Migrants' experiences of material and emotional security in rural Scotland: Implications for longer-term settlement

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on qualitative research with Central and East European (CEE) migrants living and working in rural areas of Scotland, this article explores what it is that facilitates a desire to stay longer term and how this relates to theorisations of social security and migrant-led understandings of normality. The article makes three original contributions: (i) new empirical insight into the relationship between material and emotional aspects of migration and settlement in Scottish rural contexts; (ii) greater understanding of rural migrants' diverse lived experiences; (iii) attention to the changing nature of migration to rural contexts through a focus on longer-term settlement rather than seasonal or circular migration. The article is structured by three key questions: To what extent are rural destinations actively chosen by migrants? How are migrants' experiences shaped by the realities of rural life in the particular Scottish contexts studied? How do migrants interpret these experiences through their understandings of a normal life and how does this impact on longer-term plans? The qualitative insight which the article provides has wider relevance and significance for policy and practice across other rural contexts and can help to reveal ways in which rural social systems could better respond so that areas of 'new' migration may develop into positive places of settlement.

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1. Introduction

We're definitely staying here longer term … I can live normally and earn my keep'.

(Iza, 31, Poland, Angus)[1]

Drawing on qualitative research with Central and East European (CEE) labour migrants living and working in rural areas of Scotland, this article explores what it is that facilitates a desire to 'stay longer term' and how this relates to conceptual theorisations of social security and migrant-led understandings of normality. Taking our lead from the experiences of migrants like Iza, we explore what it is 'to live normally' and how this links to both material (e.g. access to jobs and housing) and emotional (e.g. positive relations and social connections) aspects of social security. It is this combination of factors, we argue, which allows a present and future life to be imagined in rural Scotland.

Increased migration from Central and Eastern Europe to the UK since the start of EU accession processes in 2004 has prompted a growth in research into this phenomenon. This has included studies exploring various aspects of migrant identities, social networks and strategies and the ways in which these intersect with experiences of migration and longer-term stays (Datta and Brickell, 2009; White and Ryan, 2008; Trevena et al., 2013; Galasinska and Kozlowska, 2009; Rabikowska, 2010). However, the overwhelming majority of studies have been concerned with urban contexts, largely in England, and many have focused exclusively on the experiences of Polish migrants. As a result there is little insight into the ways in which understandings of recent migration to the UK might be nuanced by taking account of migrants' lived experiences of rural contexts or by looking more broadly at CEE migrants rather than focusing on specific national groups.

A small but growing body of work on migration from Central and Eastern Europe to rural locations in a range of European countries does exist, although in relation to the UK, much of this

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has focused on rural development and socio-economic impacts of migration (de Lima and Wright, 2009; Findlay and McCollum, 2013). A number of existing studies provide more detailed insight into the lived experiences of this group of rural migrants, whilst also calling for more qualitative research of this kind, and in a wider range of rural contexts (Rye, 2014: 328; McAreavey, 2012: 489). Such a broadening of research can help to foreground both the diversity of migrant experiences and the heterogeneity of rurality, and to explore intersections between the two. Rural contexts are dynamic, changing over time (Cloke, 1997: 260; Halfacree, 2007). Therefore research insights need to be regularly updated to keep pace of change which is both generated and experienced by rural migrants.

In light of such concerns, the original contributions of this article are threefold. Firstly, it provides new insight into lived experiences of migration and settlement in two Scottish rural regions with little previous experience of international in-migration on such a scale. This is achieved through the use of the concepts of social security and normality to reveal the relationship between material and emotional aspects of migration and settlement. Secondly, the article provides greater understanding of the diversity of rural CEE migrants' lived experiences in the UK. Thirdly, the article draws attention to longer-term settlement rather than seasonal or circular migration which had been the focus of earlier studies (de Lima and Wright, 2009; Jentsch et al., 2007; Findlay and McCullom, 2013) highlighting the changing nature of migration to Scottish rural contexts. In developing this focus we do not seek to deny the importance of continuing experiences of precarity and temporariness for many CEE migrants. The dominance of gangmasters, seasonality of employment, instances of trafficking, discrimination and abuse unfortunately persist in many areas (EHRC, 2015). Nor do we wish to suggest that all migrants desire to stay long-term in rural Scottish locations: many chose to migrate on to other, often urban, destinations, others return to their countries of origin. Nonetheless, our focus on exploring what it is that facilitates and encourages CEE migrants to stay longer term in rural locations offers a different perspective, one which has as yet rarely been explored for this migrant population.

These original contributions are developed through an examination of three key questions which also structure the empirical sections of the article:

- To what extent are rural destinations actively chosen by migrants and how do (in)securities and perceptions of normality influence these decisions?
- How are migrants' experiences shaped by the realities of rural life in the particular Scottish contexts studied? In responding to this question we focus on issues of employment, language learning and social connections which emerged as key for our participants.
- How do migrants interpret these experiences through their understandings of a 'normal' life and how does this impact on longer-term attachments to and plans for settlement in rural places?

Before exploring each of these questions in turn, section 2 explores the article's theoretical underpinnings, in particular concepts of social security and normality and the ways in which these relate to understandings of migration and settlement. Section 3 provides an overview of existing studies of CEE migration to rural contexts in Europe, the UK and Scotland. Section 4 explains the two specific rural contexts where our research took place, the fieldwork methods employed, and provides an overview of the migrants whose experiences we draw on in this article.

2. Theories and concepts

Key to the wider research project on which this paper is based is an attempt to explore the connection between an experience or sense of social security and the likelihood of longer-term settlement in Scotland. We move beyond limited conceptualisations of social security as equivalent to formal welfare provision, and draw on more holistic anthropological theorisations (von Benda-Beckmann and von Benda-Beckmann, 1994; von Benda-Beckmann et al., 1998). These focus attention on the diverse and complex ways in which people produce securities (social, economic, personal and cultural) and mitigate risk, through a combination of public and private resources, formal and informal networks, state and non-state structures. Further, these theorisations encompass both material and emotional aspects of security.

