

“Where did you grow up?”

An investigation into the role of rural-urban dynamics during childhood migration and their impact on the migration intentions of students after graduation

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the impact of childhood migration on migration intentions post-university, particularly focusing on the rural-urban dynamics. To understand the factors that influence students' decisions to pick migration destinations is crucial. The objective of this research is to identify the most influential factor throughout the decision-making process of migration. To do this, a mixed methods approach was used with the help of a survey that was sent out to a targeted sample of students that are within one year of graduation. The data collected was analyzed using a Pearson correlation test and Kruskal-Wallis test in SPSS. The results indicate that place attachment and identity as well social capital and networks are the most relevant factors contributing to a students preference of rural or urban migration. The pull factors of urban areas outweigh the push factors, with the majority of students prioritizing social integration and a sense of belonging over employment opportunities. Additionally, the perception students have of rural and urban areas were seen as the most influential factor as this perception is shaped during the formative years and influenced by the experiences individuals had during childhood. This research highlights the importance of early experiences and perceptions when understanding students' migration intentions and their preference for rural or urban areas.

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Introduction

Migration – a complex issue affecting countries and people worldwide – has become a significantly important concept in our lives ('Migration: Meaning, Types and Effects', 2016). Although some may think of the term migration as something negative that occurs due to war and conflict, there are many other perspectives that it can be looked at from. In general, one of the most common perspectives that migration is experienced from is the economic perspective. This perspective believes that migration can help those in the country of origin and help destination countries develop and thrive. As they trade cultures, migrants frequently offer a variety of skills that can stimulate innovation and further develop cities. However, migration also brings difficulties with integration, social cohesion and resource access. Another perspective that migration can be viewed from is the social side. Both the migrant population and the host society are affected by the process of migration. Some people see migration as an opportunity for social integration, cultural diversity and enrichment (Dingle and Drake, 2007). The perspective of migration that will be focused on throughout this research paper will be from the cultural side. Migration can drastically impact an individual's identity and sense of belonging with the concept of childhood migration standing out as a special field of research within this complex web of human movement (Dingle and Drake, 2007).

The decision to migrate is one of the most important choices individuals make throughout their life course as they have to change work, school, friends and the all round culture change. The life course approach is a perspective that examines the interplay of social, biological, and environmental factors across an individual's lifespan. This approach emphasizes how the accumulated effects of prior life events and transitions shape individual experiences and behaviors. According to this theory, migration is a dynamic process that develops through time rather than a static occurrence. Young adulthood; which ranges from ages 18-22, is a time where considerable transformations and identity development is noticed and is usually when the decision to immigrate frequently starts to take shape. An important turning point in this process is graduating from university, which marks the end of official schooling and the start of adult duties. This period often occurs at the same time as young adults decide to move, either domestically or abroad (Wingens *et al.*, 2011).

Individuals who migrated as children, such as moving from a rural to an urban area, may have different points of view and reasons when it comes to their migratory goals as young adults influencing their perceptions of rural and urban environments, altering their wants and expectations for future migration (de Valk, 2011). The life course approach suggests that migration can generally have long-term implications on an individual's trajectory through social, economical, and cultural changes which include education, employment, relationships, and general well-being. This research therefore explores how childhood migration affects adult migration intentions as well as the influence of rural and urban surroundings (de Valk, 2011).

Understanding the factors that affect the migratory intentions of individuals with migration history might give important insights into their decisions in the future, especially when it comes to choosing between rural and urban areas after their studies. Rural-urban dynamics can be crucial in the shaping of migration intentions due to the unique socioeconomic, educational, and cultural opportunities and constraints they bring. The question of whether children who primarily grew up in rural areas have a desire to stay in those settings or if they are drawn to the attraction of urban life thus becomes intriguing. It is crucial to look into all of the variables that affect these choices in order to fully comprehend how childhood migration, rural-urban dynamics, and migration intentions after graduation interact (Yue *et al.*, 2010). Some influencing factors can be access to education, employment prospects, quality of life, social networks, and ties to family. However, the experiences, difficulties and goals encountered during childhood migration, particularly in rural or urban settings, are likely to have a substantial impact on how people view these regions and influence their future migration intentions (Yue *et al.*, 2010).

The question of "*How does childhood migration affect migration intentions in terms of rural and urban areas*" is particularly relevant in today's society, where migration has become a significant issue globally. The transition from rural to urban areas is a trend observed in many countries worldwide, and understanding the factors that influence this migration is crucial. Additionally, studying the impact of childhood migration paths on migration decisions later in life can provide insight into how individuals' experiences and environments shape their decision-making processes. By using this framework, a deeper understanding will be made of the factors that

influence students' migration intentions and how their childhood migration path shapes their decision-making processes. The factors that will be discussed throughout this research aid the study by expanding the knowledge we have of migration patterns and provide insights into how individuals' childhood environments shape their migration choices.

