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For a decade, Scotland has had a declining natural population, dispersed throughout a diverse geography, including remote highlands and islands, which presents a policy making context that is very different from other parts of the UK. Rural Scotland accounts for 95% of Scotland's landmass and only 18% of the population (Scottish Government 2008). In particular, the familiar challenges, presented by the combination of population ageing with below-replacement level fertility rates, have, until 2007, been reinforced by the extent of out-migration amongst people of working age. Evidence suggests that following EU enlargement in 2004, rural areas have experienced an influx of labour migrants from Central and Eastern European countries on an unprecedented scale. Whilst such large-scale migration into rural communities has provided a major challenge for public service provision and 'social integration', it has also addressed local labour market shortages and created opportunities for regeneration. This article explores critical questions about the role and impact of migrant labour in rural communities in Scotland and the role of agencies in addressing the needs of all rural residents.

Introduction

While immigration presents a policy conundrum for the Scottish Parliament, for analysts it provides a revealing example of the on-going negotiation involved in implementing the devolution settlement. The crux of the issue is that Scotland has historically[1] been a country of net emigration, with a declining population[2] that has been identified as the single biggest challenge to policy makers (Scottish Executive, 2004), whereas England has long been a country of net immigration that serves as the primary reference point for the design of common UK immigration law. Scotland relies on attracting migrant workers to a far greater extent than other parts of the UK, mainly as a consequence of keener-felt demographic trends; fertility rates have fallen further and faster than the other parts of the UK[3] (GROS, 2008; Joshi and Wright, 2005) and out-flows of working age adults continue to present challenges, particularly in rural areas (Jamieson and Groves, 2008). Different demographic and spatial profiles create pressures and varying policy priorities, leading to an observable north–south divide in policy-makers' attitudes towards migrant labour in Britain. Even before the election of the Scottish National Party minority government in 2007, Holyrood and Westminster had differed over immigration policy to the point of outright clashes (see Hutcheon, 2005).

One distinct dimension of the demand for migrant workers is the interaction between Scotland's economy and its physical geography. Scotland is a large and diverse landmass,

where the population is divided between the concentrations of large urban conurbations (mainly in the central belt) and dispersed throughout sparsely populated northerly highlands and islands, with settlements arranged around remote coastal and mountainous regions. Whilst the natural environment is a valuable asset, it can also create challenging conditions in which to live and work, which can constrain the potential for major business investment and the availability of good quality employment. Consequently, the labour market in rural Scotland is dominated by agricultural and service sector jobs, with relatively low pay and limited possibilities for advancement (de Lima, 2008). Furthermore, high levels of youth out-migration and low levels of unemployment in some rural areas leave space for substantial labour migration into rural communities (Jamieson and Groves, 2008; Hall Aitken, 2007). Since devolution, successive Scottish governments have attempted to attract and retain labour migrants in order to address labour market gaps and rural depopulation. EU expansion, particularly since 2004, has enabled more fluid and transitory processes of migration, assisted to a greater extent than earlier phases of immigration by improved transport and communication links.

In this article, we explore the issue of EU labour immigration, particularly from Central and Eastern Europe, in rural Scotland. We consider the findings of an empirical study of the experiences and welfare needs of migrant workers in the Scottish Grampians[4] in order to gain insight into the meaning and significance of migration for migrant workers, employers and service providers. We argue that there is a need for more nuanced understandings of labour migration trends in Scotland, which are more fluid, and potentially unstable now than previous 'one off movements' (Penninx *et al.*, 2008). We call for attention to be paid to the complex and dynamic relationships between different actors (migrant workers, local communities, service providers and employers) and the ways in which they exercise agency in their interaction.

The context

Scotland's declining population has been a long-term concern for Scottish policy makers that has been brought into sharper focus since devolution and has received even greater attention since the SNP minority government took power in 2007. Despite the importance of labour migration for the sustainability of the Scottish economy, policy makers have very little control over immigration policy, which is reserved to Westminster. The main thrust of a distinctly Scottish approach to immigration came in 2004 with the launch of the Fresh Talent Initiative, by the then Scottish Executive, with the intention of attracting up to 8,000 workers from overseas each year for five years. This also involved collaboration with Work Permits UK to promote Scotland amongst people applying for work permits in the UK and to encourage students at Scottish universities to stay in Scotland for two years after graduation (Scottish Executive, 2004; see Cavanagh *et al.*, 2008 for an evaluation of its success).

