Patterns and Processes of Recent Migration in Northern Ireland

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Abstract: This paper describes patterns and processes of recent migration to Northern Ireland. The significance of space and place in relation to migrants' incorporation within new destinations is explored before considering the particular context of migration to Northern Ireland, a divided society. Drawing from the 2011 Census, we present recent migration and settlement patterns in Northern Ireland. Key emerging patterns include the rural nature of migration, variation among migrant groups, and the spatial concentration of migrant communities within particular localities. This exploration of spatial patterns is expanded on through a consideration of the localised processes of migration according to the themes of Finding Housing and Neighbourhood Interactions. In conclusion, we explore the implications of the data presented, reflecting on spatial problems and spatial solutions in an increasingly ethnically diverse Northern Ireland.

Keywords: migration, space, Northern Ireland, rural, divided societies

Introduction

This paper describes patterns and processes of recent migration[1] to Northern Ireland. The significance of space and place in relation to migrants' incorporation within new migration destinations such as Northern Ireland is explored before moving on to consider the particular context of Northern Ireland as a divided society[2]. Drawing from the 2011 Census, we present recent migration and settlement patterns to Northern Ireland. Key spatial patterns include the rural nature of migration, variation among migrant groups, and the spatial concentration of

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[1] Migrant and immigrant are contested terms (Anderson and Blinder 2014). The terms migrant and migration are used in this paper instead of immigrant as they refer to the movement of people across space, without the legal and national status implicit in the use of the term immigrant.

[2] In Northern Ireland, ethnonational division is manifest in many ways, including enduring segregated residential, schooling and domestic practices (Hamilton *et al.,* 2008; Shuttleworth and Lloyd, 2009, 2013; Bell *et al.,* 2010).

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migrant residences within localities. The localised processes of migration are then considered through the spatial themes of Finding Housing and Neighbourhood Interactions. In conclusion, we explore the implications of the data presented, reflecting on spatial problems and spatial solutions in an increasingly ethnically diverse Northern Ireland.

Conceptual Approach

In the United States predominately rural[3] states with little prior migration experience (such as South Carolina, Alabama, and Tennessee) had the fastest growing foreign-born populations during the 2000s (Terrazas, 2011; Batalova and Lee, 2012; Lichter, 2012). A similar pattern of migration and social change is evident in Europe with the establishment of new migration destinations, many of which are rural (see for instance Kasimis *et al.,* 2003; Trevena *et al.,* 2013; Gilmartin and White, 2008; Wallace *et al.,* 2013). Often this occurs in locations where inward migration is a new phenomenon and consequently the proportion of the foreign-born populations has increased rapidly. Although absolute numbers may remain small, this shift in local demography is just one aspect of recent migration to new destinations that is not fully understood.

Furthermore, it has been shown elsewhere how large-scale patterns can mask local specificities, overlooking the existence of pockets of communities and creating places that are 'statistically invisible' in that they are not easily identified through statistical analyses (Wheeler and La Jeunesse, 2008:175; see also Lichter and Johnson 2007; Foulkes and Schafft, 2010). It is critical that we develop an understanding of migration patterns at different spatial scales. We follow Miraftab in noting that

> 'we need to systematically examine small towns and non-traditional destinations to recognize the specificities and generalizabilities that surface in terms of immigrants' experiences' *(2012: 2019).*

This is because place and space matter when considering prospects for migrants' positive incorporation in a new society and particularly regarding rural ethnic inequalities (Lichter, 1989; Snipp et al., 1993; Jensen, 1994; Tickamyer, 2000; Hugo, 2000; Shucksmith et al., 2009; Slack, 2010; Peters, 2012; Ledwith and Reilly, 2014; Tsimbos et al., 2014).

Using social and cultural networks as well as digital technologies and international travel, migrants sustain various connections, including social and monetary, across multiple spaces and places. These transnational connections often exist across large distances but are realised at numerous spatial affiliations,

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[3] There are various definitions for rural, such as those based on settlement sizes (NISRA, 2005). The term 'rural' also differs according to national context and particular discussion. Acknowledging that the division between urban and rural is a dichotomy which 'divides the indivisible' (Brenner and Schmid, 2014), in this paper we use a strategically imprecise definition for rural. Rural is used here to indicate areas that lie outside the Belfast and Londonderry/Derry urban areas. For these purposes, the point is that the current migration phenomenon is unlike previous patterns of migration in that people are moving into urban AND/OR rural areas.

including domestic spaces, neighbourhoods, cities, regions, and nation-states (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998; Smith, 2005; Portes, 1996; Levitt and Nyberg-Sørensen, 2004).

Gaps in knowledge arise partially due to a conceptualisation of migration as a fairly linear movement and are framed according to binaries of push-pull, stay-move, newcomer-local, or permanent-temporary. Contemporary migration is more complex and multi-faceted than this: it is fluid and it is not a one-off proposition. Yet, this fluidity and complexity is embodied and enacted in everyday social practices in space (Easthope, 2009; Dunn, 2010), producing fluid spaces and places (Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 2005) with differing opportunities for different social groups.

Processes of accommodation can be complex. For instance, in rural United States geographic mobility does not equate to socio-economic mobility, and can result in the creation of ethnic enclaves (Crowley *et al.,* 2015). Equally it has been found that African American and Latino migration in the US not only reinforces existing concentrations of poverty, but it severely exacerbates poverty in rural areas (Foulkes and Schafft, 2010).

There has been growing interest in spatial understandings of migration, moving beyond methodological nationalism and disciplinary domains to take account of global processes in a range of spatial affiliations, including the nation as well as supra-national spaces, regions, cities, towns, villages, neighbourhoods and the home (Oakes and Schein, 2006; Brickell and Datta, 2011; King, 2012; Knowles, 2014). Such spatial knowledge furthers our understanding of how global migration flows are embodied in space and place, and the relationship of these spaces and places within global networks. Concentrating on scale and context also responds to the need to move towards inter-disciplinary and context attentive perspectives (Levitt and Nyberg-Sørensen, 2004; Guarnizo and Smith, 1998; Favell *et al.,* 2006; Bauböck and Faist, 2010; Bricknell and Datta, 2011; Miraftab, 2012). Further, spatial understandings of migration flows allow for the identification of spatial patterns of migration, problems of accommodation and subsequently of spatial solutions.

