this idea of not just living in the city, or being just business orientated – when people get time off, the vast majority wants to escape to the country, I did, and I still do. I think it is very important to be connected with the nature. I also think that we all have this need to visit the rural, but also to maintain and preserve it – it is a special place to us all.

It is also important to me on another dimension – rural places are part of my work, which is the biggest organisation of this type in the UK. We protect and conserve the historical and natural beauty in the UK. We, as an organisation, are the biggest land owner in England, and most of those lands are the farmlands, farm houses, rural and coastal areas. Therefore, rural areas are very important part of my job – it is my, our duty to preserve these places, lands and protect them. We should be responsible that the conservation goes in the right order. At the moment we work on the very big program – creating a new approach to conservation and

protection, but at the same time sustainable use of the green lands in the UK (I am talking here about England, Wales, Northern Ireland and a part of Scotland).

- P: *Have your ideas of rural changed over time? How? Why?*

- P: *What influenced your first idea/ perception of what rural was?*

When I first came here (Grasmere), it was in 2001, so when I moved here in 2004 I already knew this place, I knew how it was going to look like (because my first visit was in 2001). Before I first came in 2001, it was my first visit to England, I never wanted to visit England before, it didn't make any impression on me during my English classes in Poland or through what I've seen on TV – I was imagining it as a sad, forgotten country, at the end of the world, where it always rains – my first contact with England was London – it made a huge impression on me - a positive one! But then straight from London I came here – to Bowness and Grasmere, a massive jump from London – a very busy city. Once I arrived in rural, here, it was beautiful, gorgeous, fantastic and of course quiet - and I fell in love with this place straight away. I think I fell in love in the beautiful landscapes and calmness – it appeared to me as an 'oasis of peace'. I think this was exactly what I needed after a very busy time in my life in Poland. I needed a break from my life, from my job, which was quite demanding (law office).

I don't think I had any idea of the rural per se before, I just had an idea of the whole country, which I probably imagined as mostly rural.

- *P: The second part of questions relates to mobilities. The questions were designed to explore the ways in which rural space shapes/informs EU8 migrants' mobilities (or fixities) (O2)*

- *P: Why do you go to the rural? (what is important about the rural space?)*

I work in the rural and I live in the rural. (how about your free time? Or holidays? Do you also spend your free time in the rural? Where do you go?)

Because I grew up in the city, I miss it. I don't think I'd be able to totally isolate myself to this (rural) place. (P: *why?*) The place, this village doesn't offer enough in order to meet my needs in terms of culture, concerts, or theatre, or exhibitions, or museums. Living here changed my perception and understanding of the word 'distance'. Because of my work I often travel to Manchester, but whenever I go, while I'm there I always try and do something for myself. But to return to the distance term, that I have mentioned earlier – living here, residing within a rural area means everywhere you want to go is far away; everything is far. If you want any true, real cultural events – you need to travel to Manchester. (P: *how long does it take you to get to Manchester?*) It takes me about an hour and a half or two hours – depending on the traffic or train I take. Therefore, trips (as leisure trips) during the week are usually impractical. Therefore weekends are at stake. In terms of longer trips I choose London – for my

city-cultural needs – I also go to Edinburgh, because it's quite close. (P: *how do you get there?*) To London I always go by train, I have never used a car; to Edinburgh – that depends on the time, circumstances, how many people is going, or is it a trip by myself or with friends – sometimes I drive, sometimes I go on the train. To Manchester I mostly go on the train – because the organisation I work for puts a lot of emphasis on the use of the public transport in order to minimize the numbers of cars and therefore CO2.

I also try to be a part of the cultural life of our rural area, so the closest place, center for cultural and artistic events is Kendal, where from time to time you can go to a concert, they have a good art gallery. It is a small town, with approximately 20.000 citizens, but I am not too sure. There are also events that organized by the National Trust, especially the wing in Cumbria. For example, last week we had a Children's Book Festival in Wrey Castle in Cumbria. The event took place to celebrate Beatrix Potter's 150th birthday. Beatrix Potter is one of the most popular authors of the children's literature in England. I took an active part in this event as one day (it was a 3 day event) I volunteered to help out and one of my duties was to be a guide to Peter Rabbit's mascot. The mascot was enormous, in a rather small room, full of children, who all wanted cuddles with Peter, so my job was to look after him, speak to children and ask them not to touch him – it was mainly for safety. Peter was two meters tall!!! Anyway, the festival was a great success and it was great for children, and their parents – they all had enjoyed themselves. We also managed to invite a quite impressive amount of other popular authors. I take part in many local

events – I am really grateful that /I work for National Trust as I find it easy to find out about different events and happenings. I often take part in producing/ creating different events for our area, or just spread the information – either way, I am aware.

- P: *How does rural shape your patterns of movement?*

I think that life in Cumbria without a car is very restricting. Yes, the main attraction here is walking, climbing, trekking – but it is very difficult to get to certain mountain trails. It is impossible to get there by bus. Besides, public transport is very expensive here. You have to move around by car. Also, after work when you finish at let's say 5pm, there isn't much to do here. Nothing happens, where you could go to or do something. I don't know...

-Maybe I could tell you about my typical day? (P: *yes please!*) OK, so I go to work everyday, I mean five times a week, takes me about 10 minutes to get there (Grassmere). It is a car journey. If I need to get to a supermarket I go to Kendal, which is about 15 miles away from here – and here we go again, there is no other option than having a car. (P: *have you always had a car since you moved here?*) No. When I first moved in here I didn't even have a driving license, I passed the course here and I have been driving for 9 years. (P: *why did you decide to take the course? Did you feel that it was a necessity and you just won't be able to survive here with a car?*) Yes, yes, exactly. In the same moment that I have made my decision about staying here permanently I have decided that I must have a car, in order to be able to communicate with other people, get to and from different places. It is a necessity here. For example, I wouldn't have the

job I have now if I couldn't drive. I wouldn't be able to get to work during winter, because of the weather and lack of public transport. In addition, it is very expensive in comparison to the petrol prices (especially now!)! Using public transport is just incomparably expensive to having your own car. It just wouldn't work financially. (P: *is it reliable? At east according to you?*) Absolutely not. The buses are always late, always. I don't use them often, rarely, but I used to use them before a bit more. I think you can get anywhere, as long as you have self-abnegation, if you are stubborn. You also have to be aware of the times they arrive, you should know at what time your last bus leaves, and where to catch them from. For example, you wouldn't be able to leave this village after 6pm, without a car you'd be stuck. The public transport is rather limited, but we should be happy we still have it. I know that there are villages where public transport is practically non-existent. Buses here are very expensive, but pensioners can use them for free – which is great. I think they are so expensive because of the tourists. Tourists are often prepared to pay almost ridiculous money even for a bus – and they use it!