Theoretical Framework

This overview provides background knowledge on the factors that influence migration decisions with a focus on push-pull factors, social capital and networks, place attachment and identity and the rural-urban divide. It takes into account the economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects that influence people's decisions to migrate or stay in urban or rural locations. An examination of the role played by social networks and place attachment in migration decision-making is made possible by the combination of theories like Social Cognitive Theory and Place Attachment Theory.

Push and Pull Factors

There are many different reasons for an individual to relocate with certain factors that attract them to a particular area or certain factors that drive them away from that area. 'Push' factors are known as those that drive people away from an area. Some common examples of push factors are lack of job opportunities, poor healthcare or any general unsafe living situation. 'Pull' factors are those that attract individuals to a certain area and are known as 'place utility' meaning the desirability of a certain place that attracts newcomers. Pull factors act as a sense of promise for the individual of a better future and way of life which is the incentive to leave their current area of residence (Bruzzone, 2018).

In the context of migration intentions after university, some push factors from rural areas could include the lack of economic opportunities, lack of infrastructure, inadequate access to education

and healthcare and the limited social amenities. People may think about moving to cities with better educational resources due to educational limits including poor educational institutions and restricted access to training (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). These are some of the most common and crucial things that students leaving university desire and are searching for when choosing where they want to relocate after graduating. Some examples would be that they get to live closer to friends and family, accustomed to the culture there or rather that they enjoy the quietness that rural areas often offer and desire a close knit community. On the other hand, people are often attracted to urban areas due to the abundance of economic opportunities. Educational prospects also play a crucial role, as urban areas often provide access to quality education and training opportunities, including universities and specialized institutions. Although urban areas stand out in the department of a better future when it comes to students choosing an area to migrate to after university, there are some push factors from the urban area. People may decide to leave urban areas for a variety of reasons. Economical difficulties such as lack of work opportunities, low pay, and little room for advancement can lead people to look for better opportunities elsewhere (Thet, n.d). One of the most dominant push factors in this scenario would be the high cost of living. As the respondents that are being focused on in this research are all young adults that are just leaving university, the higher cost of living in urban areas such as housing, transportation and daily necessities may drive them away from the big city. This financial strain could cause individuals to be pushed away from urban areas and seek more affordable options in rural or suburban areas (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002).

Social capital and networks

The aforementioned theory of an area having push and pull factors is the basis of understanding the process of migration from one place to another. In order to enhance our understanding of this principle, we must look at other theories that would affect one's decision to migrate after university. The resources, relationships, and connections that individuals have within their social networks are referred to as social capital (Williams *et al.*, 2020). Social capital is important while moving since it presents individuals with access to knowledge, resources, and support during the relocation process. In contrast, social networks are the real social ties and interactions that people have with each other. These networks can help migrants by providing practical aid, emotional

support, and employment or housing options in the target country. In general, social capital and networks impact migrants' experiences, opportunities, and integration into new communities (GARIP, 2008).

In rural areas, social capital is frequently centered on close-knit communities with strong interpersonal relationships, shared values, and mutual support systems. Growing up in the country encourages the development of social networks that include family, friends, neighbors, and community members. Individuals can benefit from these social relationships by receiving emotional support, gaining access to resources, and learning about local possibilities. This social capital can impact migratory intentions by either encouraging people to stay in their rural communities because of strong social ties or by providing them with networks that allow them to migrate to cities (Lőrincz and Németh, 2022). Urban areas on the other hand tend to have more diversified social networks, containing a greater number of individuals from various backgrounds and occupations. These networks provide access to further social, professional, and educational possibilities. Individuals in cities might benefit from social capital by learning about job openings, educational programs, and professional opportunities. It also promotes networking and social mobility by allowing individuals to use their relationships to gain access to resources and strengthen their migratory choices (Lőrincz and Németh, 2022).

People's social capital can be greatly shaped by their early migratory path, which affects their access to opportunities, resources and support networks in both urban and rural areas. For example, people who have transitioned from rural to urban areas may have developed networks that help with social integration, housing access and job search. On the other hand, individuals with small social networks can have trouble finding acceptable employment or support networks. A useful perspective for understanding how social networks and interactions affect migration decision-making is provided by social cognitive theory (GARIP, 2008). The theory provides a framework for explaining how people learn and develop actions by seeing, imitating and being influenced by social circumstances. When applied to migration, social cognitive theory indicates that seeing and learning from those who have moved, as well as the social and cultural settings in which they are established, impact people' decisions to migrate. Individuals learn through a process of social modeling in which they watch and mimic the behaviors, attitudes, and

experiences of others, according to the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2002). This theory helps with understanding the research question of "*How does childhood migration affect migration intentions after university in terms of rural and urban areas*" by explaining if the behavior adopted throughout an individual's formative years can have an effect on their decision making process when migrating in the future (Williams *et al.*, 2020).