Understanding the context for inward migration to Northern Ireland
It has been established that context influences the processes of migration (Alba, 2005; Crul *et al.,* 2012). Context can be understood in various ways including the legal, social, cultural, institutional, political and economic characteristics of societies that receive migrants. Northern Ireland is a new migration destination with a particular context of division, notable for entrenched segregation between the two largest ethno-national groups, Protestants and Catholics and its ongoing peace process.[4] Spatial elements of the Northern Irish conflict prevail including

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[4] The terms Protestant and Catholic are used to denote ethno-national identity in Northern Ireland. The use of these terms reflects the 2011 Census, wherein these categories are a response to the Census question 'religion or religion brought up in'. The terms Protestant/Unionist and Catholic/ Nationalist are generally synonymous. Like all identity, Northern Irish identity is complex and reproduced through social interactions and according to context.

residential segregation, walls dividing communities, and a strong association between identity and space (territorialism) (Nolan, 2012; 2013; 2014). The legacy of segregation endures and residential segregation has only slowly reduced during the peace process (Shuttleworth and Lloyd, 2009; 2013). The arrival of 21st Century migrants has complicated an already complex picture and while there are a number of successes, Northern Ireland has at times had difficulty accommodating migration. Difficulties in accommodating increased diversity were brought to the foreground in 2014 with an increase in hate crime (PSNI, 2014), public controversy over a statement that the First Minister made with regard to the Muslim religion (Rutherford, 2014), and the UK's only Chinese-born locally elected official threatening to leave office due to ongoing racial abuse (McDonald, 2014).

A new destination for migration, Northern Ireland's socio-spatial division makes it a valuable location for considering migration spatially and for exploring the role of division in the receiving society. This article describes the spatial patterns evidenced in the 2011 Census and the processes of how migrants find housing or their experience of particular neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland. In doing so we make a contribution towards localised spatial understandings of migration as we move beyond a superficial understanding of spatial patterns (Gilmartin, 2013:18). In conclusion, implications of the data are explored, reflecting on spatial problems and spatial solutions in diversifying Northern Ireland.

Before we proceed, it should be noted that the label 'migrants' is used to group individuals who typically move to benefit from new economic opportunities. In reality it denotes many different types of individuals, all of whom have different motivations for migrating and diverse experiences of migration, including diverse spatial experiences. It is worth appreciating the complexity that falls under the 'migrant' category in the UK. While the A8[5] is the largest EU grouping of migrants, and those from Poland the largest national group in the UK, there is much variation within migrant identity and experience within the A8 category. For instance, Polish migrants may include unskilled workers alongside graduate professionals. Both groups may be broadly classified as economic migrants, but they may differ greatly in career and other life aspirations.

Methods

This paper draws on research with migrant communities that McAreavey has been conducting in Northern Ireland since 2005 and Doyle since 2012. Migration to Northern Ireland is characterised through various data sets. Spatial patterns of migrant residences evidenced in the 2011 Census are then documented, using Geographic Information System software to produce maps. The mapping is complemented by qualitative data from a series of 13 focus groups and 43

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[5] Ascension 8 or A8 countries, namely the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia

interviews that were conducted by McAreavey with migrants and with support agencies between 2005 and 2013 (see Irwin and McAreavey, 2014, Wallace *et al.,* 2013, McAreavey, 2012 for further information). Thirty interviews conducted in 2014 and 2015 in Northern Ireland by Doyle with stakeholders and migrants are also drawn on. The qualitative research was conducted in Belfast, an urban setting and in the council areas of Craigavon/Armagh, Newry and Mourne, and Dungannon[6] that encompass rural hinterlands and small and large towns. These areas had experienced a significant increase in migrant communities following the expansion of Europe in 2004. Most migrant participants were recent arrivals, with none being born in Northern Ireland, although some had been living there for at least twenty years. Participants were from Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa and included professionals as well as individuals working in unskilled jobs, many of whom held multiple jobs. The research design did not focus on a specific nationality, age-group or define a particular socioeconomic profile. However, many of the focus groups and interviews were conducted with members of the Polish community, the largest Eastern European group in Northern Ireland in the 2011 Census.

Interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed, with interpreters being used where appropriate. Consent was granted from all participants and the payment of an honorarium to migrant participants provided token recognition of their contribution. Data was analysed and interpreted by reading and re-reading scripts, followed by a process of coding, to identify and embed emerging issues (Boeije, 2010).

Data is presented according to the following key and in some cases pseudonyms are assigned to help make the analysis of certain incidents easier to follow:

- Focus Groups – #1, 2, 3, etc.; FG; gender; country of birth or organisation; date
- Interviews – #1, 2, 3, etc.; I, gender; country of birth or organisation; date

Quantitative Data Limitations

It is worth appreciating the limitations of available quantitative data on migration: identifying exact numbers of migrants is challenging. The Census provides detailed data every decade and it has its own limitations (discussed below). More generally, in the absence of yearly monitoring, various sources contribute to our understanding the overall ethnic make-up of the population (see for instance Wallace, 2011; Young, 2012). Furthermore, as Gilmartin (2013) notes with regard to the Republic of Ireland, use of inaccurate or incomplete statistics is common, particularly in politics and the media.

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[6] Council boundaries have since changed in Northern Ireland and these council areas are encompassed within Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, Newry, Mourne and Down, and Mid Ulster Councils respectively.

The 2011 Census provides spatial data ranging from Northern Ireland level to the small area level, providing a crucial social snapshot of local human geography resulting from the migration that occurred in the first decade of the 21st Century. The census data on Country of Birth, Passports Held, Language and Ethnicity all provide a picture of migration and diversity in Northern Ireland. Country of Birth (COB) provides a rough measure of migrants. Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) dataset KS204NI combines COB into the categories for non UK/Ireland COB of 'EU Pre-2004', 'EU-Post 2004', and 'Other' (which accounts for those born outside the EU). 'EU-Post 2004' migrants approximate to Accession 8 (A8) migrants, but also include any migrants from European Union (EU) countries that joined after 2004 (such as Bulgaria, Romania, Malta and Cyprus).

The 2011 Census data is limited in a number of ways, including the questions asked, categories for response, and geographic levels released. There have also been anecdotally-reported difficulties with non-English languages and it is believed that the census under-reported non-English speaking communities (Irwin et al., 2014). Census data provides a snapshot from the day of the census in 2011 and does not account for migration before or after that date. Data on migration after 2011 comes from various sources including National Insurance registrations, the Schools Census, local medical records, and translation statistics. These sources all have their limitations; spatially the data is rarely discernible below local government district.

Recent migration to Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is better known as an area of out migration than one of inward migration, although it experienced small-scale migration during the 19th and mid-20th Centuries (Russell, 2012). This pattern was reversed at the end of the 20th Century with the arrival of Portuguese and Asian migrants and then again in 2004 with the expansion of the European Union (EU). The 2001 Census recorded a minority ethnic population of 0.8% in Northern Ireland, the biggest community being those of Chinese descent. The expansion of the EU in 2004 to include the A8 states and the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland's policy of labour market access resulted in a significant increase in migration. There is no clarity on the numbers relating to the newest arrivals including Roma, Somalis, Kenyans and East Timorese; including an estimated 500 migrants from the horn of Africa (Young, 2012).

The inflow of migrants following the expansion of the EU in 2004 has been notable. Between the 2001 Census and the 2011 Census, the number of non-UK/Ireland migrants to Northern Ireland tripled (from 1.6% to 4.5%) and the number of ethnic minorities doubled (from 0.8% to 1.7%)[7]. EU Post 2004 Country of Birth migrants comprised 1.97% of the total population, some 35,704 individuals, including 19,658 people born in Poland.