- P: *How often do you go to the rural and what dictates the frequencies of your visits?*

As I said, I live in the rural and I work here. (P: *So maybe tell me how often you leave rural? Once a week?*) A lot less (than once a week). In average, I'd say it is about once a month. There are some months when I don't go at all, to Manchester, nor any other big cities, but next month I will

be going twice. When I go for work I try to do things for myself too (while I'm away), but sometimes I just visit bigger places because of my own needs. Sometimes I just need to charge my 'big city batteries', I need to change the environment, the surroundings – just for one day. (P: *Why do you need to do this?*) Sometimes is simply too quiet, too calm, for too long – and then all you want is to sit down in a very busy, loud coffee shop in the city center. I miss that sometimes. Just to look at passing people...but then, on the other side, I can always jump in the car, train or even plain and get somewhere, where you'd like to be. I think when you plan your year, your holidays and weekend trips, you can easily plan and have this balance in your life, you can fulfill your needs and wants in terms of city/village time. I think it is interesting to add here that when I plan my holidays I often choose places where it is not going to rain. I also choose to visit more than one place during one holiday – so I got a country, but I visit various towns, cities, villages, attractions. I try to change my surroundings, because I don't feel the need to go from mountains (where I live) to another mountains – I take holidays. Because I need a change, and such trip would be a change. However, I have been to visit mountains other than my own, here, I have been to Dolomites. But when I plan holidays I usually choose a destination that is completely different to the one I live in (in all possible ways).

(P: how about here, in the UK? What places do you choose? Where do you go? And why?)

I try and choose destination I have never been to. However, there is a place that I always like to return to – that's Oxford. (P: *Why Oxford then?*) I

just love it. It is calm, it is green, it is beautiful, has a lot of things happening there – probably because of students' presence. As a rule I like to visit places I have never been to before. But I also like to go to, explore places and surroundings here, where I live. For example, when I'm off and don't have an idea for a Saturday, or free time, then I just walk here. Or I travel to York, to Edinburgh, or to Chester – these are nice places, in which I have been on many occasions, but I still like to return there. I don't only go for leisure, I go for shopping, to buy clothes, because sometimes online shopping gets boring, and here, in Cumbria, cloths shopping and the choice is rather limited. So when I have a clear purpose, such as shopping, then distance is quite important – I don't choose cities, which are situated 5 hours driving away from where I live, I rather go for something that is up to three hours. In this vicinity (3 hours driving) I have seen a lot of places, I am quite familiar with the area.

But even in the UK, I like to see new places too. Last ear I went for holidays in Cornwall, two years ago I have visited Wales. They were both rural, countryside areas. Cornwall – we stayed close to the sea and in Pembrokeshire in Wales was also close to the sea. These places are very beautiful

- P: *Where do you go to the rural and why?*

I often spend my weekends here in Cumbria, I walk a lot, I explore a lot. I drive through and I visit small towns, villages, or simply mountains. I just get to a car park, leave my car and I join the pathway, or trail. I often walk through the mountains. Maybe not as much now as it is winter (February),

but in the Summer, when the day is longer I do it very often, even after work. I walk around Grasmere, or when the road to Keswick was still in use (it is damaged because of the floods) I used to go there and explore those areas. I love evening walks. A lot of my rural trips, walks, expeditions are restricted because of the weather, especially when it rains. If you go for a holiday, if it is a planned visit and it rains, you go anyway, because you are here and you must use this time; but for me, who lives here and can have it everyday, I can be more picky. If I decide that next week I will get to the top of The Old Man of Coniston and it rains, I can always go the week after – not a big deal! That's the beauty of living here! So, yes, the weather is definitely a big factor here, when it rains, you shouldn't be walking through the mountains, when it rains I just drive everywhere. Town is a bit different as you can walk from one place to another, you can hide from rain – but let's remember – we live in the UK, so sometimes the rain is strong no matter where you are, and how short is your distance, you still get wet!

- P: *When do you go to the rural and why?*

- P: *How do you go to the rural and why?*

As I said before, I have a car here – it's a necessity. I also have a bike, but I rarely use it, because I don't like going up or down the hill, and here everything is either up or down – mostly up the hill. I enjoy cycling on flat surfaces, so sometimes I take my bike for trips – for example to the sea side, like Morecabme – it's relatively flat there. (P: *do you think it is safer*

there?) Actually, one could be surprised of how many cycling lanes, paths we have here, in the mountains, in our Cumbria. So for me it's more about convenience – I just don't want to get too tired! (laughing). We have a great bicycle path here, which I have used in the past, it is on the other side of the Lake Windermere, very close to my house – it's great. I use my bike only in the summer, and only for leisure purposes. We get a lot of cyclists here, who go in groups and they must think they take part in some race, or I don't know, and they use the main road - A591, which is a nightmare for us, people who live here. They are really a nightmare for the drivers and the locals, for all of us. I walk to see my friends, to local shops, but I use my car very very often.

- *P: Do you wish to move when you're there?*

Of course, I have to – I live here. I work here. I am young (or relatively young) and I don't want to spend my life being closed at home.

- *P: Do you move when you arrive? How? How do you move when you are within the rural?*

- *P: How mobile are you when you're there?*

- *P: What helps you to move? What helps or constrains when you are there?*

- *P: With whom do you go to the rural and why?*

It depends. I live here alone, I'm single. I often travel alone, sometimes I go and visit or go for walks with my friends – if they are free, if they want to join me, if they have time. I travel with people, I often take my guests, who

visit from Poland, or other parts of the UK to show them where I live and the beauty surrounding these areas. This area is popular anyway, we get many tourists here, who wants to visit and experience what we have everyday. I take my family to different places, as I know the area quite well. However, I have to say – it is very easy to get lost in the country lanes, at times there is no signage at all!