The concept has been further explored in the post-socialist region. Here researchers have paid attention to the significance of historically informed attitudes and practices from the state socialist period, as well as the contemporary context and developments since 1989. Taken together these shape people's expectations and strategies in relation to both state provision, and the use of informal networks and personal resources in attempting to create securities (Thelen and Read, 2007; Kay, 2012). These theoretical perspectives provide analytical space for the consideration of existential and temporal aspects of security: emotions, affects, memories, aspirations (von Benda-Beckmann and von Benda-Beckmann, 2000: 7). Alongside and in interaction with more practical and material elements, these help to create a sense and lived reality of security in the present and thus a potential for longer-term plans and forms of settlement, projecting into the future.

During analysis of interview data we explored how our participants connect material and emotional aspects of security in the realities of their everyday lives, and further, how they link this to their decision to stay in the medium to longer-term in rural regions of Scotland. As part of this a strong narrative of a normal life or sense of normality emerged. In seeking to understand how this related to theorisations of social security we engaged with the wider literature on CEE migration where normality has gained prominence. Here the concept has been theorised and explored empirically in relation to the experiences of Polish migrants in the UK, primarily in urban areas of England (Galasinska, 2010; Galasinska and Kozlowska, 2009; Lopez Rodriguez, 2010; McGhee et al., 2012; Rabikowska, 2010). The category of normality is used for observing processes of adaptation and identity negotiation which occur through the migration process. As Rabikowska suggests, 'Empirically … normality passes as everyday reality which is but the materially and pragmatically experienced state of being' (Rabikowska, 2010: 286). Thus, the focus is upon how the individual perceives and creates their own normality, within the context in which they are experiencing settlement. Normality is understood as something that is relative (i.e. in contrast to what has been experienced before or elsewhere); and as often being constructed by people to make sense of the reality of their contemporary lives (see also Misztal, 2015: 1). As will become evident through this paper, normality can be used in a normalising way to order, rationalise and make the best of the situation faced.

The research cited above found that normality is talked about by migrants to suggest some sort of stabilisation in their lives, and has tended to focus on how a normal life is perceived by migrants in the future, as something to be strived for but not yet achieved (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010: 349). In addition, it is often discussed as something that is in contrast to the abnormal state of being which was left behind upon departure from their home countries, a creation of a new sense of normality, both different from, but also imitating

what was, at one time, experienced at home (Rabikowska, 2010: 287; Lopez Rodriguez, 2010: 340; McGhee et al., 2012: 715). In contrast, the normality which our participants talk about is very much situated in the lived reality of the present, although of course with reference to both experienced pasts and hoped for futures.

Through all of the literature there is an implicit connection of the emotional and the material in both the theorisation and empirical discussion of normality, for example, attention to the interaction of 'emotional well-being', 'employment, working conditions and prosperity' and 'safety and security' in the work of Galasinska (2010). This exploration of the linkages between the material and the emotional resonates with wider discussions in migration literature which highlight the difficulties of reducing the motivation for labour migration to purely economic reasoning. Instead there are consistent calls to understand the diverse and intersecting social, personal and emotional as well as economic factors contributing to the decision to migrate (Burrell, 2010: 298). In our study, economic factors have certainly been a key motivation for CEE migration to Scotland. However, we explore the ways in which economic factors interact with and are influenced by other significant material and emotional concerns which come together to influence the decisions to stay longer-term in rural regions of Scotland.

Due to the significant similarities between these frameworks of social security and normality, we use them in tandem in this paper. They complement one another in a number of key ways: both succeed in combining and paying attention to the emotional and material; that is neither security nor normality are seen as objective, measurable or given, but rather are accepted as constructed and actively negotiated through migrants' lived experiences, relationships and decisions; both are useful when looking at migration processes and decisions around longer-term settlement because they emphasise the importance of connections between places (here and there) and also between temporal perspectives (the past, present and future); finally, both align with understandings of migration and of longer-term settlement as openended, ongoing processes rather than one-time-and-forever decisions.

3. Migration and rural contexts

As noted above, our work also contributes to a wider body of literature which shows 'rurality' to be heterogeneous, multiple, dynamic and constructed (Cloke and Little, 1997; Little, 1999; Morris and Evans, 2004). This literature has looked at how issues of class, gender and ethnicity are elided in assumptions about monocultural, pure and static rural society (Cloke and Thrift, 1990; Philo, 1992; Berg and Forsberg, 2003; Little and Morris, 2005; Chakraborti and Garland, 2011). Such studies have emphasised connectivity and mobility between rural and urban places, the influence of wider social, cultural and economic contexts on rural realities and the existence of an urban-rural continuum rather than a stark and fixed opposition between urbanity and rurality (Boyle and Halfacree, 1998; Halfacree, 2009; Halfacree and Rivera, 2012). An emphasis on rurality as perceived and constructed, albeit in ways which directly impact upon behaviour and decision making (including in relation to migration), has 'highlighted symbolic representations of the rural as idyllic and/or boring (the rural idyll/dull)' (Rye, 2014: 330, cf. also Cloke, 1997). However, the role that international migrants play in such constructions of ruralities, both through their experiences and understandings of rural contexts and in the ways in which they contribute to and draw on rural structures, communities and economies have received relatively little attention (Rye, 2014: 327–8).

Existing studies of rural migration have highlighted the need to consider migrant experiences and micro level processes of decision-making and integration, and have noted the relative lack of such studies in European contexts (McAreavey, 2012: 490; Rye and Andrzejewska, 2010: 43). In the UK and Europe studies into both life-style migration (Halfacree and Rivera, 2012; Rye, 2014: 329–330), and experiences of black and minority ethnic rural residents (Chakraborti and Garland, 2011; de Lima, 2011) have explored aspects relating to motivations for migration, social connections and networks, employment etc. There has been less research into the experiences of rural labour migration.[2] A longer tradition of such studies exists in North America, exploring for example, temporary Mexican migration and the vulnerabilities faced by the migrant labour force within US agriculture (Rye, 2014: 43; de Lima et al., 2012: 86). Whilst this wider literature on rural migration can be instructive, it is important to explore the specificities of particular rural contexts and groups of migrants: in our case, CEE labour migrants to rural Scotland.