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[7]   As measured by 'Country of Birth' (COB); Census 2011 Datasets KS204NI and KS201NI, 2001 Census datasets 201833 and 201837.

While A8 and the Polish are the largest migrant social groups, it should be appreciated that the 2011 Census 'Other' Country of Birth category includes 36,046 people from locations throughout the world. A8 migration is a pronounced phenomenon, but Northern Irish migration is diverse, as illustrated in Figure 1.
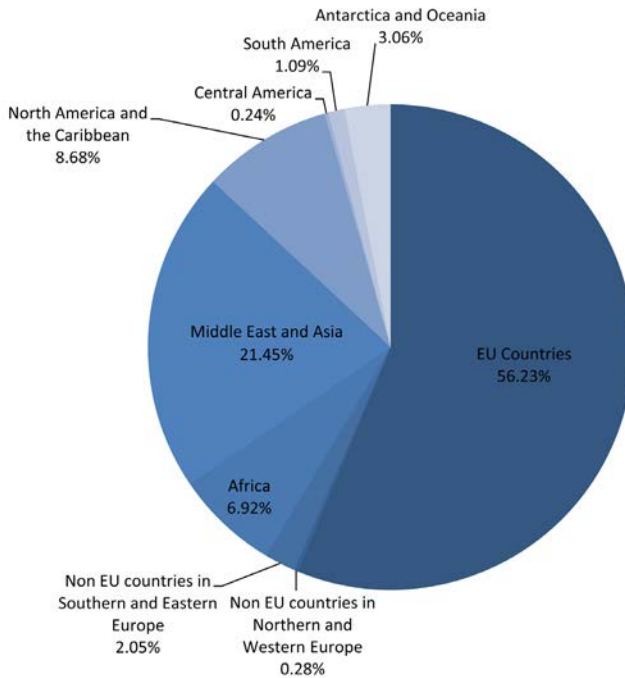

Figure 1: Country of Birth Non UK and Ireland, Northern Ireland Census 2011

Source: Authors' analysis of 2011 Northern Irish Census Dataset QS206NI

The statistics for interpreting by Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland record a phenomenal increase in interpreter requests over ten years, from 823 in 2004 to 84,622 in 2013. From 1 April to 30 June 2014 there were 24,158 interpreter requests for 41 different languages with the top six languages being Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Chinese-Mandarin, Slovak and Tetum (in decreasing order) (Source: Northern Ireland Health Service 2014).

Migrants to Northern Ireland are often families, enrolling their children in schools, and expanding their families once they have arrived. In 2012, 72 different languages were spoken in Northern Ireland's schools, and 48 Primary schools across NI had more than 15% non-white students (Source: Northern Ireland Department of Employment and Learning 2013). Data on births to mothers born outside Northern Ireland illustrates an increasing and consistent pattern of births.

Figure 2: Percentage of Births by Mother's Country of Birth (2004 to 2013)
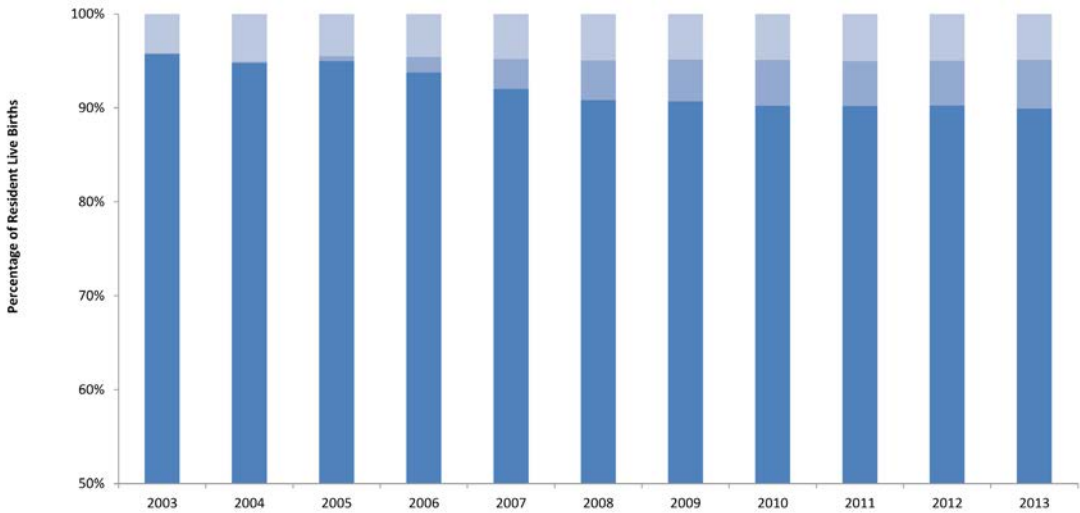
*Source: NISRA 2014. 2013 is provisional data.*

Figure 2 illustrates an increase in births to mothers born outside the UK or Ireland after 2004, reflecting A8 migration as well as ongoing migration from other countries. Notably, a decrease in migrant births reflecting economic conditions after 2008 is not apparent and levels of fertility have remained generally consistent.

Spatial patterns arising from recent migration to Northern Ireland

Key spatial patterns of migration and diversity indicators from the 2011 Census are explored below. This provides a spatial understanding of diversifying Northern Ireland, outlining spatial affiliations to be further investigated.
*Rural*