(P: What do you think about the linkages? Are places well connected? What's your viewpoint on this?) Main roads, main places are well connected, it is easy to find your way. I think the road signage is OK, I never had any major problems to find my way. This is a lot more difficult in the city – sometimes roundabouts, crossroads are very complicated and I really don't know where I'm going or which lane I should be in. We still have the small, Victorian signposts, which have very small letters, then you just have to drive up to it, stop the car, sometimes even get out to read it – but that's the beauty of living in such an old country, with an amazing history – it's an experience and a part of living here. Some country lanes are very narrow, and sometimes you can get lost. Especially when you just drive and rive and all you see is a very narrow road with hedges or walls next to them – and I think to myself 'I haven't got a clue of where I am!"

(P: Do you ever use Sat Nav?) Here? *(P: here, and in general when you move – out, in, throughout the rural?)* At the moment very rarely. Because often sat nav doesn't include those little lanes and the other issue is that it loses its signal, even GPS and then it's useless. I did use it when I first came here, to get an idea what's around me and I didn't want to look

stupid – you know, lost all the time! So in order to avoid questions, I've used sat nav at the beginning. But not any more as I need more detailed maps – you know, for my work.

(P: *Do you use physical maps then?*) Yes, I have and I do. Especially here in Cumbria, or at work For example, when I do a photo-shoot for work in particular areas, like a farm, that I have never been to, I don't know how to get there, I then take a physical map. I mark where I need to go, where I need to turn, etc. (P: *what kind of maps do you use?*) Road atlas or an OS map that shows different pathways. Usually, the scale in the road atlas isn't good enough, not detailed enough, then I look for a more detailed map. (P: *how do you find those maps? Where do you get them from?*) We have some at work, I also have a range of maps at home – I probably have all the maps that cover the Lake District area. During all the years I have lived here I walked in many places, and when I was going somewhere I always used a map for the particular area. You should always have a map when you want to go walking here as the path way aren't marked here – you make your own way with a map – so you should have a map, to know where you are. (P: *do you buy them? Download online?*) I mainly buy them, but sometimes I check things online – Google Maps, OS or anything that is available. In terms of paper maps - I bought them.

- P: *Are there any constraints, anything that stops you from moving around in the rural?*

No, not really. I mean, as I said I don't like cycling up and down the hill, so I avoid these. I use my car often. We have one main road here, so if something happens – like a car accident, then the road is closed (for example, A591) – there is a lot of traffic, so you have to try and find some other roads, which can be tricky. But besides the enormous amount of tourists, who come here during the summer and any other national holidays, who are responsible for the busy traffic, and besides the natural catastrophes – such as snow and floods, I can't think of any other constraints or things that would stop me from moving.

There is a bus here 555, but there is only one per hour and it is very expensive - £8.50 for a return ticket from Windermere to Grassmere. There is another bus – 595, which is mainly for tourists, it runs during the season only; it goes from Windermere, through Bowness to Grassmere. I also have to add that the bus drivers are very experienced and you should feel safe. And this section of the road here, through Grasmere, A591 was named as the most picturesque road in Great Britain in 2015.

P: Now, this part of questions was designed to help me analyse the experiences, activities and decision-making processes of EU8 migrants in rural space, and how this may vary according to migrant dispositions, including their social, economic and demographic characteristics. Would you like me to tell you more about it? (O 3 and 4) B: No, its OK, you explained everything through your email. Just ask me questions.

- P: What do you do in the rural and why?

As I said before, I live here, I go to work here, meet my friends, go for walks, a coffee. Sometimes I do photo-shoots for work, even though I am not a professional photographer.

- *P: What experiences do you have of the rural?*

Let me tell you first about my work. I work for National Trust, from 9 to 5pm. Mainly in the office, but also outdoors, in the field – but this is more occasionally, it isn't a regular occurrence. I work in the department of admin and marketing. I am responsible for publications, and I organize large events for government. It takes quite a lot of my time, because I usually sit in my office from 9 till 5. After work, I take an active part in the local church – it is a roman-catholic church – we have meetings, we do prayer evenings and many other things. (*P: it this a Polish church?*) No, it is an English church, but it's a Roman-Catholic Church, not CE. Once a week we have a prayer group, which I go to, on Sundays I go to church – Holly Mass. Other than that I cook, I don't eat processed food, so everything I cook is made from scratch. I don't have a family here, I am single, I meet with my friends. This semester I am not doing it, but in previous terms, years I used to attend language courses – I used to learn Spanish, I had to travel to Lancaster for the lessons. I meet with my friends – we go to a restaurant or someone's house. Sometimes after work I go to the cinema. (*P: Your village seems to be quite good, because it is relatively close to Bowness or Windermere, where there a lot of – for a rural area – options, activities... It's just my observation, but I don't know whether you'd agree with me?*). Yes, I have to agree with you, there is

plenty to do here. You can go for yoga classes, Pilates or join other sporty/physical groups – but I don't find these things, activities interesting, it's not my cup of tea. I went for a couple of yoga sessions, but then I have decided it wasn't for me. There are things to do here, but definitely in more urbanized areas, in towns, cities, you get a bigger choice, everything is more convenient to get to, there are different times, options. But I guess we get something they don't have – fresh air, beautiful views, outdoor space, some kind of freedom – and they have things we don't have – theatres, massive cinemas, etc. – but I think we are richer – in experiences. I choose rural. Anyway, returning to my after work activities – I used to go swimming in Bowness in Old England Hotel – it is a luxurious hotel with a swimming pool – you can buy a membership. I got it for my birthday and I used it then, but I didn't decide to renew it as I didn't think the atmosphere was great. (*P: why?*) It was mostly older people, who were quite snobby. During winter I spend a lot more time at home, I think we all do here. It is dark, it is cold. In the summer, there is a different story, as here, in the north days are very long, the sunset is about 10pm, so I feel like I have a lot more time. I walk a lot, even after work. I go for drives. Soetimes I drive to have a walk in Keswick, or Kirkby Lonsdale in the South Lakeland area – I usually go for a walk, or I go to the lake and then walk around it, or some kind of path – from somewhere to somewhere, I don't know, some kind of a mini mountain trip, or just a walk.