In recent years, research has emerged exploring the increasing numbers of CEE migrants arriving to a range of rural contexts in Northern Europe and the UK. This includes studies highlighting the need to consider the specificities of rural migrants' experiences, the nature of rural settlement and the implications of these in (re)shaping particular rural realities. In his study of CEE migration to rural Norway, Rye notes, 'profound multilevel and multidimensional economic, social and cultural changes in western countrysides resulting from East West migration streams' (Rye, 2014: 327). He calls for greater attention to migrants' lived experiences, and particularly so, in order better to understand the complexities of these two-way processes of change and the extent to which they complicate pre-conceptions about a post-productivist European countryside. McAreavey's study of CEE migration to new rural and small-town destinations in Northern Ireland also emphasises two-way processes of change, in this case by highlighting intersections between local and regional histories of migration, the extent of service provision and local infrastructure and the experiences and reception of new migrant groups (McAreavey, 2012). Increased migration to such places is a learning process for all involved, and McAreavey points out that more insight is needed into 'how social systems can cope … [and] the extent to which these 'new' areas will mature' into places of settlement (McAreavey, 2012: 489).

Studies of CEE migration to rural locations in Scotland have also highlighted the challenges posed for rural services and communities, as well as noting migrants' potential economic and demographic contributions (de Lima and Wright, 2009: Jentsch et al., 2007; Trevena et al., 2013). Early studies, examining the period immediately following EU accession of eight CEE countries in 2004, focused predominantly on experiences of arrival, and described migration which was largely circular and temporary, linked to seasonal employment in the agricultural and tourist industries (Jentsch et al., 2007; de Lima and Wright, 2009; de Lima et al., 2012). Concerns were raised about whether longer-term settlement, which might help to reverse some of the economic and demographic consequences of local outmigration from rural Scotland, could be achieved without improved employment opportunities for new migrants (Jentsch et al., 2007).

More recent work notes the continuing arrival of CEE migrants to rural areas of the UK, including Scotland, in order to take up 'devalued work' in agricultural and food processing industries (Scott and Brindley, 2012: 29). Trevena et al.'s study found that the availability of work, and/or housing can bring migrants to more

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[2] Although two recent anthologies explore multi-faceted experiences of rural labour migration within the Mediterranean region (Gertel and Sippel, 2014; Corrado et al., 2017).

peripheral or rural destinations in both Scotland and England and that longer-term stays in a range of urban and rural locations can emerge even when migrants' initial plans were more temporary (Trevena et al., 2013). Our research has found similar patterns: many of our participants have been living and working in rural Scotland for five to ten years and/or are planning to stay long term. This provides an opportunity to explore the ways in which longer-term experiences of and attachments to rural places develop, how these intersect with migrants' perceptions and experiences of normality and security, and the ways in which these contribute to decisions about settlement.

4. Fieldwork context and methods

The data on which this paper is based was gathered as part of an Economic and Social Research Council-funded study 'Experiences of Social Security and Prospects for Long Term Settlement in Scotland amongst Migrants from Central Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union' (SSAMIS). Fieldwork undertaken between June 2014 and December 2015, involved the collection of 207 in-depth interviews with migrants across four locations: Glasgow and Aberdeen cities and the rural regions of Aberdeenshire and Angus. In recruiting participants, we focussed upon those who had been resident in Scotland for more than one and less than ten years. In addition, observations were carried out at places of work, language classes and places where migrants come to access services. 60 expert interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders: representatives of local councils, service providers, migrant associations, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) practitioners and employers.

In this paper we draw on a specific subset of 22 migrant interviews collected in the predominantly rural regions of Angus and Aberdeenshire. These neighbouring regions situated in the North-East of Scotland, have relatively little experience of international in-migration, but have experienced increased migration from CEE since 2004, including to peripheral, small town, village and more remote destinations. The population of CEE migrants living in Angus is very mixed, with the majority coming from Poland but also many from smaller CEE countries (for example, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Bulgaria). In Aberdeenshire, the population of CEE migrants is mixed, again with a majority of Polish migrants, however, Russian-speaking migrants, mostly from Latvia and Lithuania, are also particularly prominent.[3]

The migrant interviews selected for this paper were chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, they capture the experiences of those who work or have worked on farms or in food-processing factories. We acknowledge that these sectors are not the only form of rural employment, but these are the jobs that predominated amongst our rural participants, due also to the particular economic and geographic profiles of the regions studied.[4] Secondly, they represent migrants' experiences of living in small towns, villages, or more isolated rural locations. Thirdly, reflecting the emphasis in this paper on an in-depth analysis of motivations for and experiences of longer-term settlement, at the time of interview, these participants indicated a desire and intention to stay in these rural Scottish locations for the foreseeable future. These 22 participants were employed in a range of unskilled and semi-skilled positions. Some had secured permanent contracts, whilst others were still managing a combination of more temporary forms of employment and/or agency work. Thirteen were female and nine male, eight were from Poland, whilst the others came from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Hungary. The age of these participants ranged from 19 to 56, with half of them in their thirties.

Interviews were conducted by two researchers, located for approximately six months in Angus and Aberdeenshire. Residence in the region enabled them to gain familiarity with local specifics, for example, the places where migrants lived, worked and socialised, the availability of services and social provision, both statutory and voluntary, and the nature and extent of transport links in the two regions. Participants were accessed mainly through their places of work, through ESOL classes, at sites of service provision and through snowballing techniques. The majority of the interviews were carried out in the migrants' native language, Polish or Russian, or if the migrant wished, or the researcher could not speak the language of the migrant, in English.[5] In these cases migrants may have been less able to express or convey some aspects of their experiences. However, a close reading of the transcripts demonstrates that linguistic ability is not the only factor impacting upon the rapport and levels of interpersonal communication established during the interviews. All interviews were fully transcribed, and translated into English, then analysed using NVivo 10 software.