EU Post 2004 migration to Northern Ireland has a pronounced rural character as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: EU Post 2004 Migrants in Northern Ireland, Census 2011
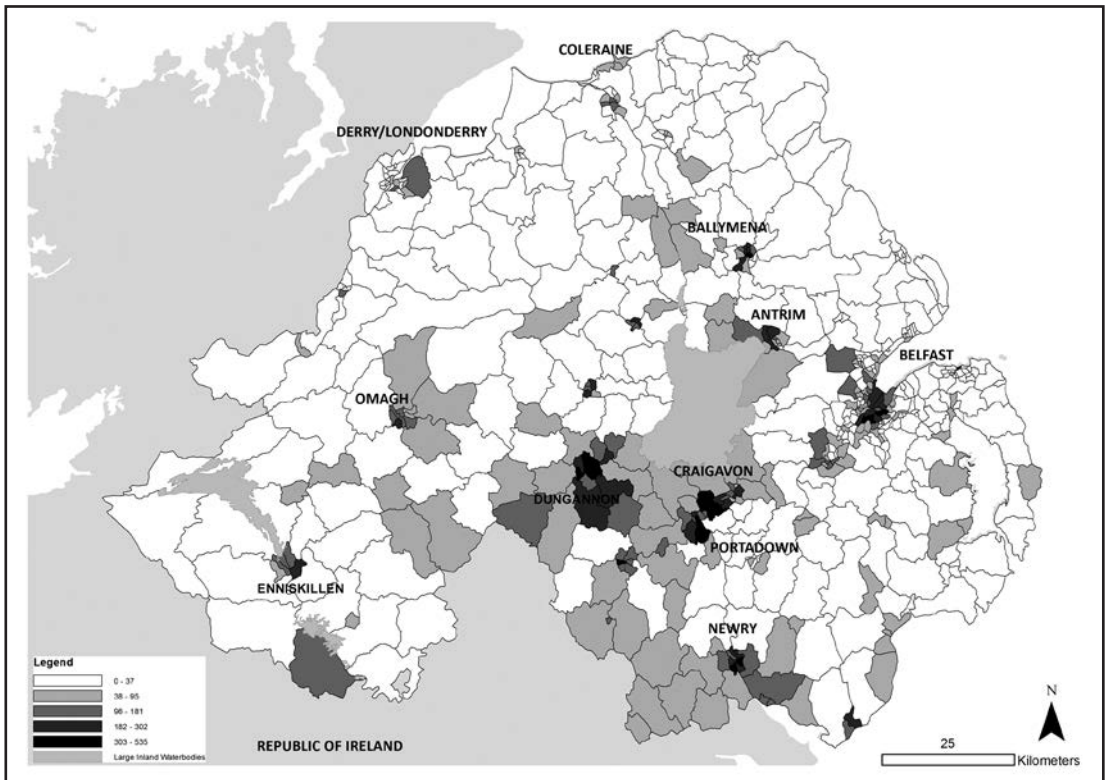
Migrants from EU post 2004 countries are distributed across Northern Ireland, with notable amounts in the Belfast area and large clusters in larger towns, including Dungannon, Craigavon/Portadown, Newry, Antrim, Ballymena, Omagh, Enniskillen and in a number of rural outliers such as Derrylin (south of Enniskillen) and Kilkeel (South East of Newry). There is a noticeable region of migrant settlement in southern mid-Ulster stretching from Craigavon to Dungannon and encompassing rural wards.

EU post 2004 migration has a geographically different character to that that of 'Other' County of Birth migration (non-EU migration), which generally is more concentrated in the Belfast area, as well as rural towns and villages.

**Figure 4:** Non EU Migrants in Northern Ireland, Census 2011
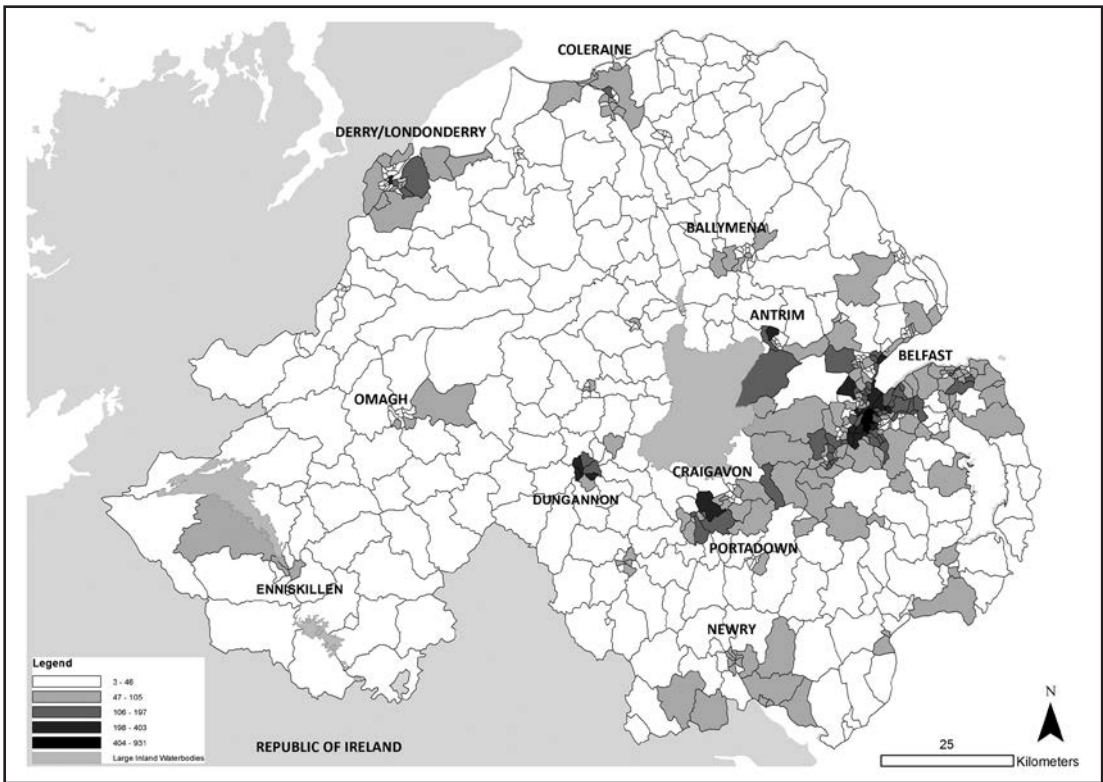
Figure 4 shows how non-EU migrants are clustered in the Belfast region and surrounding areas, as well as in towns, such as Derry/Londonderry, Coleraine, Ballymena, Dungannon, Omagh and Enniskillen. There are some exceptions, such as within rural pockets in County Down. While 'other' migration has a rural character, it is more predominately concentrated in settlements, i.e. towns and villages, whereas EU Post 2004 migration includes rural towns as well as rural wards.