(*P: can you please tell me, when you choose your walks, your pathways to you check how hard they are? Do you want a challenge or is it just a simple, relaxing walk?*) When I go walking after work I usually choose

something light, but the more difficult ones, for example Langdale Pikes or the Scafell Pike Routes, or the Old Man of Coniston fell, or the Skiddaw, or some other larger, higher peaks take me longer, I need an all day for such trips. I need a day off, so I can spend there a day.

(P: *have you got any specialist equipment?*) It is actually quite funny as before I have moved to the mountains I believed that you must have some sort of tools, equipment if you want to move around – I mean around the mountains; but now when I see people in full riot gear, fully equipped, wearing: super mountain shoes, super trousers that are appropriate for mountain climbing, wind and waterproof coat - you could probably wear it to climb the Mount Everest - I am very surprised. To be honest you meet and see a lot of people, who just live here and when they feel like going to the mountains, they do – they don't need to 'dress up', they don't even have walking boots. Of course, if you want to climb, for example, Scafell Pike – you'd need proper boots, but when I go for my short walks I just go as I stand. Of course, I am not wearing high heels, but if I was going to go around the lake I'd just go in regular, simple trainers, I would go and look for walking boots. I'd just go as I stand. But I have to note that living in the rural area your style changes totally – what you wear, how you dress. (P: *in what way?*) Your clothing changes – we wear jeans, boots, it is a lot more casual – you can wear the same clothes you wear to an office and straight after you can just go in the mountains or a field. This is also how you can spot the tourists here, who take it to the next level – as I have mentioned before they often wear specialist clothing, equipment – we just dress in a casual, comfortable way.

- P: *What does it (rural space) mean to you? And how does this impact on your engagement/ activities?*

Work, because I work quite a lot. Weather, time that I want to spend with my friends, sometimes finances as sometimes you simply can't afford things.

(P: talking about finances and living – do you think living here, in the rural area, especially such popular one – is it relatively expensive? Or you can't really say because you have never lived anywhere else?) B: When I talk with my friends, who live in other part of the UK, or England, and compare the prices of purchasing or renting accommodation – this part is a lot more expensive, both to buy and to rent. I am not including London in these comparisons, but perhaps less popular areas, such as Midlands (I have friends there), and similar areas – rent is a lot lower than it is here. Cumbria is a very popular place to visit, it is a very popular place to live – a lot of people have their second property here. These are usually holiday homes, but these have an enormous impact on other properties and their prices. Because of such people (second home owners) prices grow dramatically. I currently rent a place here, a flat, but if I was going to buy a house here – I'd never be able to. I'd never be able to buy a house in the Lake District, even in a small village, I'd have to move out as I'd never be able to afford it, and I don't have a bad job!

(P: Did you ever consider moving out? Moving away from this area?)

National Trust is an enormous organisation and they often re-structure the

place, we are currently going through one – and I always have this fear, I guess, that if I lose the job here, I'd have to leave the company as I wouldn't like to move away. However, if I do find another job, my dream job (I don't know what this would be by the way) then maybe I would consider moving. I think I would have to be really pressured to leave my village, to leave where I currently reside – I would rather stay... I really like this place, I really enjoy this peaceful location, the calmness I have and experience everyday suits me greatly, I love it. This excitement of life, and everything what happens, hubbub, loud life – is also great, but from time to time; I don't want to live it. I would find it tiring in a longer run.

It is very good in England, Great Britain that a lot of people reside in the rural areas. Of course, it is a great bonus when a rural area, a village is situated in a close proximity to a larger place, town or even a city. You get the shops and other things closer, which makes life easier, but I wouldn't say better.

- *P: How has the nature of rural itself shape your experiences/ engagement?*

b (To what extent do representations of the rural shape perceptions / inscribing of rural space by distinctive spatial practices and everyday lives and experiences in it?)

- How activities and are shaped by representations of the rural? (are your

activities shaped by representations of the rural?)

- How do the representations of the rural shape your decisions and what you do when you're there and your experiences of it? Tv, ads, etc.

c P: To what extent do everyday lives and experiences of the rural inform representations of it and perceptions of rural / how it is inscribed by distinctive spatial practices? (...if a rural space is lived differently on an everyday basis then this too may impinge on perceptions and inform representations)

P: How your activities are shaped by your perceptions and how those perceptions may be shaped by your own

What do you do on everyday basis and how it influences your choices?

- How people use rural on everyday basis?
- What they do there in the context of everyday practices?
- Do everyday lives and experiences differ in the context of who you are
- P: Does the nature of the rural shape who you are?

In some ways yes, for sure. There are a lot of things that you can't do because of the space and its nature. For example, you can't really 'wonder round' around here at 8:00, 9pm as your mobility is restricted. Unless you have a car then you can drive, but you don't see people, who walk here so late. However, I know there some lovers of walking in the dark; there are even people who climb different peaks such as Scafell Pike in the dark. I think it's called Scafell Pike in the dark challenge, but that's just another story. There are things here that restrict your movement and maybe even you as a person. (P: can you explain this?) That means the lack of

infrastructure, it is what it is here, and you just can't do certain things. It changes you and your lifestyle as you start to live more in harmony with nature. I didn't fully immerse myself with that nature, because I don't live on the farm, I can't get my own eggs in the morning, I still rent a flat and buy products, but these are our local products. I have, I experience some kind of a touch of an urban civilization, because as I said, I live in the flat, I work in an office, but I don't buy a Starbucks coffee every morning – it just wouldn't make any sense to me. I really like our local coffee shops, local products. Although, I did encounter a problem – I like coffee, I like a good, strong coffee and I had a problem with finding a local place that would meet my needs, but now, it has changed. They have opened a great coffee shop/ bar, which is called 'Café Italia' – it's a small place opened by a Polish guy and his Thai wife (or partner – not too sure). I don't go there daily, but from time to time. But yes, the nature of rural space changes your habits. Because this place is calm, is quiet, it's beautiful – I became a lot calmer, I stopped worrying about small things, irrelevant affairs, bits and pieces. I can't even give you a specific example...*(thinking)*... Maybe the fact that you don't have the possibilities, there isn't much choice, you just get used to it... *(a waiter came over and brought us a shortbread that he has made by himself for the first time – he wanted us to try it)*. You see, small things like that! If we were sat in a café in some town or city, nobody would even notice us! I think the interpersonal relations are a lot more personal here, people notice you, know who you are.. *(P: do you like it?)* Yes, I like it. All my lived I have lived in Torun, my whole family has lived there for many generations, so sometimes, even in the city if I went for a

walk I would meet 4 friends and 3 different aunts, but here, when you walk on the street you know most of the residents, the vast majority. I know that Torun is a relatively large city, and because I was born there and I knew a lot of people there too, so I have never experienced a total loneliness in the city. But a lot of people, who visit our villages here, in the UK, they really like the fact that people know each other, they know who they are. This interpersonal dimension here is very important – people are nice to each other, they are polite, and to certain extent they care for and about each other.