In May 2004, the UK opened its borders for the free movement of workers from the enlarged Europe (see de Lima *et al.*, 2005). A large influx of workers came from the new A8 accession countries, particularly from Poland (Blanchflower *et al.*, 2007; Home Office, DWP, HMRC, DCLG, 2008). Although Scotland did succeed in attracting new migrant workers, the majority of the newcomers were concentrated in English cities (ibid., 2008). Since then, the approach of the new SNP-led Scottish Government has been to introduce Scotland's first population growth target as a central plank of

the new economic strategy: 'to match average European (EU-15) population growth over the period from 2007 to 2017, supported by increased healthy life expectancy in Scotland over this period' (Scottish Government, 2007: 16). Achieving this target is likely to require increases in fertility alongside sustained net in-migration (GROS, 2008: 84).

At UK level, a new points-based entry system was introduced in 2008 by the Home Office to regulate the flow of migrant workers from outside Europe into the UK and is described as 'the biggest shake-up of the immigration system in 45 years' (Home Office, 2008). However, points are allocated in relation to the needs of the UK labour market as a whole, without sufficient regard for the peculiarity of Scottish skills gaps or labour shortages. There have been calls to address this problem by offering extra points for people moving to Scotland (Phillips, 2008), in a similar way to the Canadian and Australian systems that are designed to divert migrant workers to the provinces most in need (Wright, 2006).

Labour migration in rural Scotland

Local labour markets in rural areas of Scotland have become increasingly dependent on the supply of migrant workers from the A8 countries, with some employers reliant on such workers for the survival of their businesses (Bell *et al.*, 2004; de Lima *et al.*, 2005, 2007). Accession state nationals were reported as making up 7% of the workforce in agriculture in the UK, significantly more than in other industrial sectors (Gilpin *et al.*, 2006: 20). The increasing incidence of migrant workers being employed in agriculture, food processing and tourism correlates with evidence of large-scale migration to rural areas across the UK (CAB, 2005; CRC, 2007; de Lima *et al.*, 2005).

In general, the impact of migrant workers in rural areas has been noted particularly in the low-skilled sectors, where their flexibility is seen as an example of a labour market working well. In other industries where the problem is of skills rather than labour shortages (e.g. construction industry), migrant workers are perceived as a necessary short-term measure (*Insider*, 2006). Research has consistently highlighted that migrant workers are mainly recruited in '3-D' (i.e. 'dirty, dangerous and difficult') jobs for which they are overqualified (Anderson *et al.* 2006; CAB, 2005; Stalker, 2008), and are favoured by rural employers for their positive work ethic, reliability and flexibility (McKay and Winkleman-Gleed, 2006; SER, 2006).

The 'integration' of migrant workers is complex, involving broader issues of access to services such as accommodation, health and welfare, and education (Cooke and Spencer, 2006; Spencer *et al.*, 2007). For migrants, access to services is shaped by a complex interaction of factors, including a combination of communication difficulties, lack of awareness of entitlements and obligations, poor access to advice and support, location where there may already be a high pressure on resources and lack of support of an established migrant community. For rural service providers, fluctuating numbers of migrant workers, diversity and changes in the nationalities encountered, changing government policies on immigration and varying entitlements to services amongst migrant workers create challenges in responding to their needs (BBC, 2006; CAS, 2006; CAB, 2005). Furthermore, access to services is exacerbated in rural areas due to inexperience in dealing with significant migration and a weak infrastructure for responding to migrant workers.

Moving beyond a 'one dimensional' view of rural migrant workers

While it is important to acknowledge that migrant workers are exploited, there is a tendency to present migrant workers as homogenous, lacking in agency and invariably as victims of the system. Their 'migrant labour' identity is privileged over all other forms of identity with little acknowledgement of the ways in which their personal, social and cultural background may be mobilised and shape their experiences in particular circumstances. The acknowledgment that people are not just 'defined by a set of binaries', but are 'multi-positioned' in complex ways is taken up by Arber (2000: 46) who argues that:

> all of 'us' and all of 'them', are multipositioned, implicated in unequally empowered ways of understanding and doing; that people share positioning in common and yet are not simply defined by sets of binaries; black/white, working class/middle class, female/male . . . positioning is something strategic, a coalition, a way of resistance, a precursor of agency and yet and at the same time something contingent and relational, mediated by and mediating, a criss-crossing of understandings and ways of doing.

However, the notion that particular identities may or may not be taken up at will has to be balanced against the prevailing inequalities (including ethnicity, class and gender) and power relations which exist in society. Whether or not a specific identity is mobilised in a particular context may, therefore, be a complex matter of the constraints and choices.