Variations among migrant groups
Substantial spatial variation can exist among migrant groups. An example of this is provided through analysis of main language spoken by the two largest migrant groups, (identified in the 2011 Census dataset KS207 as numbers of main language speakers over the age of 3) Polish (17,731) and Lithuanian (6,250) and illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Polish and Lithuanian Main Language, %, Census 2011
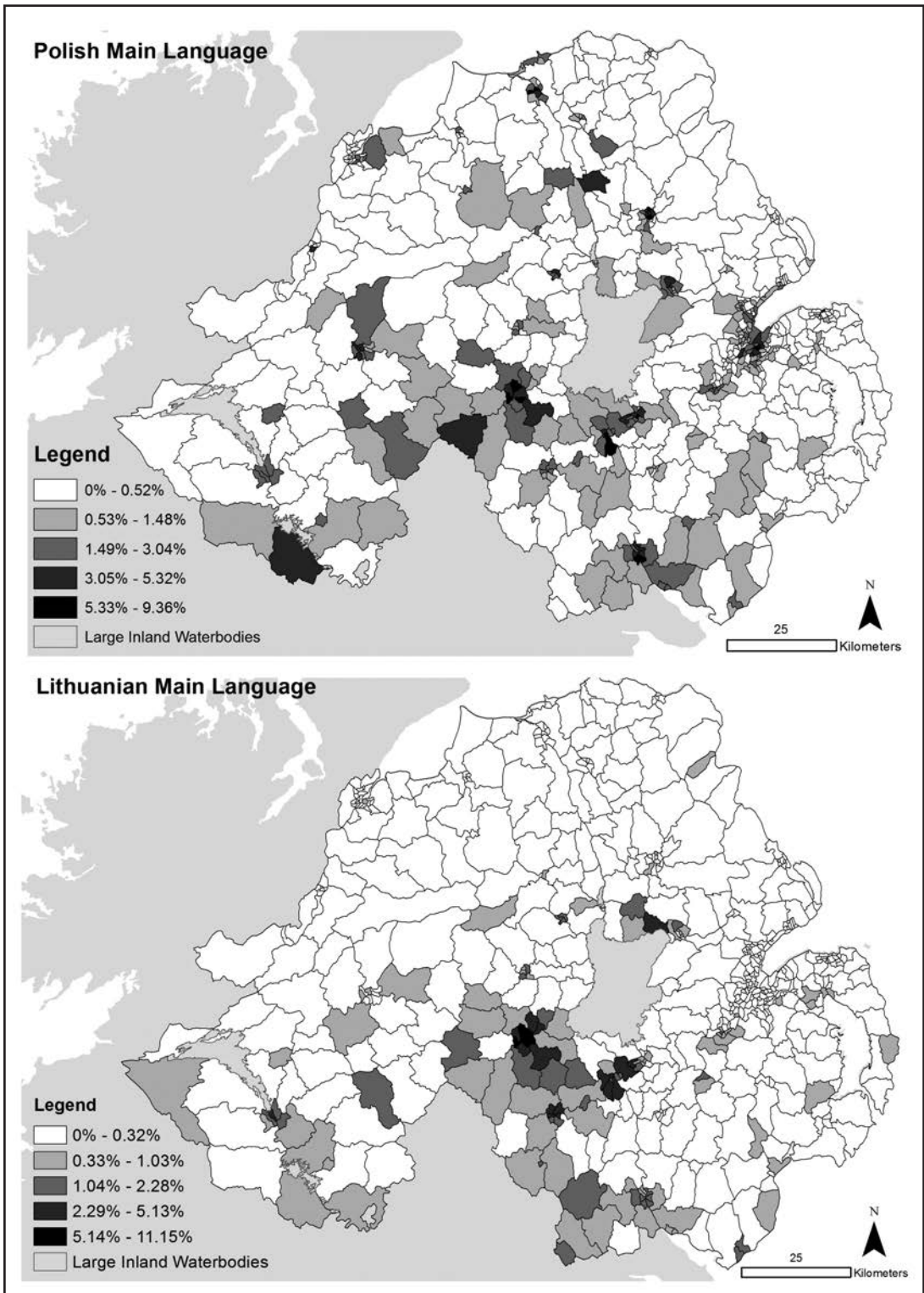
Figure 5 shows how Polish language speakers are concentrated, comprising over 3% and upwards of 9% of speakers in a number of rural wards and settlements (i.e. villages and towns), as well as in parts of Belfast. Lithuanian speakers are largely absent in the Belfast areas and the North West and North Coast, and in a more limited number of areas they have similar if slightly higher concentration levels than their Polish counterparts. They are clustered primarily in large towns and in the hinterlands of Dungannon, Portadown, Craigavon and Antrim, with upwards of 11.15% in certain wards within Dungannon.

Concentrated

Figures 3 through 5 illustrate the uneven distribution of migration communities throughout Northern Ireland and its pronounced rural element. Table 1 characterises this spatial pattern in terms of the combinations of migrants in various locations, and shows that concentrations at ward level are more pronounced than the 4.5% all Northern Ireland statistic, with 16 wards having over 10% non UK/Ireland migrant levels, and some as high as 30%.

Table 1: Wards with over 10% Non UK/ Ireland Migrant Residences in Northern Ireland.

Ward	Local Government District (Pre Reform)	EU Pre-2004 (%)	EU Post-2004(%)	Other (%)	Total (%)
Castle Demesne	Ballymena	.74	17.59	3.01	21.34
The Mount	Belfast	.97	8.1	3.52	12.59
Bloomfield	Belfast	.97	6.31	2.81	10.09
Woodstock	Belfast	1.1	7.75	2.85	11.7
Ravenhill	Belfast	1.52	5.0	3.1	9.62
Botanic	Belfast	1.95	3.56	8.73	14.24
Windsor	Belfast	1.81	4.29	11.44	17.54
Ballynafeigh	Belfast	1.47	5.55	8.77	15.79
Kernan	Craigavon	1.42	7.24	3.68	12.34
Annagh	Craigavon	2.86	12.72	4.5	20.08
Drumglass	Dungannon	3.14	14.55	6.32	24.01
Killymeal	Dungannon	4.7	16.64	5.4	26.74
Ballysaggart	Dungannon	3.15	19.6	7.47	30.22
Coolhill	Dungannon	2.72	18.63	8.95	30.3
St Patrick's	Newry Mourne	.48	9.12	1.9	11.5
Drumalane	Newry Mourne	.63	9.52	2.09	12.24

Source: 2011 Census Dataset QS204.

Evidently EU Post-2004 migrants, EU Pre-2004 migrants and Other migrants combine in varying ways in different locations; in some cases, EU Post-2004 migrants are the vast majority, in other locations, 'Other' (COB) migrants are the majority; and in some localities there are substantial communities from both Europe and further afield.

The wards with greater than 10% combined migrant levels are all located in villages and towns, with Belfast the only official city. Dungannon, a town in rural County Tyrone, has four wards with over 20% combined migrant levels and two with over 30%, a significant change to occur in 10 years.

The concentration of migrant residences increases further at small area level, the smallest area for which data is available. It should be noted that this geographic unit is variable in size and the numbers in question are small, so percentages should be approached with caution. Nonetheless, the data, presented in Table 2, illustrates high concentrations of migrant communities in relatively small areas and, significantly, this has emerged over a relatively short period of time.

**Table 2:** EU Post 2004 Country of Birth small areas over 25%

Small Area	Ward	Local Government District (Pre Reform)	EU Post-2004 (%)
N00000531	Castle Demesne	Ballymena	31.55
N00001980	Churchland	Coleraine	25.00
N00002187	Annagh	Craigavon	30.07
N00002224	Church	Craigavon	26.77
N00002818	Ballysaggart	Dungannon	28.6
N00002858	Coolhill	Dungannon	27.5
N0002886	Killymeal	Dungannon	30.13

Source: 2011 Census Dataset KS204

At small area level, the concentration of migrant residences becomes even more pronounced with seven small areas having over 25% EU Post-2004 migrants (at ward level the highest percentage is 19.6%). Concentrations of migrant residences in some cases entail a very concentrated location within a wider area. This is evidenced in Figure 6.

Figure 6: EU Post-2004 Migration Mid-Southern Ulster Comparison of Ward and Small Area Levels.