Place attachment and identity

The emotional and physical bonds people form with their urban or rural community are referred to as place attachment, which is another vital factor when it comes to deciding where to relocate to. Childhood experiences, cultural history and a sense of belonging all have an impact on these connections. For example, people who grew up in rural areas could have strong emotional links to their hometown that are based on memories from their youth and tradition. The opportunities and experiences of urban residents may also influence how they attach to and define themselves (Anton and Lawrence, 2014). Migration decisions are heavily influenced by the interaction between personal identity and place connection. *The Place Attachment Theory* provides insightful explanations of how identity influences migration choices. According to this theory, people form strong attachments to places based on emotional ties and important experiences they have had there. Childhood experiences are especially significant in forming place attachment since they frequently leave long-lasting impressions and memories. Individuals create significant attachments to their hometowns, neighborhoods and communities during childhood which produce a feeling of identity and belonging that can last into adulthood (Inalhan, Yang and Weber, 2021). These formative ties to places can have an impact on migration decisions after university as individuals who have a deep attachment to their rural homeland may experience sentiments of nostalgia, rootedness and a desire to stay connected to their familiar rural surroundings. This can be linked to the research conducted by Trąbka *et al* showing how important place attachment was for Polish and Lithuanian returnees from the United Kingdom (Trąbka *et al.*, 2022).

Place attachment can function as a pull factor, attracting people back to their rural regions after they finish their education in order to maintain their feeling of identity and connection to their

place of birth (Leviston *et al.*, 2023). On the other hand, individuals who established a strong connection to an urban setting throughout their youth may be more likely to relocate to urban areas after graduation. Their sense of identity and goals may be aligned with the active city life, cultural variety and possibilities for job progress. The urban environment may resonate with their experiences and ideals resulting in pushing them to seek out comparable environments for future commitments (Anton and Lawrence, 2014). Furthermore, place connection and identity might alter people's impressions of rural and urban locations. Those who have a strong rural place attachment may have a favorable attitude about rural places, emphasizing the feeling of community, natural surroundings and traditional values associated with rural living.

Rural-Urban Divide

This section examines the differences in socioeconomic conditions, infrastructure, and general quality of life between rural and urban locations. It also looks at how a person's childhood migration journey can influence how they view and assess both urban and rural environments. People who grew up in rural areas with little possibilities and inadequate infrastructure could think of urban places as having higher standards of living and more opportunities for success. On the other hand, those who encountered challenges or discrimination in urban areas may form an unfavorable opinion and decide to return to their rural communities. Additionally, it explores the special difficulties and chances people face in various places, giving a deeper view of the rural-urban gap (Pedersen and Gram, 2018). Individuals' perceptions of urban and rural areas are heavily influenced by socioeconomic factors. People who grew up in rural areas with limited economic possibilities, weak infrastructure, and lower living standards might view urban areas as providing more access to resources, employment opportunities, and a higher quality of life. The attractiveness of cities as hubs of economic activity and social growth might be especially appealing to people looking for better socioeconomic circumstances and possibilities for advancement (Lucas, 2021).

Methodology

Firstly, to successfully answer the question of *"How does childhood migration affect migration intentions after university in terms of rural and urban areas"*, I have assessed the influence of the childhood migration path on the general migration intentions. This means that I will determine whether students who grew up the majority of their life in rural areas are more inclined to migrate to an urban area after university or if they pursue to stay in an environment that they are accustomed to and do not want to leave the culture they grew up with in the rural area. This will also be analyzed vice versa from the perspective of students that grew up the majority of their life in an urban area to see if they are more likely to relocate to a rural area to try something new and experience a new culture or if they still chose to stay in an urban area as they have a sense of belonging there and do not want a dramatic change. Does the student's choice between either rural or urban have anything to do with the fact that they have a specific desired field of study that has been influenced by their childhood migration path. Lastly, I will examine the impact of perceptions and stereotypes of the students and how they define a rural and urban area. This definition is not the same for everyone and it can have an effect on their migration intentions as individuals that come from a rural background hold certain biases or assumptions about urban areas and also vice versa. These perceptions can be the reason one does not migrate to a specific environment and have an influence on their migration decisions.

The survey used a mixed methods approach to gather information on participants' post-graduate migration intentions as well as their childhood migration journey through the online survey platform Qualtrics. The purpose of the survey was to gather detailed information on the respondents' personal characteristics and views on migration. It was made up of a series of multiple choice and open questions that were intended to collect extensive information about the participants' experiences moving as children and their opinions on moving after university. Participants were asked how many times they migrated throughout their childhood and to specify their primary residence during the majority of their childhood, indicating whether they lived in an urban or rural region. An open question asking participants to provide their own definitions of what makes a rural or urban location was included in the survey in order to further study the different perspectives of rural and urban areas. These subjective perceptions and interpretations

of the rural and urban areas were revealed by the qualitative data, which helped in the analysis of the participants' migration intents and preferences.