-How are your choices shaped by the rural representations?

- What rural representations are you aware of?

- what (representations) has shaped your understanding of the rural?

Most of all calmness, isolation, distance from the world, from the rest; beside these also fields and sheep, the rural landscape, which is an important element of the rural.

(how about formal representations?) Because of my work and what I do formal representations of rural are quite 'normal' to me, I don't even notice them anymore, but I am aware of their presence. Whole Cumbria is divided, is split into different farmland, public access is sometimes restricted – people can't get everywhere. You can only go or follow the marked pathways, you can't just walk or wonder around the fields because they belong to private individuals, private owners. You can see sheep on those fields, so if you walk nearby with a dog you have to make sure it is on the leash, to protect the sheep, not to scare them, or even worse – bite

or kill them. All farms and all fields are separated from each other. Even if you look at the mountains you can see the famous fencing, the famous dry stone walls that run through the mountains, down the edges or across – in order to divide different farmlands and fields. All sheep are differentiated from each other – they show belonging to each farmer – they are usually painted with a different colour, or a mark – when you see them on the field you check who do they belong to – it's all written down in a special book, also published by the National Trust. For example, you see a sheep, you check its mark and/or colour then refer to the book/guide and you know 'oh! This sheep came from the Yew Tree Farm in Coniston'. We also have 'common lands', which National Trust looks after, but everyone has open access to common land. One person can use it for their sheep if they want or others could have a picnic there – but whether they'd like to, it's another matter. For example, here, parts of the Langdale Valley are common lands. National Trust looked after that land for the past 100 years, but it doesn't have a formal owner, it has to open to everyone, free access. (do you think people are aware of these divisions and regulations?) yes, I think so. I think people who reside here are fully aware of these formalities, formal representations. In Great Britain there is no such thing as land without any ownership – it always belongs to someone, either to a private person, organisation or all people – as common land. The whole surface of the country is divided and utilized. We also have public footpaths, which are very important. Sometimes when you walk through the fields, mountains, you have to keep to the designated pathway as the rest of the land belongs to someone else.

(did you ever think, consider those formal, yet invisible representations, earlier, or is it a result of your work?) I am a lawyer, I finished a law degree before I moved here, so land ownership was already known to me, I already had it in my head before my arrival. It wasn't an abstract matter. We had a module on different types of land ownerships, and one part of the module covered the land ownership in England and Great Britain, so I was already aware of it. I wasn't an expert in this area, but now, by being engaged in different projects (I have been doing this job for almost 8 years) I have learnt a lot. I believe that foreigners, who decide to migrate to Britain, they should attend an English course here, even though they may be super fluent. Especially the one that shows, illustrates and talks about the life here, about the traditions. I have attended a similar English language course in Kendal College for two years and I have learnt a lot about the culture, and general information in regards to the British society in Great Britain, some kind of general knowledge. Some details, knowing things, facts – can give you some kind of self-confidence, they allow you to find yourself in this society and become a part of it. You don't feel isolated, because you are unaware. Such courses, apart from teaching the language, they also kill ignorance. It is important to build your knowledge about the place and society you reside within in order to become a part of it. (so was it a language course? Or language and culture?) No, it was just a language course, which was offered to European Union citizens for free, which I think is amazing. I think it was called ESOL.

In terms of advertisements.. I don't see any TV ads in regards to rural areas, or actually anything as I don't have a TV. If I want to watch anything

I see it on the 'I player', and things that are being shown, such as the Country File programme, but they address many environmental issues rather than everyday life or social aspects, however, what they show is realistic, it doesn't deviate from the truth. Some TV programmes represent rural, especially the Lake District area as wealthy. However, I think that this belief that Lake District is a region for rich people, that only wealthy Brits live here in very expensive houses, who can easily afford anything they want – it is very untrue, false and incorrect. There are a lot of people, who live here and work in hotels, in hospitality, in tourism, who don't earn a lot and they can't really afford to buy a property. Grassmere is an example of such place, such village, not that long ago, I think 2 years ago, where they built a small housing estate that were sold only to people from this area. This happened as 80% of housing here in this area were bought as second holiday homes and young people had zero chances to move out from their parents or to buy own houses or flats. The only option for them was to move away from Grassmere all together, away from the area. And we are talking here about people who lived here for generations! So this is really sad. Migration doesn't have anything to do with it as we, as well as the locals (some of us are the locals too) can't afford to buy a place here. Most of migrants don't earn enough. These houses, that estate was built on the land that belongs to the parish council. I think that it is a myth that only wealthy people live in Lake District. It isn't a true representation. We have many people who earn very little. For example, two years ago I was involved in a project –a 'Food Bank in Windermere', which is thought to be one of the most luxurious places in

Great Britain (*laughing*). Some people were really against this initiative, they believed it is going to ruin the reputation of the area! It was organized with the help of our local church (which I go to). We believed that it is needed, because we have a group of people, who can't make it till the end of the month, who can't afford food! There was also a problem with benefits payments at the time – I think mothers didn't get their money in time and therefore they were unable to feed their children. We don't have massive queues, but we do have people, who use it and really appreciate it. I see this place, this area as a mixture of extremes really – very rich but also very poor people. There is a big gap between the very rich, who have mansions next to the lake and the ordinary people, who work hard in hotels, in restaurants and try their best to make ends meet.