Source: © Crown copyright and database rights
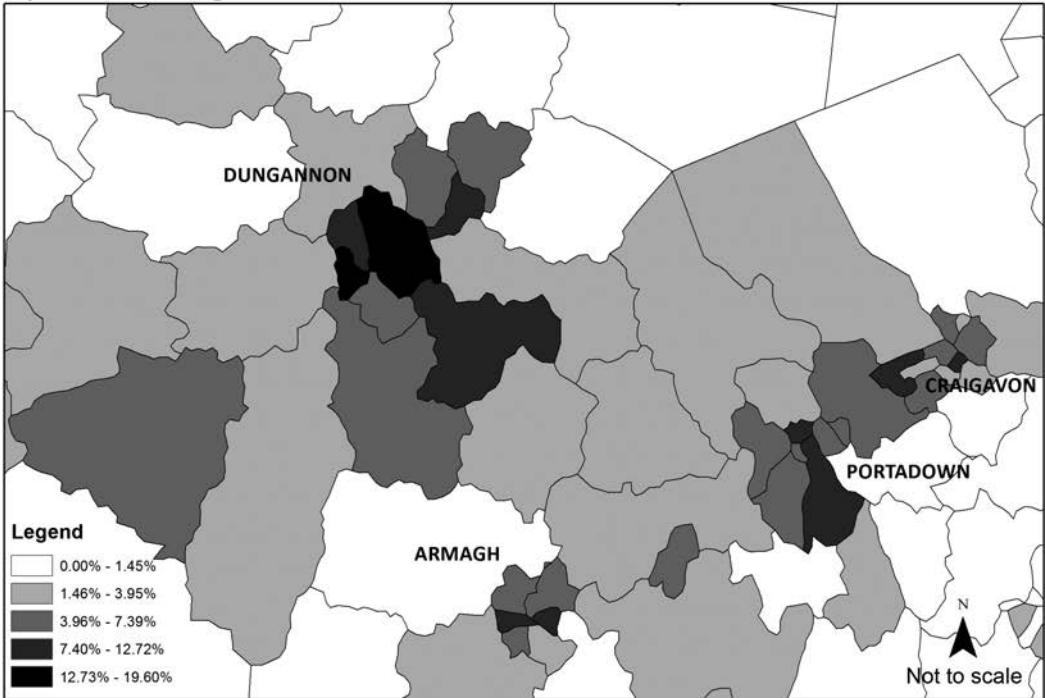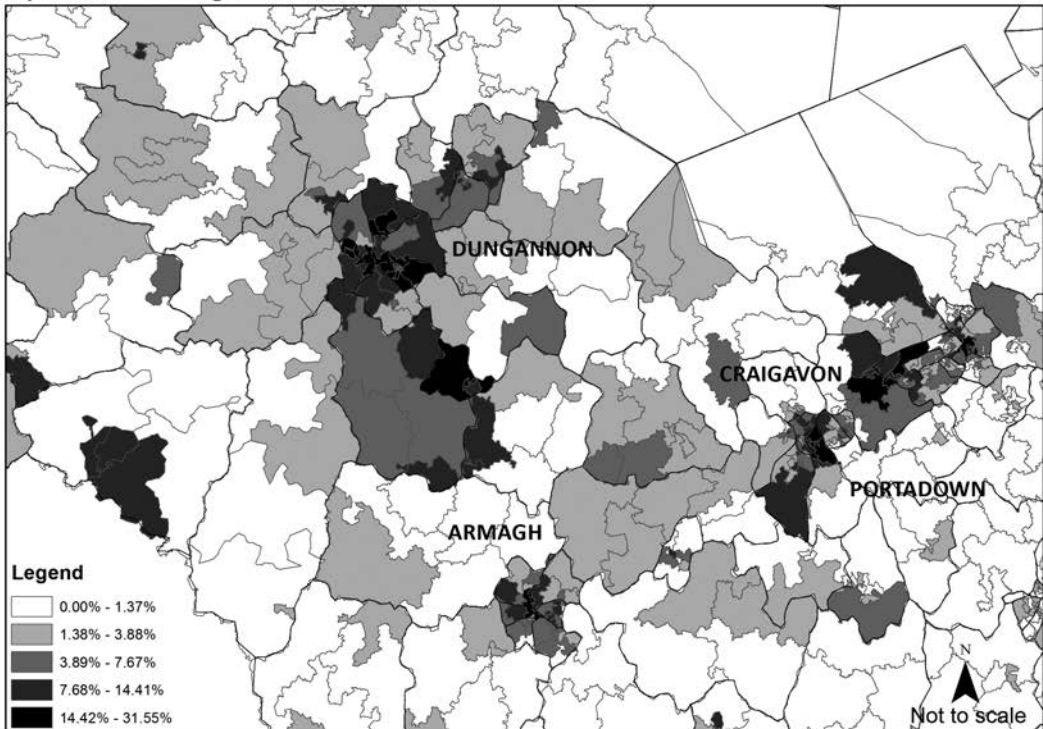
In the case of Mid-Southern Ulster, migrant residences at a small area level are concentrated, with both rural and settlement areas evidencing a nuanced geography of ethnic diversity, visible only through sensitive data analysis. It is clear that the settlement patterns of migrants have altered demographic balances of some areas substantially, including particularly some rural areas and towns and villages in parts of Mid-Southern Ulster. The concentration of migrant residences raises a number of questions, including why this pattern is occurring, as well as how migrants experience concentration, and what this concentration means for receiving communities.

Processes

Social and Cultural Division

Migrant settlement patterns to Northern Ireland should be understood within the context of Northern Ireland's social and cultural division. Civil unrest prevailed in Northern Ireland from the mid 1960s to the mid 1990s after which a 'peace process' was instigated. The transition to a peaceful society has been protracted and in 2015, division remains in many ways including segregated residential, schooling and domestic practices (Hamilton *et al.,* 2008; Shuttleworth and Lloyd, 2009, 2013; Bell *et al.,* 2010; Nolan, 2012, 2013, 2014).

The inflow of migrants resulting from the enlargement of the EU saw increased ethnic diversity from a very low base. As in many other new rural destination locations (Jensen and Yang, 2009; de Lima *et al.,* 2005; Jentsch and Simard, 2005; Kasimis *et al.,* 2003), a lack of knowledge, policy, and institutional structures within Northern Ireland, as well as a focus on addressing sectarian conflict, impacted on its ability to smoothly accommodate a sharp increase in migration (Wallace *et al.,* 2013; Geoghegan, 2010). The role of this context is explored in the following section through the local spatial experiences of Finding Housing and Neighbourhoods.

Finding Housing

Migrants' settlement choices are often opportunistic, with few options available to them. Availability is a key consideration and migrants are over represented in private sector housing, as illustrated in Table 3 with regard to A8 and A2 migrants.

Table 3: Housing Tenure in NI and tenure of A8 and A2 migrants

Housing tenure in NI and tenure of A8 and A2 migrants	NI	%	Migrants	%
Total NI dwellings (occupied)	**731,400**		**35,610**	
Social housing	118,600	16	2954	7
Private rental sector	122,900	17	27,077	60
Homeownership	489,900	67	5579	12

Source: Census 2011 and Department for Social Development 2013, provided by Aisling Murphy,
Queens University Belfast

The complexity of settlement strategies is wonderfully encapsulated in this extensive quote from an advocacy professional, working in the Portadown area.