5. Choosing rural destinations

A range of diverse, but interconnected, reasons for migration to and degrees of settlement in rural areas emerged from our interviews with migrants. As explored below, employment was a key motivating factor, however, decisions were most often based on a combination of both material and emotional considerations, balancing experiences of and aspirations for the past, present and future. Experiences of employment insecurity in their country of origin were a common factor contributing to an initial decision to move. Bozena, a Polish woman in her mid-fifties experienced multiple insecurities at home following the loss of her job during an extended period of sick leave. The material difficulties of unemployment were compounded by her anxiety that her age, gender and health would mean poor future chances of employment. Encouraged by a friend who had previously moved to a small town in rural Angus, she came for a trial visit in 2008, followed by a stay of several months, by the end of which she was convinced that her prospects for employment and a more settled future, at least until retirement, were better in rural Scotland.

> I came to have a look around, I'd reached the conclusion that I'll manage here, and that's how I arrived. After half a year I reached the conclusion that I'd like to stay here so I went back to Poland, dealt with all the formalities that needed to be dealt with, and I stayed here.
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> (Bozena, 56, Poland, Angus)

An increasing sense of security in rural Scotland, leading to more

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[3] In both regions data from the Scottish Census 2011 shows that Polish migrants make up approximately 1% of the population. No breakdown is available for other CEE migrant groups. http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/.

[4] In Angus and Aberdeenshire tourism and hospitality are less developed than, for example, on the west coast or in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The two regions are more agricultural and industrial, including fishing-related industries particularly in Aberdeenshire. Experience of working in the fishing industry is not covered here as migrants working in this sector predominantly lived in larger towns, for example, Peterhead or Fraserburgh.

[5] The researcher located in Angus is a bilingual Polish-English speaker and the researcher located in Aberdeenshire is a fluent Russian speaker. This mirrored the linguistic make-up of the larger migrant populations in each region. Where interviews were conducted in English, citations in the text are verbatim and reflect the differing levels of fluency amongst participants. Citations from interviews conducted in Polish or Russian have been translated to retain the fluency of the participants' speech in their native language.

settled arrangements and a longer-term attachment to particular places emerged over time for several participants. Andrei, a Bulgarian man in his late twenties had been coming to the same farm in Angus for seasonal work over a period of four years. When he was offered the opportunity of a permanent full-time contract he decided to stay. At the time of our interview his wife had already joined him and they planned to bring their young daughter, as well as Andrei's disabled brother and his elderly mother to live with them soon. Andrei described this reuniting of the family as an important step towards more permanent material security for the whole family in that it would increase his chances of obtaining social housing, and he hoped his brother and mother would have better access to disability benefits and care than currently available in Bulgaria. It was also the first step to a more emotional sense of connection and belonging in Scotland as 'home', which a more secure job alone did not provide:

> Home is in Bulgaria, not yet, not yet. Maybe when my daughter is here, my whole family, maybe. But for the moment, no, not home here'

(Andrei, 27, Bulgaria, Angus).

For some participants the relative security of rural Scotland was measured not just against their experiences of life back home but also in relation to much more insecure experiences of migration to other locations. According to Madara, who had made the journey from Latvia with her husband Gatis and sister Dita, and who had experienced a traumatic period of homelessness and exploitation in the South-East of England, the Aberdeenshire farm to which they had come to live and work was 'like paradise' in comparison. Her 19-year-old son Karlis explained that, just as for Andrei, it was an emerging sense of both practical and emotional security which led the family to formulate longer-term plans and bring over other family members.

> Obviously I moved only when Mum felt secure here — only then. That's when Mum invited me, because she never planned to live here. She never planned it, she just thought she'd live, earn some money for her debts in Latvia, then maybe go back. But then she [came to] Scotland, decided she liked it and to live here forever. She's definitely not gonna change her mind.

(Karlis, 19, Latvia, Aberdeenshire)

These examples reflect a theme from the wider literature on migration, showing that decision-making in relation to both migration and settlement is open-ended and ongoing and can involve negotiations within families and households (Piętka-Nykaza and McGhee, 2016; Piore, 1979). For many of our participants, longer-term stays had not been initially planned, but had gradually emerged, becoming the plan for the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, in contrast to some earlier studies which have suggested a more haphazard process of migration, with control largely ceded to others (e.g. employers, employment agencies) (Jentsch et al., 2007), our participants recounted various planning strategies, gradual pathways towards longer-term stays and negotiations involving a range of relationships and actors.

Indeed, as noted in the literature on network and chain migration, including more recent studies regarding migration from CEE to the UK (White and Ryan, 2008), relationships, and the emotional and material forms of support and security they can offer, were often key to decisions regarding initial migration to rural destinations, as well as influencing decisions about longer-term stays. A number of our participants, like Bozena, made a conscious choice to move to a particular rural location in Scotland, encouraged and reassured by friends, relatives and acquaintances who were already living and working there. As well as providing information and encouragement these relationships often also facilitated initial access to accommodation or employment. Other participants began by making shorter visits, or, like Andrei, engaging in seasonal or circular patterns of migration, getting to know local conditions, employment and housing opportunities before making a more permanent move.

Intersecting and overlapping emotional and material aspects of (in)security, as well as negotiations and comparisons of past, present and future prospects, in rural Scotland and in their countries of origin, influenced migrants' decisions to move to rural Scotland, and in some cases led them to consider and plan for longer-term stays. These factors also feature as subtexts to many of their descriptions of day-to-day experiences within these rural contexts, explored in more detail below. However, mirroring Rabikowska's observation on the close empirical relationship between normality and everyday reality (Rabikowska, 2010: 286) it is here that migrants' accounts more regularly stress the importance of living a normal life.