Migration intentions were assessed by inquiring about participants' intended destination following university completion. Participants were asked to indicate whether they intended to relocate to an urban or rural region, and to explain their decision. This made it possible to examine the elements affecting their decision-making and it revealed how their early migration path might affect their desired future migration. The respondents were chosen from participants who were found through a number of methods, including social media platforms and personal relationships. Responses were gathered and safely kept on the Qualtrics platform over the course of the 4 week data collecting period. In order to investigate the connections between childhood migration, perceptions of rural and urban locations and migration intentions, the survey data were subjected to quantitative analysis using statistical approaches including descriptive statistics and inferential analyses. The quantitative survey carried out by Qualtrics allowed the systematic collecting of data on participants' childhood migration paths, opinions on post-graduate migration, perceptions of rural and urban locations, and intents and reasons for migrating. The information gathered using this methodology formed the basis for an analysis of how individuals' intents to move and preferences for living in rural or urban locations after completing their university education are affected by their childhood movement.

Results

The data acquired from the survey consists of 125 responses, of which 76 were fully completed and valid to analyze. Of these 76 responses, 60% were men with a mean age of all respondents being 22. In Figure 1 we can see that the majority of the respondents migrated between 0-2 times throughout their entire childhood with around 26% of the respondents never having migrated. The data showed that the vast majority of the respondents shared the opinion that they would struggle socially and struggle finding employment when migrating post-university. This can be seen in Figure 2 and 3, which show that 39% of the respondents disagree with the statement about migration being socially difficult and 34% disagreeing that it would be hard finding employment when moving. From the figures we can see that they both illustrate the same trend which most people disagree with. The figures provide a basic understanding of the type of sample being dealt with and with further analysis we can come to a conclusion about the question “*How does childhood migration affect migration intentions after university in terms of rural and urban areas.*”

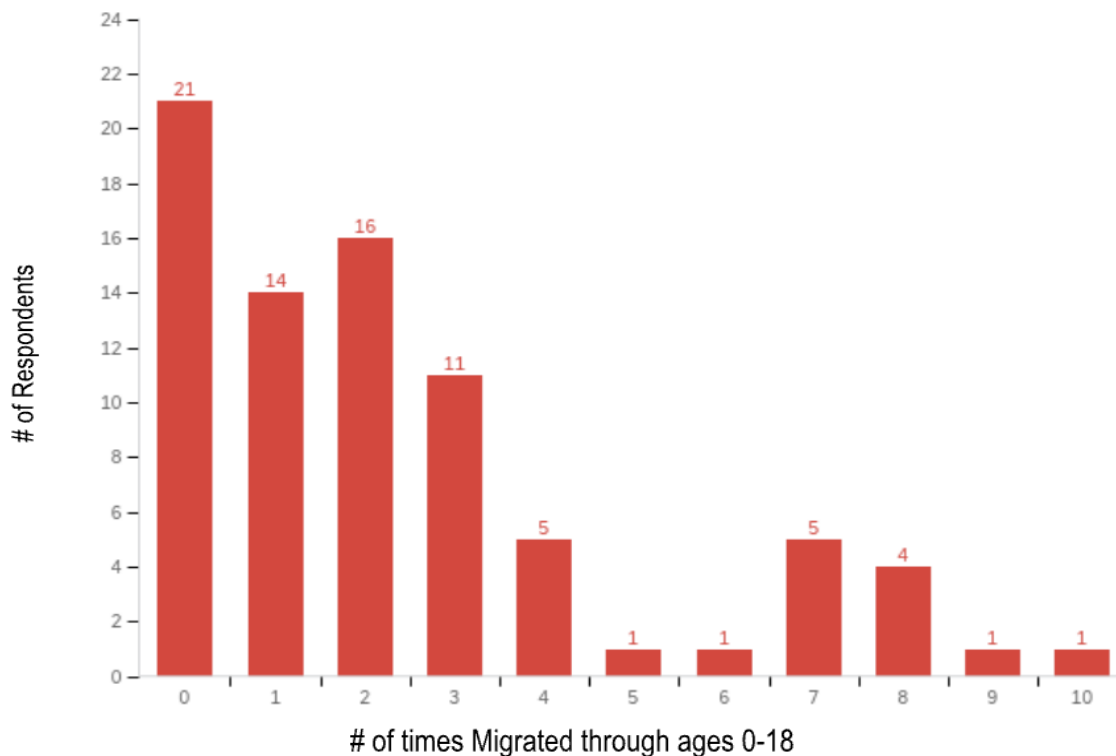


Figure 1: Bar chart showing the amount of times respondents migrated between the ages 0-18