'… in 2001/2 the Portuguese chose to live in interface areas[8] and that was the only place they were allowed to live because the accommodation was cheap and it was a dangerous area to live in. As families have come along and people have settled and we've adapted to seeing people around, we have seen in our database that we can trace our clients to every single street in Northern Ireland. Now that is a huge change in ten years, before they were in two areas Craigavon and Lurgan. Because of the geography of Portadown, Lurgan and Craigavon we don't have the same issue that exists elsewhere. As people have chosen to settle in the centre of Craigavon, because of the green spaces… So for instance in Dungannon, you can't change the geography of Dungannon, years back you had a Polish street or an East Timorese street and now you still have the same, because you can't go anywhere else. Also people work in [a meat processing factory in] Dungannon, so the Polish live on a Polish street, or the Portuguese live in the Portuguese street, so there is no integration…In Portadown they were all hemmed into interface initially… and certain things happened to allow them to move and part of that was probably the landlords in the boomtime who were buying up property all over the place. So all of a sudden you had Protestant and Catholic landlords who were buying property all over the place and they were concerned about the house, not the community. They weren't concerned about who they put in the house. So you found that there were Catholic landlords from the Garvaghy *[predominantly Catholic]* area who had bought houses in the Protestant areas and they were known to the Portuguese community. They would say, I've no house here, but I've a house in Thomas Street, would you fancy going up there? Plus as people in *[a meat processing factory]* became friendly with locals, people were saying, I've got a house, or my friend has a house so you had that build-up of friendships and relations that started to allow people to move. As people moved they started to say to each other that it's not too bad here, we thought this area was a dangerous area to live in, but it's ok' (#14, migrant support agency, 20.06.13).

This illustrates how the legacy of a divided society created spatial boundaries that limited migrants' housing options. It also demonstrates how statistics can overlook the granular nature of migration – demarcations at the street level denote different housing opportunities. Localised knowledge, friendships, co-ethnic networks, the housing market, and employment all affected the way in which migrants settled in this area. This array of factors and the degree to which they are localised are significant; the latter point is something that is not always appreciated

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[8] 'Interface areas' are the zones that lie between Protestant and Catholic neighbourhoods and where conflict occurs. They are often divided by 'peace walls'.

by newcomers. For instance, in Northern Ireland, shifting demographies have meant that many working class Protestant estates have been vacated and these are the areas that are often the most affordable to rent or buy and also are readily available. Migrants who are not familiar with the area will respond to these types of opportunities within the market and in the absence of local knowledge they may make decisions without seeking guidance from others. This can lead to choices that they later regret as this Polish man describes:

> 'If there was one thing I would change I would move away from *[XXX]* Park. …at the beginning when we were looking for a house, it was, I don't like this, I don't like that about this house. But then the prices started to go up so quickly …So then we started looking for something where we could afford it, and it turned out that that area was the cheapest area… But if I had to buy a house there again today, I'm not sure I would, … the house is a nice house, the building is fine, but the area is a problem'.

Unfortunately, this man had bought his home at the peak of the housing boom and at the time of the interview he was in negative equity. Although he and his family continue to live in the area, he described how their neighbourly interaction was limited. This was something they very much regretted and it would seem to be a loss for that community.

The workplace is important for migrants in their search for housing. Support agencies reported incidences of accommodation tied to employment, often within the agriculture sector and of the exploitation of those workers. Equally positive stories of finding housing through employers were told:

> 'My friend got me a job at *[an agricultural engineering company]* in *[small town]*. I rented a room from that company and during the next year my family came here. The company has houses and I shared a house with other Polish people' *(#10, Polish, M, 19.06.13)*.

> 'It was a link with work; I live with the same people that I work with. There are three rooms and we each have a separate room'. *(# 6 Polish, M, 13.06.13)*

While this man indicated that his living arrangement was satisfactory, it is notable that he had been in Northern Ireland for eight years, and yet he could speak only a minimal amount of English. He mixed entirely with other Polish nationals in the workplace and in his home, sending money back to his wife and son in Poland.

Some migrants are eligible for social housing. Even for those who do not qualify, housing agencies can play an important role in directing and supporting, as indicated by this Polish woman:

> 'First I went to the housing agency and they helped me find a house, there was a lovely woman there and we are friends to this day…She couldn't offer me a house because we were not working. But we started a

friendship and I remember she came to me one day with pots and pans…
she helped me find my first job cleaning'. *(#1 Polish, F, 13.06.13).*

Such positive connections are not always made:

'The place that they gave me was a smelly dump; it was not fit for a
human. The people who are dealing with this they showed me the place
and it looked like a prison with bars on the windows. It gave me bad
memories of the place that I just left. I went back to the lady and she said
we don't have any other place to give you. If you want another place we
can't help you. I can't understand how these people respond to people
the way that they responded to me' *(# 2 Congolese, F, 15.6.13.).*

Although this woman was 'free' to choose not to live in that place, that choice
could render her homeless. In this case, the lack of housing alternatives is suggestive
of ghettoisation, where communities are confined to certain spaces because of
social and cultural practices that also stigmatise certain places. This can lead to
'ghettoisation' and it is similar to Bock *et al.*'s 'blemishing places' (2014, p. 205
after Wacquant, 2008) when areas become socially and territorially stigmatised.
Ultimately this can result in 'poor' people living in 'poor' places, something that is
familiar for Native Americans in the Dakotas (Lichter and Johnston, 2007; Peters,
2012) and Roma in Europe (Kovaćs, 2015). These processes of concentration and
stigmatisation of newcomers are complicated by the often-existing poverty of
those already living in these neighbourhoods.

Migrants can display high levels of spatial mobility in that they are willing to
move, often several times, before they settle at least for the medium term. One
Polish woman moved with her two children and husband several times from the
South to the North of the city, before settling in a new housing development on the
edge of North Belfast. She explains the reasons for her family's choices:

'We moved to the Antrim Road *[from a loyalist area in South Belfast]*
… there was a garden, there were nicer kids and they could go out in the
evenings and just play on the street. They met their best friends there,
they befriended siblings…the sort of money we paid there…I thought
we were washing that money [rent] down the sink and my husband said
no, no, no we might go back. I said, we're not going back, what would
we go back to. But he felt it was too big of a commitment to buy a house
… It's difficult because it's Belfast and you don't know where to buy…
from all of the places that I have lived in Belfast; I liked the Antrim Road
the best. It's lovely, the garden, it was lovely to live there, the people and
everything. But the house was awful, it was getting colder and colder…I
love this house because it's new, it's clean and it's warm…but it's *[the
neighbourhood]* still getting established and we do know some of our
neighbours…but you wouldn't necessarily know your neighbours. But
it's ok here when you realize that all of those people have bought their
houses and there are no council houses.' *(#9, Polish, 13.06.13).*

Time and again research respondents reported their multiple moves. In a similar way an interpreter reported how she:

> 'used to live in the Falls Road and that wasn't very good – she had been disturbed by local kids and she ended up moving. She moved to the Ormeau Rd, near St. Joseph's college and this is much better'. *(FG #2 Chinese, F 21.03.12)*

Having the resources to exercise spatial mobility is evidently important for migrants in finding a preferred neighbourhood and home and the absence of good information sources can result in poor housing strategies. There is a real possibility of migrants getting 'stuck' in difficult neighbourhoods or in difficult housing situations. However, the degree to which spatial mobility is enacted as a simple means of improving well-being and quality of life, or if it is connected to other factors such as economic mobility is not understood. These matters warrant further investigation.