6. Experiencing rural realities

6.1. Employment

We start our examination of migrants' day-to-day experiences and understandings of rural realities by looking at the key area of employment and how positive and negative experiences may impact upon longer-term plans and processes of settlement. As highlighted above, we deliberately focus on agricultural work, mainly farm work but also employment at food-processing factories. In recent studies on rural migration of CEE migrants to the UK and Norway, experiences of agricultural work are more often discussed in negative terms (Jentsch et al., 2007; Rye and Andrzejewska, 2010; Rogaly, 2006; Rye, 2014). However, the majority of these studies have focussed on temporary farm work, which due to its seasonal nature brings a host of insecurities and challenges. As Rye and Andrzejewska suggest, this can also mean migrants see the work in an instrumental way and are prepared to accept bad working conditions in the short-term for long-term (financial) gain in their home country (Rye and Andrzejewska, 2010: 44, 49). Our participants had mixed experiences showing the complexity of employment: much depends upon, for example, the nature of working relationships; the location of work; employers' attitudes and behaviour, all of which impact upon both material and emotional securities and influence migrants' sense of normality in their lives.

Employers and their attitudes towards and willingness to support migrant workers emerged as an important factor (cf. Rye, 2014: 337), highlighting the power relationships involved and the potential for employers to use this power in a positive, albeit paternalistic manner, or in more negative ways. Employers who were accommodating, flexible, reliable in the payment of wages, and helpful in providing information and assistance with bureaucratic procedures helped to normalise potentially stressful experiences, assisting migrants to feel secure:

> When we got here, they did everything … we were from the EU so they didn't need to do some things, but the manager did it himself. He got us National Insurance, with those little cards, he helped us do everything. It was very good. He's a very good boss!

(Vasylyna, 38, Estonia, Aberdeenshire)

The presence of a good employer and related positive experiences of employment generate a sense of security and contentment in the present, but significantly also allow a stable future to be imagined. In a number of cases, participants spoke of how they were happy with their current circumstances and related this to more open-ended plans for settlement. Madara, working on a farm in Aberdeenshire along with her husband Gatis, described the good working conditions and treatment by their employer, contrasting these in the wider interview with much more negative experiences elsewhere. She explained that this was a contributing factor to their wish to remain on the farm long-term:

He wants us to get our money, and if there's nothing to do we clean and paint or something. He doesn't want to leave us without money. He's great. That's why we've been here for six years and don't want to go anywhere else!

(Madara, 38, Latvia, Aberdeenshire)

One problem that has emerged across the agricultural sector for migrants, and in rural areas more broadly, is the lack of opportunities for progression (Jentsch et al., 2007; McAreavey, 2012: 497). Our research showed that this is often an issue, but also that some opportunities do exist. Ieva, a 24 year old from Lithuania, moved to a less manual job in the farm office. Others, like Andrei, moved from more casual, seasonal contracts to contracts which were permanent and guaranteed year-round work. Some migrants moved away from agricultural work to more stable, and perhaps less physically taxing, employment in non-agricultural sectors, for example, in hospitality, in the care sector or cleaning. However, in a number of cases, migrants who left agricultural jobs to try work in another sector later returned: Iza, a Polish woman in her early thirties moved into care work, and then returned to farm work, due to its more straightforward and less emotionally taxing nature.

Dita stressed the sense of calm that she and her brother-in-law Gatis experienced in their farm-based employment, comparing it favourably to work away from the agricultural sector, both in their home country and in the South-East of England:

Working in an office is good until they start getting on your nerves. But I like my work here, I feel very calm and I know my job. I do it well and I do it the way I want to. … Sometimes I get tired, which is natural, but it's not stressful. My job is nice and stress-free. When we worked at the hotel I would cry in the morning before going to work … now I laugh all the way to work. Gatis always sings while we're driving to work. As long as the farm is here, I don't have any other plans.

(Dita, 45, Latvia, Aberdeenshire)

For Bozena, the difficulties of agricultural work, its physical demands and monotony, were clearly apparent, however these were to some extent mitigated by a sense of emotional well-being linked to her appreciation of the beauty of particular rural locations:

I liked this farm. We'd be working in this workshop, and it was really dark there, and we'd go out and see this beautiful beach and the sea. And I would say to myself that it's worth working there for this view alone!

(Bozena, Polish, 56, Angus)

Thus, positive employment experiences have both material and emotional components, which draw on perceptions and experiences of both rurality and security. Reliable employers, good working conditions, regular wages, all help to provide a sense of material security; whilst feeling valued by employers, having good relations with co-workers, feelings of contentment and calmness whilst at work, and appreciating the surrounding environment, can help to facilitate more emotional feelings of security. Such securities are related to perceptions of a more normal life, as highlighted in Galasinska's study where she found that employment, good working conditions, prosperity, and a general sense of well-being are key to migrants' understandings and constructions of what makes a life normal and ordinary (Galasinska, 2010: 316—317). These in turn, can help people to make sense of and find satisfaction in their current circumstances, despite the less than ideal positions they may nonetheless occupy.

There is no denying that farm work is physically hard, often monotonous, dirty and that for most migrants it is, 'not my dream job' (Aleksandra, 40, Poland, Angus). Despite her enjoyment of the farm's natural environment, Bozena found the prospect of working there long-term problematic. Her decision to move to a job in cleaning and kitchen work was motivated precisely by her longer-term plans to stay in the small town rural environment of Angus and a fear that she would not be able to manage the physicality of farm work as she grew older, noting that she was already an 'exception' to be working in this sector in her mid-fifties.

What I'm doing now, I could easily do until retirement. If I keep in good health, of course. But I feel I could easily do it until retirement. … And in the fields, that might have been a problem at that age. I haven't come across any older people working in the fields … Because it is hard work.