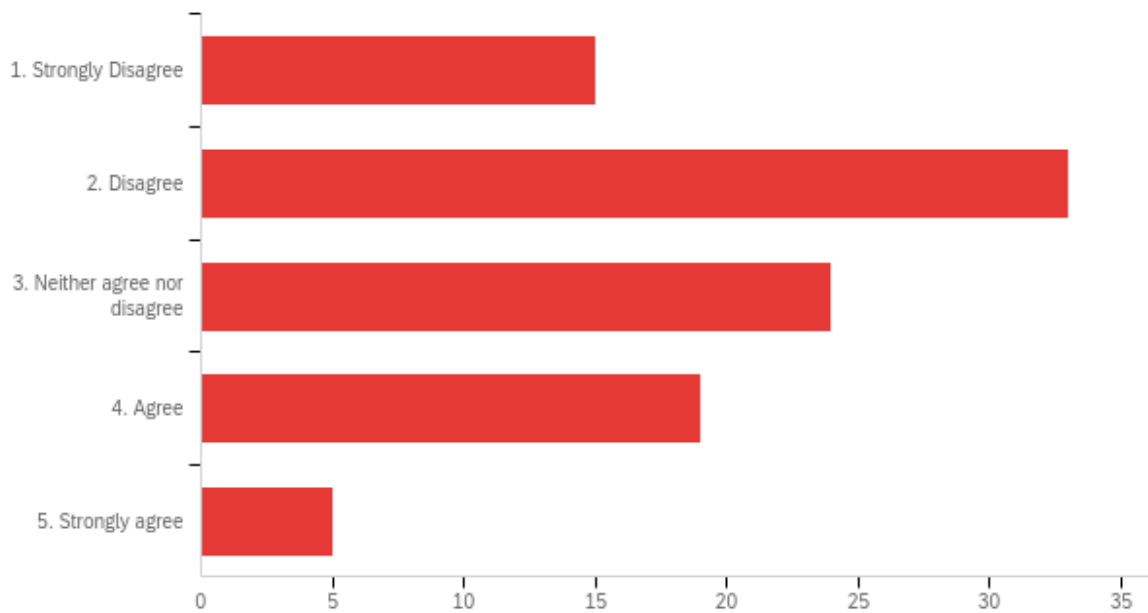


Figure 2: Bar graph showing the agreement level of respondents answering the statement "It would be difficult socially to migrate at the end of my study period"

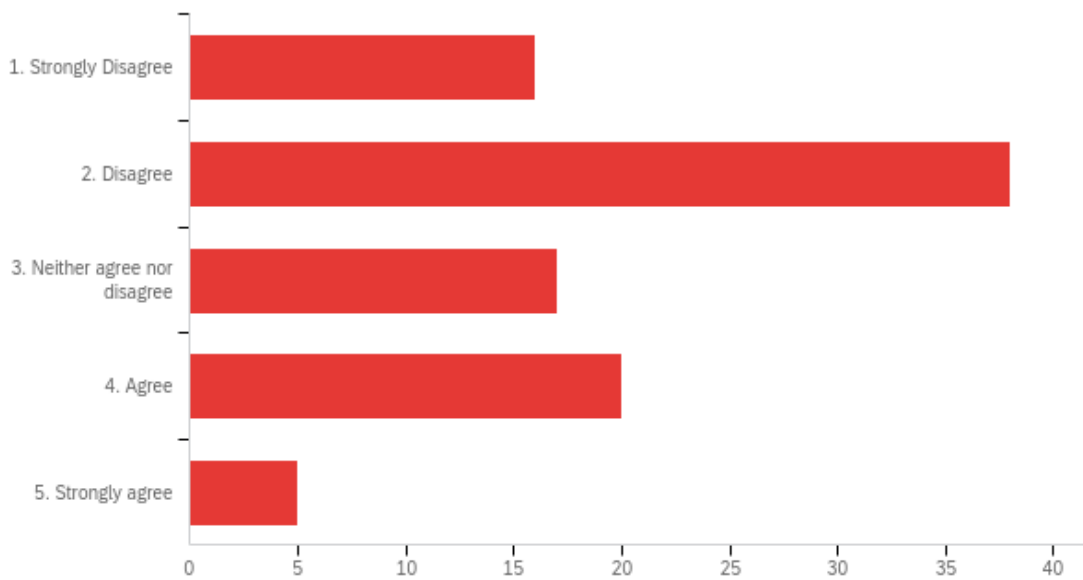


Figure 3: Bar graph showing the agreement level of respondents answering the statement "It would it be difficult to find adequate employment and maintain my standard of living if I migrated after my study ends"

Quantitative results

Through the use of a quantitative approach, the data was analyzed using the software SPSS. Due to the fact that the data is mixed between ordinal and nominal data, a number of tests could have been used to come to conclusive results. In order to test if previous experience of living in a rural area had a relationship with where the respondent would prefer to move after university, a Pearson correlation test was performed. The dependent variable was the nominal dataset that had two categories; "Rural" or "Urban" and aimed to answer the question "Where do you prefer to move after the completion of your studies?" The results of the test provide us with a statistically significant result between the respondent's previous experience of living in a rural area and their preferred migration destination after university. Since the p-value obtained of 0.032 seen on Figure 4 is below the conventional threshold of 0.05 assuming a 95% confidence level, the correlation can be considered statistically significant. This significant correlation between prior rural living experience and migration intentions after university suggests that the experience of living in a rural area during childhood can influence someone's preference for where they migrate in the future. However, the Pearson correlation of 0.234 suggests a positive but weak relationship between these two variables. What this means is that there are some tendencies for the variables to increase together, but the association is not very strong meaning they don't impact each other too much. This highlights how important early life experiences are when making decisions to migrate and supports the claim made by (Trąbka *et al.*, 2022) suggesting that feeling at "home" for a migrant is more important than their employment status.