Sometimes people ask me whether I see differences between the Polish village and the British one – but there is a little problem, I can't really say, as I don't really know much about Polish village. I have visited Polish Mountains and I have seen rural areas there. But then again I can't compare the rural that I live in with the rest as this may not be your typical rural area because it is in the mountains. I have been to Cornwall or Wales and there is plenty of rural there too, but it's a different rural. (*P: in what way is it different?*) Well, the land is a bit flatter; you see more fields, more farmlands. The buildings are different. I think they are a little brighter – the more south you go the lighter they get (colour-wise). Anyway, the difference between Polish and British countryside is that here, rural areas are more focused around grazing animals, breeding animals, whereas in Poland there is more croplands, farmlands to grow grain and wheat. It is

probably related to the weather. And maybe soil. This is the most general difference that I see.

- P: *how do you engage with the rural? What types of activities? What I'm trying to explore here is the extent to which individuals feel the materiality of rural shapes both, the representations of it and how people live in it? So, do you think the way rural places are influence people's lives and what they do there?*

- P: *In what ways do you connect/ engage with the rural? (work, leisure?)*

- P: *Do and if so, how different representations (factors) shape your decisions about moving into rural, living or move out?*

I live here, I travel here and I work here. I like living here. I like it. I like the rural space. (P: *anything in particular?*) Everything about it. I feel good here and I feel like I belong here, It is my place. When I first came here I worked in another village nearby - Rydel Valley, which absolutely stunning. I go past it every day on my way to work – on the right hand side there is the valley and there is the Rydel Hall building. I remember that the first sight of this place amazed me, and it still does – every day. I like this place, I like to return there, from time to time, but I think that because I go through it daily – it isn't a place where I'd go walking. Because when you want to go somewhere, when you want to have a break, you want to change your surrounding 'a little bit' and I think when I go to the mountains I choose different parts of this area, maybe a little bit further away. But Rydel Valley is one of the most beautiful places I have every seen. I also

enjoy going to Kirkby Lonsdale , which is a beautiful, small market town – down south from here, actually it's not in Cumbria anymore. It is one the border of Cumbria, Lancashire and Yorkshire. I love going there, walking there, around the area – mostly because of the picturesque landscapes. I love the famous Ruskin's views. Ruskin was one of the famous British painter, who used to say that Kirkby Lonsdale is the most beautiful place he has ever seen. The view of the River Lune from the churchyard is known as Ruskin's View and it was praised by him as "one of the loveliest views in England". So of course, if it the most beautiful view in Enfland, it must be the most beautiful view in the world, because England is the most beautiful place in the world. So, yes, I go there, I praise the view and I enjoy it. I love these areas. I also love, I think of them as beautiful – the lands of the East Lakes, especially Ullswater, which is stunning. It is very picturesque there, I love the steamboat trips across the lake. Ullswater is great – a gorgeous place to visit. You can have great walks on the other side of the Lake Windermere, where Beatrix Potter used to walk. I like to spend my time here, I like to go for beautiful walks and just admire the nature and landscapes. I don't think I have ever encountered or came across a place that I would hate and think of as horrible, and I wouldn't like to return to.

P: So that was very positive. Are there any negatives?

The weather. It gets me down, this never ending rain – especially this year! I also find summers as quite annoying, because they are nonexistent here! In the Lake District area we don't have a proper summer (I mean

British summer, not a summer you'd get in Poland, of course), in other regions at least they get a little bit of it, we get none. What we get it's a mixture, I'd call it springy summer, which doesn't even last long, and then it turns into a short autumn. But it wasn't always like that here. It has changed in the past seven years, something around that. When I first came here to visit my friend I think 16 years ago, I stayed for 6 weeks with them and it was the hottest summer in the history, the temperature was around 30 degrees C, almost every day! This holiday gave me the wrong impression of the area, because it made me want to live here! Recent years keep disappointing me – whether wise. It is always cold! The other thing that disappoints me here are such high prices of properties! This gives me an impression that I will never be able to afford my own place and then I wonder whether maybe I should move away from the area. There is a point in your life when you want to have your own place, when you want own something, even a small flat – I don't think I will afford this. So I don't know; it's a kind of a compromise, I guess – I will move away and then commute to work, or stay here and always rent! So the weather and the property prices are the only small minuses about this place in particular. Oh, I just remembered another thing! A potential development of your career – it is rather restricted, limited. There aren't many places here, many jobs. I was quite lucky I guess that I have a job, which I like and which I appreciate. I enjoy what I do and I don't want to move, I wouldn't want to change it. I like and I fully support the organisation I work for. If I didn't have that job I would probably have to have moved. If I ever lose this job and I don't find anything similar – most probably I will have to

move away. (P: *where did you work before, if I may ask?*) Yes, sure. I used work in the notary office, and before that I worked as I waitress. Years ago, a job as a waitress wasn't that bad because we used to get big tips – unfortunately it isn't the case anymore. People don't have money and they don't tip. Rent was cheaper, life was cheaper; life was easier. But when I have decided that I am staying here for good, I want to build here my life- things change. I bought a car, started living by myself – everything costs money.

P: The next part was designed to explore how EU8 migrants perceive they are shaping / re-shaping the rural? And also, how it shapes them?

P: So, can you tell me whether you've noticed any changes in the rural - to what extent and in what ways is the rural changing? Have you noticed any changes since you first moved here?

Yes. It used to be a lot cleaner. When I first moved here everything was looked after, it was clean and you the residents were mostly British, or even English, you didn't see nor hear other nationalities, plus you could really see the traditions; they were definitely there. I mean, here, in Cumbria, this multiculturalism is limited to people, migrants from the EU. If you see anyone, who comes here to live or work, they are only from the EU countries. (P: *why do you think is that?*) There is a number of migrants who came here after 2004 and stayed, the new ones come just for a year, maybe two – like if you'd come here for a short period of time, which

seems like do a gap year, and then just leave. There are a lot of Spanish people in this area, especially in Windermere. When you walk on the streets here you don't really see this multicultural Britain, probably because the EU migration is invisible – because we are white. I don't think that it is just the rural areas that change, I think it is Great Britain as a whole, and this then has some kind of impact on Cumbria and its rural space. Rural places become more and more multicultural, because of migrants. As a result, and an example, was the opening of the café in Windermere - 'Café Italia'. There was a clear gap in the area. There were many young European people and they needed a place. So, as a result, there was the opening of the café in Windermere - 'Café Italia. It was opened by a guy from Poland. 12 years ago, when I came here you'd never be able to have a coffee and a desert after 6pm or in the evening. I think it's a great place. Yes, of course, we had coffee shops, but they all close at 5 and that's it! This café is open until 10, 11pm, and even longer in the summer season – you can order a tiramisu and a cappuccino at 9pm, and this is great! I see a lot of small changes that were brought by this new European migration, but I think these are positive changes! For example, there are more cafes that extended their opening hours. I have noticed that Great Britain and Cumbria has changed its culinary habits (because of the presence of migrants) and this had and still has an impact on the way places are being run.