(Bozena, 56, Poland, Angus)

This demonstrates the importance of appreciating the temporality of security (von Benda-Beckmann and von Benda-Beckmann, 1994: 13), and normality (Rabikowska, 2010: 287). For Bozena a move away from the physically demanding work she had carried out at the farm to the less physically taxing work she currently did meant that future security and a more normal existence could be imagined, allowing her to plan for longer-term settlement.

The more negative experiences related often showed the flip-side of the positives highlighted earlier, again picking up the interplay between material security and its more emotional aspects. Several participants talked about exploitative and/or negative relations with either employers or co-workers, including with other migrants, who were appointed as supervisors, or where issues of competition for jobs and frustrations around interdependencies led to tensions and conflict. Participants reported that some employers provided only very poor or basic facilities, paid wages late and/or offered unstable and unclear working hours. It is undeniable that many migrants continue to work on farms largely due to a lack of any viable alternative (cf. McAreavey, 2012: 497), and may find that their working conditions not only hinder opportunities for progression in employment but also limit the development of other aspects of a normal life.

Long hours, physically demanding work, and a tendency to work almost exclusively with other migrants, for example, were raised repeatedly as hampering participants' abilities to make wider social connections or to improve their skills in English language. As Dita explained:

At the beginning we didn't really speak to English speakers because everybody spoke Russian at the farm. We didn't have any sort of communication. Then we started to talk to [the farmer] more, the management and also to the tractor drivers, who spoke English. [Madara's] son made some local friends and

they come to our house. So now we're more exposed to it. But before that how were we supposed to learn without socializing with people?

(Dita, 45, Latvia, Aberdeenshire)

Boguslawa really wanted to learn better English in order to communicate with her boss and co-workers, nonetheless, the nature of her work and the long hours left her with little time or energy for classes.

This is hard manual work, as I say, and the monotony, I come back home in the evening and it's dark. So this is maybe just an excuse but it does work this way that I just don't feel like learning because I'm simply falling asleep already, I'm tired.

(Boguslawa, 48, Poland, Angus)

Indeed, some people left farm work precisely in order to improve their English language skills and in doing so to improve their opportunities of alternative employment. Despite having gained a more administrative role in the farm office, Ieva decided to leave farm work in order to take up a full-time programme of study at a local college:

I decided to come here to my ESOL programme … because my English is not so well, so I decided to do it. And I would like to do something more than working in the farm.

(Ieva, 24, Lithuania, Angus)

Ieva's decision was facilitated by her life stage and personal circumstances. With no dependents and a Scottish partner willing to support her she was more able than many to make such a choice. Nonetheless, her experience of the difficulties of combining language learning with farm work and simultaneously the low likelihood of moving to other forms of employment without improving her language was far from unique. This indicates some of the challenges migrants face regarding language learning and employment in rural contexts.

6.2. Language learning

Provision of ESOL classes in rural regions is often limited due to their shorter history of accommodating diverse linguistic communities and language learning needs and a geography of more dispersed settlements with sometimes poor transport links to centralised structures and resources. These issues, as well as the impacts of recent funding cuts and constraints, were raised by ESOL teachers and local authority workers during expert interviews and reflect concerns raised in the wider literature (cf. McAreavey, 2012: 499; de Lima et al., 2012: 91).

In both Angus and Aberdeenshire migrants could choose to attend ESOL classes leading to qualifications at further education colleges located in larger towns, however, the daytime classes and intensive nature of these courses meant that they could not be combined with full-time employment. The alternative was to attend evening classes, and despite a lack of resources and many challenges, a network of classes, run by local authorities, the Workers Education Association, church groups and other charities, were available at beginner and intermediate level in small towns and larger villages in both regions. However, attendance at these classes was often unpredictable due to incompatible working hours, exhaustion following a long day of physical labour and other pressures for migrants. Irregular attendance and difficulty keeping

up with homework left teachers struggling to accommodate a constantly shifting number of learners and levels of English, whilst migrants expressed frustration at a lack of progress in their language abilities.

Nevertheless, fieldwork observations at evening ESOL classes suggested that those migrants who had attended gained not only language skills but also opportunities for wider social interactions and information about local culture, signposting to services and sometimes tailored assistance with specific needs and challenges. As such, classes offered migrants options for overcoming certain practical difficulties, as well as more emotional insecurities linked to social isolation and problems with communication. As Gatis pointed out:

If you can't speak the language, it's a big problem really. It's much easier if you understand a little bit. Otherwise, you can't say what you want and nobody understands you.

(Gatis, 38, Latvia, Aberdeenshire)

This sense of a certain abnormality linked to language barriers and difficulties in communicating more freely and with a wider circle of co-workers, acquaintances and neighbours also featured in Boguslawa's account of her struggle to improve her English:

At work there are two Scottish ladies … and the guys operating the forklifts are also Scottish. And there are three Latvians and me, the only Pole. All the others are Scots. So it would be nice to be able to exchange a few words with them, even just niceties … I try, they can see that, but … they don't speak to me now because they don't want to stress me out. They don't try to make me speak, there is this language barrier.

(Boguslawa, 48, Poland, Angus)

For some, the more readily available opportunity for improving communication with those around them on a day-to-day basis was to learn another CEE language rather than English. Iza, from Poland, regularly travelled to the farm where she worked with a group of Russian-speaking migrants from the Baltic States. As a result she had reactivated her school-girl Russian and found this to be more important for day-to-day communication than English. Similarly, Paskal, who already had good English, enjoyed picking up some Russian and Polish from his co-workers, made easier by his native knowledge of Bulgarian, another Slavonic language:

Last year I learnt Russian. … Just for a few weeks, because I had to work on another job … [where] there were mostly Russian speakers. So I had to learn it. It's not that hard for me because Bulgarian and Russian are quite close. … This year, it's mostly Polish language. The Polish language is also close to Bulgarian, so it's easy and it's fun.