Dependent variable :	Pearson Correlation	Significance (2-tailed)
Where would you prefer to move once you complete your study		

Have you ever lived in a rural area	0.234	0.032
Have you ever lived in an urban area	-.171	0.120

Figure: 4 : Pearson Correlation test between the variable showing preference for future location and variable indicating if the respondent ever lived in a rural area

The positive correlation obtained between prior rural living experience and the preference for rural migration destinations indicates there is a sense of comfort and familiarity to rural environments. Individuals that experienced the rural lifestyle might enjoy the tranquility and sense of community it offers causing them to feel attached to that area. On the other hand, the results obtained for prior urban living experiences shows that there is a negative and weak correlation between the experience of an urban lifestyle and the preference to move to a rural area. This test was not significant with a p-value of 0.120. These results suggest that individuals will want to keep on living their urban lifestyle and not want to change to a more rural area which means the advantages of urban cities outweigh the disadvantages.

It is important to note that correlation does not imply causation. While the correlation suggests a relationship between previous rural living experience and migration intentions, other variables may also be influencing this relationship. For example, we can look at how social factors affect decision making by running a Kruskal Wallis test. The test ran the dependent variable against the one showing if the respondent would struggle socially to migrate with answers being in an ordinal scale going from “*Strongly Agree*” to “*Strongly Disagree*”. As shown in Figure 5, the p-value obtained of 0.077 indicates that there is no statistical significance meaning we do not reject the null hypothesis which is in this case “*There is no significant difference in the preferred migration destination after university among different groups based on the level of perceived social struggle associated with the move.*” Although it is not significant, we can still say there is some type of relationship as it is very close to 0.05 compared to the test performed on how employment factors affect a decision to move. As shown in Figure 6, finding employment seems to not be a big problem when it comes to picking somewhere to move to after university with the test having a p-value of 0.752.

Dependent variable:	Kruskal-Wallis H	Asymp. Sig.
Where would you prefer to move once you complete your study		
"It would be difficult socially to migrate at the end of my study period"	8.441	0.077

Figure 5 : Kruskal-Wallis test between the dependent variable of preference for location after university and statement of if it would be difficult to migrate socially after university

Dependent variable:	Kruskal-Wallis H	Asymp. Sig.
Where would you prefer to move once you complete your study		
"It would it be difficult to find adequate employment and maintain my standard of living if I migrated after my study ends"	1.914	0.752

Figure 6 : Kruskal-Wallis test between the dependent variable of preference for location after university and statement of if it would be difficult to find employment after university

Qualitative results

When delving deeper into the data acquired by the survey, five distinct groups emerge. For the purposes of this analysis, five respondents have been selected to represent these groups. Their responses will be analyzed in more detail below. These also align with the key concepts discussed in the theoretical framework which include push-pull factors, social capital and networks, place attachment and identity, and the rural-urban divide. This strategic approach allows for a more focused examination of the data that the five selected participants provide and enables us to draw insightful conclusions about the broader sample. The data of the five selected respondents can be found in the appendix.

This data provides us with a deeper understanding of the relationship between childhood migration and post-university migration intentions. This is particularly clear when we look at the groups that respondents 1-3 represent. They show clear similarities and differences between their migration history and intentions. By examining their perspectives on rural and urban areas, we can delve into the intricacy that surrounds the factors that affect an individual's decision-making when migrating after university.

For example, respondent #1 experienced a significant shift from a rural area to an urban environment during their formative years. They only migrated once throughout their whole childhood which was a transition to an urban area after living in a rural area for 7-8 years. Their description of what a rural area consists of was “*isolated and lacking opportunities, both socially and economically*”. This perception they have reflects a common sentiment among individuals who grow up in such rural settings. This lack of opportunities can limit personal and professional growth especially for students who are just graduating university, leading to a desire for more stimulating environments such as big cities. When looking at their perception of an urban area, we can see a significant difference in the way that the respondent describes what living in an urban area is like. They describe it as “*exciting, vibrant, and full of possibilities*”. This highlights the appeal of urban living, where access to diverse social networks, cultural events, and employment prospects are more readily available. The motivation to migrate after completing university that the respondent mentions stems from a fear of reverting to the perceived

limitations of the rural setting that they used to live in. This respondent represents roughly 20% of respondents that share the same opinion to portray the concept of push-pull factors that an individual experiences when deciding where to migrate to.