Changes in Great Britain and its rural areas: (not because of migration). I think Britain is changing as a whole. This then has an impact on rural

places. We have changed our culinary habits because of programmes and celebrities such as Jamie Oliver, we have more and more vegan places, raw food restaurants – and even here, in Cumbria I can see those changes, I can see how businesses develop – we still have very, very few vegan restaurants, but the change is happening now.

- P: To what extent do you think it's changing in the consequence of your *actions*?

- P: *Do you think the rural has changed because of the presence of migrants?; What impacts do migrants have on rural space?*

I think I've already explained it, so I'll move forward, if that's OK. Nothing more than what I have already said. Maybe not to do with migration. Some people say that constant influx of the workforce is the reason why wages and salaries don't go up. People get annoyed that a lot of places pay the minimum wage and migrants don't complain and are prepared to take it.

- P: *To what extent is rural changing as a consequence of your activities and engagement in the rural?*

- *Has the rural adapted to accommodate the needs of migrants (both, a worker and a visitor?)*

It is difficult for me to say. I work for a massive company that employs people from different places and nationalities but I don't look at it this way – what they do just for the migrants. They are just a good company to work for, that's it, whether you're a migrant, or not. In terms of rural space

itself – I don't see it either, I don't notice it, but maybe it is because I don't feel I need to.

I think that there is a lot less migrants now than it used to be at the beginning when we have joined the EU – between 2004 and 2006 there was a lot more – I am talking about the Lake District area. I don't see this mass migration anymore. There are more migrants in the summer – but we simply need them to help us with tourism. Seasonal migration is needed here, otherwise we would be short of the workforce. Because of the presence of migration, mostly Polish and Spanish here, I have noticed that things were translated to Polish or sometimes Spanish – for example, menus. When I did my driving license, I had a choice when I was taking my theory – I could do it in Polish, or English. So obviously they recognised our presence here, which is very nice. I know that Polish migration was dominant amongst others, and this of course was confirmed by the Census, which has revealed that Polish is second most spoken langue in the UK after English. You can even do a Polish GCSE. But I think that British people want the migrants to integrate and speak English. And I fully agree – I think that people should at least be able to have communicative English, I think it is our duty! I don't think that translating things into Polish is necessary – it is OK for visitors, maybe our parents, but I think it is more important for migrants to learn English. However, I do a weekly bulletin for our church and I have been asked by the priest to include information about mass times in Polish too.

These things, these changes exist, but I don't see them often. Or perhaps, I don't pay attention, because I don't have to.

Festivals... No, I haven't noticed anything like that here in Cumbria. However, there is one Polish shop in the area, in Kendal, it is very popular. And there is one Eastern-European in Windermere or Bowness, I think. A lot of English people go there too and they buy our Polish products – they buy yoghurts, buckwheat, gherkins, pickled cabbage, Polish bread. This shop has its regular customers, and many of them are English – they enjoy Polish products, they enjoy the quality. But I haven't heard about any Polish or Eastern European festivals that are happening here in the rural. I know that there is a girl, a Polish girl in Kendal Library, who leads many courses, including Polish language courses for the local people and they get some attention, which again, is quite nice to hear.

Appendix 2. Follow up interview after 2016 Referendum

P: Thank you for agreeing to meet with me again.

The purpose of this interview is to see how you are after the results of the Referendum have been published – has anything changed for you? Would you like to add anything to the previous interview, which you have a copy of?

It's good to see you, although I do not know if it's what I think about this will be helpful to you, but I will try to express this well in words, and you do with what you think :) (P: Thank you, I really appreciate it).

So about understanding the rural, definitions, representations, and so on – I don't think anything has changed. I still see the rural as a beautiful, idyllic and a great place. The material aspects of the rural have not changed. My experiences in it didn't change either. But it's only been two months since the end of June, so maybe it's too early to say, too early to notice anything.

In our house, my husband and I spoke a lot about it before the referendum took place and somehow at the same time I was sending out my application for the residency status (the timing was just a coincidence – not planned because of Brexit). In general, we weren't worried or stressed over the vote, however, we assumed that the British population will want to stay in the European Union and all this fuss will be over just after the big vote. I honestly thought that it was a game played by the Labour party to

get the votes, but it wouldn't actually happen. On the day when they announced what happened, I woke up and cried. I also had three text messages on my phone from different people (from all over the world) saying that it's a mess and asking me whether it's real and how I feel. I then went online on different news sites and I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I was hoping that after the final count the result will be different, but even then (still hoping) I didn't feel too good as I thought that the proportion is still very large. That day we talked a lot about it with X (my husband) and honestly we both felt somehow 'unwanted' if you can call it that. I felt unwanted and unvalued as a European citizen for them, for those people those who wanted to leave the EU. And I felt almost betrayed, although nobody ever promised anything to me, but it felt like a betrayal. I really don't know how to put it in words, how to phrase it better. On that day I spent a lot of time thinking about my future here, in this country. I am, of course, aware of my entitlements and rights here and it wasn't that I was worried that I will be kicked out of here by tomorrow, but I felt unwanted and unappreciated. I felt that my contributions, input and attempts to acclimatize here, trying to adapt and become a part of this place, rights, duties, customs was not appreciated, even uncared about. I wonder now what changes await us, as citizens of the European Union living outside the union, how long it will take to exit and the withdrawal of various contracts. I wonder now what the labour market will look like, especially when I finish my degree (veterinary). I can't hide that I am happy that at least I am able to complete my degree and have a student loan as we are still part of the EU and we will for at least a year. But I am