(Paskal, 26, Bulgaria, Aberdeenshire)

Many participants had struggled to improve their English, despite in some cases having lived and worked in the same areas for five years or more, and in virtually all cases expressing a strong desire to become more fluent. The realities of rural contexts and agricultural patterns of employment compounded difficulties in accessing opportunities for both formal and informal language learning and in some cases resulted in a vicious circle: migrants could not improve their English whilst working long hours on farms where they were mainly surrounded by other CEE co-workers, yet they could not find other forms of employment, increase their circle of acquaintances or deepen their forms of

communication without first improving their English. As reflected in the wider literature on social security (in)securities in one area produce or contribute to (in)securities in other aspects of a person's life and such multiple (in)securities are often linked to particular contexts (Kay, 2011: 46). For some participants, connections to other CEE migrants and shared language families could facilitate language learning, although of other CEE languages rather than English.

6.3. Social connections

Above, we have touched on the way in which language is important for the forging of social connections, and how it can be a medium through which this occurs. We now move to look at how the making and functioning of social networks is shaped by the rural contexts within which migrants live. In some of the existing literature a lack of easy access to wider networks of co-nationals living nearby has been highlighted as a particular issue for migrants in rural places (cf. de Lima, 2011). In contrast, whilst our study has certainly found less by way of more formally organised migrant associations and activities in these areas, migrants' daily lives often involved quite extensive networks and interactions with their co-nationals and other CEE migrants. This was not necessarily a universally positive experience (cf. White and Ryan, 2008) and networks were often described as burdensome and claustrophobic. In Iza's case this had led her to move from a street of social housing predominantly inhabited by Polish and other CEE migrants:

I wanted to move out of there because for me it's simply terrifying what goes on there. There are a lot of Poles there, a lot of Poles, and the situation there isn't great. … I had such experiences that I couldn't enter the flat in peace with my shopping because they would look into my bags as if I had god knows what there

(Iza, 31, Poland, Angus)

Other migrants talked about conflicts with co-workers and other acquaintances, where for example feelings of indebtedness and burdens of reciprocity could become problematic (cf. McCullom and Apsite-Berina, 2015). Here there were tensions between aspects of material security (finding a job, a place to stay, help with formal structures) which could sometimes only be resolved through reliance on fellow migrants, and emotional insecurities where jealousies, competition and unwanted feelings of co-dependence led to difficult relationships and conflicts.

In contrast to such problematic relationships, migrants often spoke about strong positive links and mutually supportive relationships with family members or with a smaller number of close friends.

I even have some very close [Polish] friends that I've known since I came here and we really like one another …. Because I'm here alone, meaning I have no family here, … I had to find some people I could trust here. Someone who would take care of the flat when I'm away, someone I could leave my keys with, … but also trust them with confidential stuff … It works both ways, because when they go away I do the same for them, … I'm really happy that I found someone like this because I feel calmer.

(Bozena, 56, Poland, Angus)

Most often these close, trusting relationships were with co-nationals, but sometimes also with other CEE migrants or with Scottish neighbours or co-workers. Elizabete, from Latvia, spoke of her Scottish neighbour, remarking on the way she spoiled her and her daughter, and overall, pointed to the friendliness of Scottish people in the small town where she lived. These closer relationships provided a sense of emotional security and were often trusted as a first line of support in case of a potential crisis, demonstrating the overlapping temporalities of security where resources built up in the present help in the imagining of a secure future (von Benda-Beckmann and von Benda-Beckmann, 1994: 7).

A sense of emotional security was also linked in several migrants' narratives to living in smaller places perceived as friendlier, safer and quieter. Such perceptions may well be constructed through migrants' preconceived ideas about rural places, and the friendliness referred to often appeared relatively superficial in reality. Nonetheless, a sense of familiarity with others can have a significant impact on feelings of security and belonging in a place (cf. Galasinska, 2010: 315). As Ieva explains, this can influence plans to settle longer-term in such small-town contexts:

For me it's better to stay in smaller towns, nice people, you know the people, they say hello for you. I am walking sometimes in the street and I think "I know this person but I don't know why ", but it's the guy from the gym, we start to say hi … It's nice to see people's faces that you know. Bigger cities, you just going and you don't know people.

(Ieva, 24, Lithuania, Angus)

Migrants' social connections in the rural contexts we have studied are complex and in some ways contradictory. Extensive connections with co-nationals and other CEE migrants dominate, and may be essential in gaining access to various practical securities. However, these social ties can also be viewed as burdensome and can produce emotional insecurities, whilst a much smaller number of close and trusted friends are relied upon emotionally and in guarding against potential crisis. On the other hand, relatively superficial friendliness in day-to-day interactions with local people, which participants interpreted as a specific feature of rural contexts, played a significant role in engendering a sense of emotional security, encouraging them to consider making a more permanent home in these places.

7. Longer-term attachments to rural places

In this final section we look in more detail at the ways in which migrants interpret their experiences of living in a rural region, through their own constructions of rurality, as well as their understandings of what constitutes a normal life, the emotional and material aspects of this, and how this might impact on longer-term plans for settlement. We do this by firstly looking at the specific nature of these rural contexts, for example, levels of service provision and infrastructure, and our participants' perceptions of this rural reality, which in some ways replicate wider assumptions about rural idyll/rural dull (Cloke and Little, 1997). We then return to instances where migrants talk specifically about the future and what longer-term settlement in rural Scotland depends upon.

A common assumption is that rural places suffer from a lack of services, transport links and infrastructure and that this is particularly problematic for migrants who may lack the wider networks and alternative avenues to problem solving available to local residents (de Lima et al., 2012). However, it is important to explore each rural context in its own right and to challenge homogenising assumptions about degrees of service scarcity and remoteness. Also, whilst levels of service provision and infrastructural development may be implicitly measured against an assumed urban norm in external assessments of rural scarcity, it is important to explore in

greater depth how migrants living in these places experience such realities and what measures of normality they apply.