Neighbourhood Interactions

A number of social factors also influence the way in which relations within neighbourhoods are played out. Some communities in the region have felt threatened by the arrival of migrants and have responded with hate crime attacks (BBC, 2014). A number of factors combine to contribute to this behaviour of 'scapegoat framing' (Penninx, 2007, p. 3), including the fragmentation of social organisations, gentrification, and the insecurity felt by Protestant working class communities in new globalised markets (Chan, 2006). The expansion of the buy-to-let market changed the demographic character of communities unevenly, which has had disproportionate impacts on certain local communities. In Belfast, the growth of the buy-to-let market has been paralleled by a declining Protestant population and with it the perceived erosion of Protestant identity (Doyle and McAreavey, 2014). In other locations, available housing was in Catholic areas, with localised experiences of substantial demographic change there as well. Experiences in neighbourhoods are mixed:

> 'I also have a neighbour who welcomed us as soon as we moved in. She came over with cookies; she kept coming over to make sure that we were fine and offer help if needed' *(FG #9 Polish, F, 19.01.10)*

Neighbourhood interactions can also be minimal.

> 'My neighbours for instance are not that nice at all. Honestly. Maybe it doesn't bother me this much, because they are not important to me. But sometimes I get this impression that they behave the way they do, because I am not Irish. We live in a semi-detached house and I only see my neighbours very rarely. I'm not saying that we should integrate more... It's a quiet, nice place to live in, though not many people stay there' *(Polish woman, FG June 2013).*

Neighbourhoods can provide crucial support mechanisms for migrant families who are challenged by their new circumstances or by the lack of family networks. At the time of interview, one participant had been living in Armagh for four years. During that time she met and married a local man, and she enjoyed a friendship with her Lithuanian neighbours and

> 'all the time they are helping us and we help them...I can go to their flat and watch television. We see each other often'. *(#8, Ukrainian, F, 07.04.09).*

Perhaps more seriously one participant discovered that young children should not be left at home by themselves as she had done during a time when her daughter was sick and she had gone to the pharmacy for medicine. A neighbour had reported her to social services who then visited and indicated that she could find herself in serious trouble should the event be repeated. That same neighbour then offered to sit with the children and help out as necessary. Subsequently, the two women provided mutual childcare support. This participant was simply unaware of the legal obligation relating to young children as she pointed out that in Lithuania no-one felt any duty towards the children of others. Therefore, the transformative nature of interaction among migrants and established residents, which plays out in localised spaces and places, and everyday ways, is important.

Neighbourhoods can also provide something of a refuge for migrants, giving them the space to celebrate their cultural identity; to retain connections with their home country and to spend quality time with co-ethnics. One participant, a Lithuanian man, who was out of work, spent his time in a fairly solitary way on the computer, playing his guitar and fishing. Meanwhile, on a less frequent basis, he mixed with Lithuanian friends from his neighbourhood, celebrating cultural events, including painting eggs for Easter. Other neighbourhoods have developed cultural events that celebrate difference. These initiatives are often led by support organisations including church groups, ethnic associations and service providers.

Neighbourhoods are important places that provide the crystallisation of social relations. They can provide a supportive environment, nurturing positive connections between residents. In other situations, interactions can be less positive. Indeed, they may be so limited as to be the location of hate crimes, or they may encourage groups towards living in ethnic enclaves. The particular geo-politics that prevail in Northern Ireland present an additional complication to these processes.

Discussion and Conclusions

Northern Ireland has experienced pronounced migration in the 21st Century from a low base, comprising a large A8 and particularly Polish population but also with substantial numbers of international migrants. Migrants have settled in many places throughout the region. Migration has a particular rural character, and Mid-Southern Ulster has experienced considerable migration.

The concentration of migrants in some communities is pronounced; Ballymena, Craigavon, Dungannon, Newry and Belfast local government districts have all received migrant populations over 10% in some wards. Migrants comprise over 30% of residences in certain locations, a number of which are located in Dungannon. This is a significant shift in ethnic diversity over a relatively short period of time.

Where migrant groups are located can vary considerably, pointing to a need to consider the varying compositions of locations experiencing increased diversity and questioning the inappropriateness of treating migrant communities as a single 'migrant' social group. Practically speaking, governance, policy and institutions which address the migration process need to reflect the rural and variable spatial patterns of Northern Ireland's new communities. Clearly there are a number of challenges to increased diversity in rural areas, not the least being a need for variable language services, such as translation and teaching.

The concentration and pockets of migrants in some localities presents challenges. Some receiving communities have experienced the concentration of the migrant residences as part of a wider process of disenfranchisement, including perceived attacks on identity and widening economic inequalities. (Doyle and McAreavey, 2014; Nolan, 2014). There is limited research thus far on the experience of communities that have experienced significant levels of increased diversity.

Migrants are disproportionately reliant on the private rental market to find housing, and strategies for finding suitable housing are evident but these require resources. The concentration of migrant residences and the spatial variation in migrants groups is reinforced by interview data which discusses 'Polish Streets' and 'East Timorese Streets', and difficulties in leaving problematic housing have been identified. As Gilmartin notes, spatial concentration of migrants could lead to

'to future problems around access to resources and services, and around the quality of life in such areas' *(2013: 17).*

To apply Wacquant's distinction that the difference between an enclave and a ghetto is the degree of choice in mobility (Wacquant, 2008), there is the possibility of ghettoisation. There is evidently a need to avoid migrant and ethnic segregation adding a new layer to an already segregated society.

This paper has explored the spatial patterns of recent migration to Northern Ireland using the 2011 Census data, and the local experiences of migrants in finding housing and in settling in to neighbourhoods. The spatial patterns illustrate the complex nature of migration to Northern Ireland. It occurs in rural as well as urban areas, in differing areas for different country of birth groups, and in spatial concentrations, all of which have implications for both new and established residents. This is an illustration of the fluidity and complexity of contemporary migration. Examining the spatialities of migration beyond urban experiences, and beyond methodological nationalism, provides a more complex understanding of the phenomenon. As illustrated in the discussion of Finding Housing and

Neighbourhoods, space and place matter in the daily lives of migrant residents, and it is in these spaces and places where the processes of integration occur.

Acknowledgements

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