worried about the future complications, about the bureaucratic business of things, more paper work to fill, about visas... Will we need them? Will we get them? I wonder about the life here, whether we'd be able to continue, and if so, under what requirements, for example – will we have to apply for visas, work permits, and so on. I am also upset for my family – will they be able to visit? It will probably cost them a lot more. When the results were revealed I considered moving out to a different European Union state (worried that life will become more complicated). It could also be a motivation for me to return back to Poland – because I wonder what's the point of staying here if I'm not wanted? Are we really that bad? I'm almost a vet, I volunteer, I work hard, I pay taxes and never claimed any benefits, I support the economy and barely use the NHS because I don't think they're that good anyway. I can take Paracetamol without queuing to see a doctor. But this conversation is about something else. What I meant was – that I'm not too sure whether I even want to stay here if I am perceived as a 'Polish vermin or Polish scum'. (P: Have you ever been called this? or recently?) I haven't personally, but I know of people who'd been getting notes like this – calling them names and telling them to go back to where they came from. You know it feels like the moment the referendum results were published, people started to feel that they have 'a green card' to speak out loud what they think, even if it's very racist. Like, it's justified now, because they voted, so now, all of the sudden it's OK to be racist. When is it ever OK to be racist, to be nasty or horrible to other? That's about me and my thoughts on the topic.

However, I feel I need to tell you some other stories in relation to this topic.

(P: Great!) A friend of mine, he's English, a very educated man with two PhDs – one in politics and the other in history, who has a holiday home in Greece and traveled the world – after the results have been published he sent me a message, almost apologizing for the results. He said he feels embarrassed and could not get over the results. He admitted that it has taken him over 3 weeks to calm down, but his feelings changed from disbelief to anger.

As for the Poles, I unfortunately have observed that the majority took the news very emotionally and personally, some even turned to panic. Especially people whose English is weak or hardly speak any English and perform rather simple jobs - these people were almost crying, saying things like 'what about us now?, what are we going to do?" They are really worried. And I really feel sorry for them.

I, personally, have not received any negative comments, either at the university or anywhere else. The topic of Brexit was also highly publicized in the Polish media, especially the attacks on Poles and other foreigners, even my parents and grandma keep calling me to ask if everything is OK. In my husband's work, his bosses reassured people that the contracts of employment still stay the same, the work still carried out as normal and nothing has changed – I think that was really nice. An acquaintance of mine told me that at his friend's work, some Englishmen joked and told the migrants to pack up and return home the day after the referendum – but as I said I only heard that, it didn't happen to me. But it's still awful to know that such things take place.

I also feel like I should comment on another thing. I am not too sure

whether I should or not, but I will anyway. The media was quite loud about it that there was a clear division between the education level between those who voted to leave the EU and those who haven't. Those more educated wanted to stay in. I was wondering how true it was and whether there was any consistency, and I have to say that after some consideration, I'd have to agree with it.

Some of the people I am friends with on Facebook were talking between each other who voted and how, and what were their reasons – this was an unpleasant discussion. I am also a friend (on social media) with many professionals, such as doctors, lawyers and veterinarians (due to contacts with the former work and practice) and I must admit that, indeed, I noticed that the more educated people voted to remain in the EU. I don't know why, perhaps more educated population understand more, are enlightened and perform higher jobs, on higher positions, and don't feel their jobs are in danger? Or maybe they were able to do more research, distinguish between lies and the truth? These are only my observations, I don't know how helpful they are to you. (P: They are very helpful, thank you).

P: how about the relationships with others? Have they changed?

For me they haven't really. I haven't lost any friends over Brexit – yet. But again, I know of people, histories, where the referendum changed their lives. They lost friends. Or they fear being othered so as a result they have taken a step back – they almost try to hide, you know. (P: Can you explain this?) So they are worried to speak Polish on the streets in case they will get abuse. You know, like sayings: 'learn how to speak English'; 'go back

home'; 'we don't want you here' – it did happen to some of my friends. I think Brexit made us feel less valued and like we don't belong here. It's sad.

Also my friend who lives in Penrith told me that in Carlisle there was even a demonstration – a march of pseudo-nationalists Britons (those who claim that immigrants steal their jobs). Again, this wasn't really pleasant. Other than the above, I can't really think of anything else that happened – either to me or my friends.

P: How about mobilities? Travel?

I think it's too early to say, but I've heard that some flights will be cancelled and I fear that travel will become more expensive. So we won't be able to see our families as often, because we might not be able to afford it.

P: How about travel here in the UK?

So my thoughts on it are that I don't really want to visit places, where the majority of people voted for Brexit. Like Blackpool, or Wales. I'm uncomfortable, but also I'm worried I might the comments. It'll probably calm down soon, but at the moment I'm just upset. Although I fully understand that you can be called names everywhere, and also that not everybody is the same. I'm just upset now. And I know such things happened in the past. For example, I know a Polish family, who only travels by car; they've never used public transport because their English isn't that good and they're worried they will get lost and never be able to find their way home. But by acting this way, they'll never be able to learn, and they won't assimilate as well as they should have! So it's like a vicious circle. One more thing about travel and Brexit! Everything in the UK will

be more expensive! The public transport is very expensive now, but because the economy will struggle they will put the prices up! So that's another of my worries!

P: how about the changes? Whether the rural has changed in any way? Or the way migrants change the rural? Or how the rural shapes migrants? Has that changed because of Brexit?

I don't think so. As I said, I heard from some friends and on TV about many attacks on Poles because of Brexit and I really don't know what to think. I cannot imagine that any of my neighbors would suddenly start treating us differently. My opinion on those, who think that Brexit can justify their violence, is not the nicest. I believe that those were uneducated people, who completely misunderstood what leaving the European Union meant and believed that "voting for Brexit will equal getting rid of the immigrants" – which can't happen, and definitely not overnight. I think that a lot of migrants who experience racism in places where there are a lot of migrants like to go to the rural to get a break. Because there's less people, and the countryside makes people feel relaxed. So maybe it's like an oasis, a safe place? For it's always been a special place, and nothing has changed. I don't think anything else has changed, but if I think of something, I will email you straight away! (P: Thank you! I really appreciate it!)