It has been clear in our research that there are significant differences in service provision between small rural towns with, for example, their own community centre, supermarkets and cafes, council access points and direct bus links to other (and larger) towns; and smaller villages which might have just a post office, a couple of small shops and a library open twice a week, as well as much more limited public transport links. Moreover, migrants' experiences regarding the accessibility of services, connections to other places (for example to nearby towns, regional centres etc.) and indeed the degree of importance they attach to this kind of access can be very varied and may depend, for example on their life stage, or previous experience of living in rural/urban contexts in their countries of origin (cf. Trevena et al., 2013).

Some of the younger migrants who took part in the research although planning longer-term stays in Scotland expressed a desire to move to the city at some point in the future. They appreciated opportunities to get out of rural locations, building social networks and enjoying leisure activities in nearby urban centres instead. Karlis reflected on the lack of leisure opportunities in rural Aberdeenshire:

> There's nothing really for young people. … Nothing — work, earn money, eat your food. There's nothing to do …. You can't have hobbies. Okay, you can play football, but if you don't like football?
>
> (Karlis, 19, Latvia, Aberdeenshire)

By contrast, Ieva, who was also still in her early 20s, but had grown up in a village in Lithuania explained that she felt most comfortable in smaller, rural contexts and whilst enjoying opportunities to visit nearby towns, was definitely planning a longer-term future in rural Angus with her local boyfriend. She dreamt of buying a house further out into the countryside, in which to start a family:

> I like the nature, I like the people here, they are really nice, I really like it here. And it's not so far from a bigger city like Dundee, if you want to have fun or go for shopping, but I like smaller place to relax and have a nice time.
>
> (Ieva, 24, Lithuania, Angus)

Older migrants with families also commented on the quiet and peaceful surroundings, deriving a sense of both emotional and physical security that they perceived to be more difficult to obtain in larger urban settings:

> It's quiet here and better for the child and I don't need to worry about him going outside and something happening. … It's quiet and peaceful here. No, anything but Aberdeen, it's noisy.
>
> (Madara, 38, Latvia, Aberdeenshire)

Particularly when discussing their growing sense of attachment to places where they had been living and working by now for several years, many participants stressed the 'normality' of their lives and the sense of emotional and material security this engendered, often directly contrasted to insecurity and uncertainty in their countries of origin:

> No, we're definitely staying here longer term because, first of all I have nothing to go back to in Poland. I haven't got a flat there and my parents wouldn't be able to help … And let's not fool

ourselves, here I have the comfort … I work and can earn my keep by myself. I can afford a flat, a car, I can live normally and earn my keep.
>
> (Iza, 31, Poland, Angus)

By contrast with such measures of normality, a relative scarcity of facilities or services was seen as unimportant. In response to a question specifically about the lack of services or other facilities in the small village where she lived, Vasylyna stressed that she had other priorities:

> There's everything we need here, nothing else is necessary. … We're happy with everything … We came here to work, we're settled at work, and for us that's the most important thing … The second thing was to make friends, and we've got that as well.
>
> (Vasylyna, 38, Estonia, Aberdeenshire)

For many, an emerging sense of security and decision to settle longer-term in rural Scotland was about an explicit juxtaposition of past experiences, present circumstances and aspirations for the future. However, the future was not necessarily final: longer-term stays emerged over time and were predicted for the foreseeable future rather than 'forever' (cf. Piętka-Nykaza and McGhee, 2016). Elizabete told us she was definitely staying in rural Angus for now, because of the comfort of her life there, but nonetheless,

> I speak with one Latvian lady here, when we old, we retire, maybe we will go back, so … Because, like in Scotland you can feel like human, and live not like a … just exist and fight.
>
> (Elizabete, 39, Latvia, Angus)

8. Conclusions

This article's main contribution is the use of concepts of social security and normality to shed new light on the diverse lived experiences of migration to and settlement in rural areas. Our findings show that migrants' decisions to stay longer-term in rural areas of Scotland are linked to both material and emotional aspects of social security, and to the intersections between them. These are experienced by migrants as contributing to a normal life, and employed by them in their constructions and lived realities of both normality and rurality.

In applying this approach through a detailed qualitative study, we have demonstrated the significance of a deeper engagement with specific rural contexts by revealing the complexities of migrants' lived-experiences in particular settings. These highlight the interconnected nature of emotional and material securities, contributing rural migrants perspectives to the existing literature on normality and social security. Our findings show the need for more nuanced descriptions of rural labour migrants' lived experiences. By exploring the relatively positive realities reported by the CEE migrants involved in our study, we bring fresh insight to research in this field which has more commonly highlighted issues of marginalisation, exploitation and social exclusion.

Our findings demonstrate the importance of considering the overlapping temporalities of social security for a fuller understanding of the ways in which migrants negotiate emotional/material (in)securities in the present, and how this relates to their plans for the future. We have further shown that these negotiations are shaped by the opportunities and constraints particular to rural

realities, as well as by migrants' own perceptions of normality and rurality. Rather than measuring their experiences of rural Scotland against an abstract urban norm, it was their lived experiences and constructed understandings of emotional and material security available to them in these rural contexts which enabled the participants in our study to live normally. This was often compared favourably to their recent past experiences, or current understandings of material conditions in their countries of origin, despite, for many, ongoing strong emotional ties to people and places in those countries. It is worthy of note that the empirical research on which this article is based took place before the UK 'Brexit' referendum. Media and public debate since the decision to leave the EU was made have highlighted both immediate and likely future impacts for both material and emotional security amongst CEE migrants, however further empirical research is required to scrutinise these in more depth.

To conclude, we suggest that the theoretical approach presented here is more widely applicable and could be employed in further empirical research in other rural settings and in relation to broader shifts in political, economic and social contexts. Furthermore, the qualitative insight which this article provides into how and why migrants chose to come to, and stay longer-term in rural Scotland, has wider relevance and significance for policy and practice in a range of rural contexts within and beyond Scotland and the UK (Rye, 2014). Greater attention to the complexities of migrant experiences can help to reveal ways in which rural social systems could better respond (cf. McAreavey, 2012) so that such areas of 'new' migration may develop into positive places of settlement.

Acknowledgements

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