We can see some similarities when looking at the data of Respondent #2. The respondent presents an interesting perspective, having experienced both rural and urban environments for almost an equal amount of time. While not feeling obliged to stay in their current country of residence, they acknowledge the challenges associated with moving to a new location. They mention how it would be socially difficult for them to migrate after their studies indicating a level of importance when it comes to the social side of migration. As discussed previously in this study, social networks are crucial in the decision making of migration providing the individual with guidance and support when arriving in the desired destination, along with having connections that can aid them navigate through challenges they face in the new environment. The respondents answers on the survey also show the importance of familial support when migrating as they strongly agree that their family would support a move after graduation. Respondent #2's preference for an urban area after university is driven by the "*ease of establishing social connections, abundant workspace opportunities, and a wider range of leisure activities*". The desire for an urban lifestyle, which combines social and professional growth, demonstrates how childhood experiences in different settings shape migration intentions. This respondent represents the wider group of people that take social factors most into consideration when deciding where to migrate.

Respondent #3 stands out with their strong disagreement regarding the expectation to migrate after completing their studies, indicating a sense of autonomy in their decision-making. Growing up in a rural area for more than 15 years of their life has given them a unique perspective on the limitations of such environments. The contrast between the rural area, described as "*fields and farms, one main street with a few shops, sparse and bland,*" and the more urban area they currently reside in, which in their opinion offers a "*an area with many things to do, walkable, containing people from many different places*" fuels their desire to move to an urban area after finishing their studies. Respondent #3's perception of the urban environment as more interesting

and captivating shows the significance of exposure to different settings in influencing migration intentions.

Discussions on social connections and job opportunities are common themes when looking at these three respondents. It is clear that having the ability to form social networks and find employment is critical in migration decisions. Respondent #2 specifically mentions the ease of social connections and the availability of workspace in urban areas as important motivators for their intended migration. Similarly, while not expressly stated, Respondents #1 and #3 hint that the urban environment offers greater opportunities for personal and professional growth, impacting their relocation plans.

The analysis of the three respondents highlights the importance of childhood migration experiences on individuals' migration intentions after completing their university studies primarily on a social level. Social capital and networks provide valuable insights into the factors shaping migration decisions.

The data of Respondent #4 and #5 illustrate a different side of the spectrum when it comes to factors that influence decision making when migrating, which is the economic perspective. Both respondents have distinct backgrounds and preferences that shape their migration decisions. Respondent #4 has migrated 7 times throughout their childhood which might have influenced their inclination toward urban areas as they have also never experienced the living environment of a rural area. Their desire to move to an urban area after graduating stems from the fact that they want to pursue a fashion career, as urban areas often provide more opportunities in this field. The respondent acknowledges the difficulty of finding employment when migrating, indicating a potential consideration that may impact their final decision.

In contrast, Respondent #5 has never migrated but expresses a strong sense of obligation to stay in their current country of residence. They also anticipate minimal social difficulties if they were to migrate after university. However, they strongly agree that finding employment would be challenging in a new location, reflecting a concern shared by both respondents. Respondent #5's preference for a rural area is driven by the desire for a quieter lifestyle and the availability of a

stable job. The significance of employment and job opportunities in migration decisions is evident in both respondents' responses. Respondent #4's inclination toward urban areas aligns with their career aspirations, recognizing the potential for better prospects in their field of interest. Respondent #5, on the other hand, values the stability of job opportunities in a rural area over potential challenges associated with finding work in an urban setting.

Discussion

The aim of this research was to explore the factors that influence student decision making when migrating post-university, specifically focusing on the rural-urban dynamics and the influence of childhood migration experiences. The findings obtained from the survey provide valuable insights into the factors that influence migration intentions post-university. By examining the concepts mentioned in the theoretical framework of push and pull factors, place attachment and identity, social capital and networks, rural-urban divide, and the social cognitive theory, we gain a deeper understanding of how these factors have shaped the decision making process of students migrating post-university.

Firstly, the concept of push and pull factors, which represent incentives for migrating and was reflected in the responses of the survey participants. The majority of respondents mentioned various reasons for their preference of area to migrate to such as job opportunities, access to amenities, and quality of life. These factors are consistent with the idea that individuals weigh the potential advantages and disadvantages in either rural or urban areas and then determine the push factors that drive them away from their current location and the pull factors that attract them to a new one.

Secondly, the theory of place attachment and identity played a significant role in shaping individuals' migration intentions. This research revealed that the perception respondents had of rural and urban areas, which they had formed throughout their formative childhood years, had an impact on their future migration preferences. However, the quantitative analysis using SPSS

revealed an insignificant correlation between childhood exposure to urban living and the preference for rural areas as a post-university destination. This means those who had not experienced rural lifestyle expressed a strong reluctance to it by often having negative perceptions without actually having experience of rural living. The statistically significant result obtained for the experience of rural lifestyle indicates that early experiences in rural environments foster a greater likelihood of choosing rural migration paths in the future. This finding emphasizes the enduring influence of childhood experiences on migration decisions and highlights the role of familiarity and comfort associated with rural settings.

Furthermore, the concept of social capital and networks appeared as an influential factor in the decision-making process. Individuals with strong social connections and networks in rural areas, which were developed through childhood migration experiences, were more inclined to prefer rural destinations after university. These connections provided emotional support as well as sources of information and resources which aided the decision making process. The significance of social networks highlights the function of relationships in influencing migration decisions and emphasizes the need of taking social capital into account when examining migration trends.

Additionally, the rural-urban divide concept was clearly apparent in the study's findings. The impression of rural and urban areas was important in respondents' migration intentions, with the majority preferring urban areas. This choice is due to the perceived benefits of urban life, such as improved opportunities for employment, access to facilities, and an exciting social scene. It is worth mentioning, however, that this choice was frequently based on personal preferences and assumptions, with respondents maintaining negative views and misconceptions about rural places while having no actual experience. This emphasizes the need of addressing these stereotypes and promoting a more realistic knowledge of rural surroundings.

Overall, the findings of this study give empirical support for the theoretical framework. The study emphasizes the role of the rural-urban divide, place attachment and identity, social capital and networks, push and pull factors, and the social cognitive theory in individuals decision-making processes when considering migration after university. It was clear that the

rural-urban gap, particularly perceptions of rural places formed by childhood experiences, had the greatest impact on migration intentions.

Conclusion

The question of *“How does childhood migration affect migration intentions after university in terms of rural and urban areas”* has been answered with the findings from the mixed method approach. The qualitative analysis showed us that the perception of rural and urban areas are the most significant when it comes to deciding where to move. By exploring the unique advantages and disadvantages individuals mention that they face throughout the rural and urban area provides a deeper understanding of the divide between these two areas. Rural areas often present distinctive difficulties such as limited access to services, fewer job opportunities, and potential isolation. On the other hand, urban areas may offer a wide range of amenities, cultural diversity, and employment opportunities. The perception these individuals have are built on the experiences they have had throughout their childhood and influence their migration decisions. This impression made on the two areas was deemed to be crucial in the decision making process when migrating after university as respondents mention negative views on rural areas without ever having experienced the lifestyle there. This supports the social cognitive theory explained by Bandura (2002) that individuals learn from others and base their perception on what they have heard without direct knowledge. The answers provided by the respondents showed that the vast amount of job opportunities in urban areas was of importance for them when making a preference for relocation, particularly Respondent #4 who chose an urban city purely because that is where they can pursue a fashion career.

The quantitative analysis provides us with a different conclusion compared to the qualitative. The statistically insignificant result received from Kruskal-Wallis test showed that individuals are not necessarily worried about finding employment when choosing where to migrate to which counteracts what was just found in the qualitative analysis. Although the study did not find a statistically significant relationship between social struggles and migration intentions using the

Pearson Correlation test, the marginally significant p-value indicates the potential influence of social factors on decision-making, warranting further investigation.

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study, such as the relatively small sample size of 76 respondents and the fact that the target population could have been influenced by the researchers' positionality. Future research could include a larger and more diverse sample to strengthen the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, qualitative investigations could delve deeper into the nuanced aspects of social struggles and employment prospects, further identifying their role in migration decisions.

In conclusion, this research suggests that the perception of rural and urban areas, influenced by childhood migration experiences, and the presence of social capital and networks play pivotal roles in shaping migration intentions after university. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors that individuals consider when making migration decisions.

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Appendix

Figure: 1 ; Table showing the data of 5 respondents from the survey

Respondent #	1	2	3	4	5
Age	23	21	18	20	22
# of times migrated throughout childhood	1	1	1	7	0
Family would support a move after university	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Would find it difficult socially to move after university	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree
Would find it difficult to find employment if moving after university	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Have they lived in a rural area?	Yes - 7-8 years	Yes - 5-6 years	Yes - 15+ years	No	Yes - 22 years
Have they lived in an urban area?	Yes - 15+ years	Yes - 7-8 years	Yes - 1-2 years	Yes - 20 years	No
Perception of rural area	isolated, lacking opportunities (both social and economic)	Lower number of inhabitants compared to other parts, not very business oriented	field and farms, one main street with a few shops, very sparse and bland	An area with a small population and distanced from an urban or large city with fewer resources	Small town, necessary shops local
Perception of urban area	exciting, vibrant, full of possibilities	Large amount of inhabitants, accumulation of business	an area with many things to do, walkable, containing people from many different places	An urban area is far more compact with more people as well as more resources for living and working	Built up, populated

Where do they want to move after university	Urban area	Urban area	Urban area	Urban area	Rural area
Decision for choosing that type of area	Would be bored in a rural area	easier for social connections, work space and leisure	After living in a rural area for so long, contrasting it to the more urban area they live in now, they find it much more interesting.	their career choice, they want to work in fashion and the big cities is where that would be highly possible	it is quieter and has a stable job there, is worried that he wont find work in an urban area