> The freedom that we actually have to choose our identity, especially in the way others see us, can often be extremely circumscribed . . . In general, whether we are considering our identities as we ourselves see them, or as others see us, we choose within particular constraints. (Sen, 2001: 326)

The study: migrant workers in Grampian

This article draws on a study (de Lima *et al*., 2007) of migrant workers undertaken in 2006 in the Grampians of north-east Scotland, involving three local authorities: Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray.[5] The aims of the study were to identify how and in what ways public sector agencies might improve their response to migrant workers and to assess the level of service provision they would need to plan for. The study included three components: (i) interviews, focus groups and postal questionnaires with 61 employers from a range of sectors to explore labour market considerations, issues arising out of the employment of migrant workers and how these were being addressed; (ii) focus groups and interviews with 87 migrant workers to explore their experience of accessing employment and local services; and (iii) focus groups and interviews with 46 service provider representatives from the public and voluntary sectors to identify the impact of migrant workers on services and the challenges they experienced in responding to their needs.

Profile

Between 2002/03 and 2005/06, Grampian increased its share of migrant workers in Scotland, from 12.7 per cent to 14.5 per cent. The study found that the growth of A8 nationals was a very significant component of migration in Grampian and the main focus

of the study was on A8 migrants. National Insurance Number registrations (NINo) by A8 nationals had increased from 20 in 2002/03 to 3,010 in 2005/06, with Polish people being the largest group in rural Grampian. In Aberdeenshire, A8 NINo registrations rose from 7 per cent (30) of the Aberdeenshire total in 2003/4, to 55 per cent (510) in 2004/5 and 78 per cent (1,250) in 2005/6, where they constituted 20.9 per cent of the Grampian total (3 per cent of the Scottish total). In Moray, A8 NINo registrations rose from zero in 2003/4, to 110 in 2004/5, and 290 in 2005/6 (35.5 per cent of the Moray total in 2004/5, and 54.7 per cent of the Moray total in (2005/6) (de Lima *et al.*, 2007: 23–24). The majority of migrant workers in the study were single and between the ages of 20 and 45 years.

Findings

Employers' perspectives

Despite having qualifications, migrant workers were predominantly employed in semi-skilled and unskilled work in a limited range of sectors, such as food processing, agriculture, hospitality and tourism and social and health care. The reliance on migrant workers varied between industrial sectors in the study, reflecting trends in other rural areas (e.g. Green and Hardill, 2003; Insider, 2006). Employers viewed migrant workers as an important part of their workforce and valued what they saw as a 'good work ethic'. Employers felt that migrant workers were more willing than local workers to accept jobs that were unskilled, semi-skilled, that involved 'dirty, hard work' or travelling long distances to inaccessible areas.

> The Poles are so hard-working they put the British workers to shame. It's so sad that they are qualified nurses who have to hide their training and skills to work as carers. The care sector could not manage without them. (Employer, Aberdeenshire, 2)

Beyond homogeneity: migrant workers' experiences of exclusion and inclusion

This section starts by exploring the diverse perspectives and experiences with regard to issues such as motivation for migration and employment. It then focuses on some selected examples of accessing services including interaction with local communities, in order to highlight the importance of taking into account the complex, cross-cutting and often competing views and experiences within and between various groups involved in the labour migration process.

Migration drivers and employment. Research on rural labour migration, while recognising in passing that migrant workers may have varied reasons for migrating, has tended to emphasise economic drivers above all else. This was reflected in the views of research participants to some extent:

> Money is the main reason, the situation in Poland is not so good. Many people can't get jobs. There are so many adverts in the local newspapers that Scotland needs us, so I think to myself I can come here and earn more money. (Polish, Moray 9)

> I earn at least three times more in one week than I do in my country. I don't mind doing this job because I know it is only for a short time and I am making enough money. (Polish, Aberdeenshire 3)

However, the study revealed that drivers for migration were varied, depending on individual circumstances. Not all migrant workers in Grampian believed that conditions in their country were as bad as was sometimes portrayed by migrants themselves and some emphasised the importance of individual choice:

> I think that the conditions (work wise or in terms of life in general) in Poland is not bad as some Polish people make it out to be. For many Polish, going abroad is a choice. (Polish, Moray Focus Group 1)

Short-term seasonal work in the summer was valued by students because it enabled them to experience a new culture, meet new people and improve their English whilst simultaneously earning money for their studies:

> I am here because I want to meet nice people and I wanted money for living in my country, paying for my flat for my studies. If I was at home, I would be not be doing much. So, it is better to be here. (Czech, Moray 2)

Students in particular also emphasised a sense of adventure, exploration and gaining different experiences as important reasons for being in Scotland:

> I want to live life on my own and get some work experience internationally. It's exciting to be living and working abroad. (Lithuanian, Moray 1)

By contrast, quality of life issues for their children were important for migrants with families:

> I am here because I want a better future for my children. It is not that Poland is so bad, but I think I can have a better life here and for my future. (Polish, Moray Focus Group 2)

This highlights the importance of understanding the varied motivations and circumstances of migrant workers as decision makers who are not exclusively driven by economic considerations. Having an in-depth understanding of these varied motivations is important not only in influencing decisions with regard to staying or leaving, but also to ensure that appropriate interventions are developed and resources are targeted more effectively.

Recruitment into employment is another area where research has tended to portray migrant workers as invariably victims of unscrupulous recruitment agencies and employers, with little capacity for exercising agency. There were undoubtedly examples of abuse by recruitment agencies in Grampian, for example:

> My husband paid money to a recruitment agency in [country X] that sent him to London. The agency in London had no jobs for him. His English is not so good . . . he came on a bogus contract. He paid the agency the equivalent of £700. We never pursued with litigation because the police in [country X] is not very good at pursuing such cases. My experience is not isolated; it is very common. (Lithuanian, Aberdeenshire 2)

Nevertheless, there was also evidence that revealed that A8 migrants used a variety of routes to access work and some were well informed about how to avoid potential exploitation. In contrast to previous research (SER, 2006; de Lima *et al.*, 2005), the majority of participants in this study reported that they had secured employment independently (e.g. by responding to advertisements placed by companies in their home countries, through well-known websites, or by approaching companies directly). Word of mouth and networks played an increasingly important part in identifying companies and websites (especially amongst young people) which were to be trusted:

> We found www.gumtree.com a secure site for looking for work. It has a good reputation for providing reliable information, compared to going through some recruitment agencies which can lead to exploitation. Recruitment agencies can be a risky route to employment and as far as possible should be avoided. (Polish, Moray Focus Group 2)

In addition employers also actively used migrant workers they employed to recruit others. There appeared to be a local pool of migrant workers emerging in Grampian, with people moving between jobs as opportunities arose:

> It was good because my friends kept me [in their house] for the first few months and told me how to look for a job. I think it would have been more difficult for me without their support. (Lithuanian, Aberdeenshire 4)

Migrants who had been recruited through student summer placement schemes to work in the small horticultural businesses also reported positive experiences:

> I like it here the farmer has been good to me. This is a nice farm, we are allowed to have barbeques, parties, etc. I think it must be one of the best farms, so I keep coming back. (Slovakian, Moray 7)

In the majority of these cases they not only returned to the same employer for two to three years subsequently, but also recruited their friends and/or other family members. Such return visits were arranged directly with the employers and appeared to be a common trend especially amongst the small-scale family-run seasonal agricultural enterprises.

The vulnerability of migrant workers to exploitation in the workplace has been consistently highlighted by research on migrant workers in the UK (e.g. CAB, 2005; CAS, 2006; CRC, 2007). Interviewees reported breaches of health and safety, low pay, long and irregular hours of work, lack of training opportunities and loss of accommodation where this was tied to employment. For some, taking time off work was not an option, as reflected by this participant in a conversation about his girlfriend who had experienced an accident at work: 'She is not here to have time off work. If she is not working, she does not have any money' (Polish, Moray Focus Group 2). While such extreme situations were not uncommon and cannot be condoned, it is also important to recognise that many migrants were making calculated decisions based on their circumstances.

The employer–migrant worker relationship cannot be simplified to one of exploiter–exploited; employers often reported feeling under pressure (e.g. by migrant workers hanging around the workplace after work) to provide over-time beyond the legal limit. This was particularly evident amongst the male construction workers who had left families

behind and wished to maximise their income. In addition, some of the conditions of employment which have been reported in studies about migrant workers may reflect a general restructuring of the workplace which applies to all workers. For example, being employed through employment agencies on short-term contracts seemed to be typical of a growing number of companies in rural areas and applied equally to 'local' workers. This suggests that it is important to avoid essentialising the experiences of migrant workers by contextualising research in relation to broader trends and experiences that cut across migrants and 'local' residents. It is also important to understand the employer–worker relationships of both migrant and local workers within the broader context of unequal power relations, not least of all in relation to social class.

Services. Research has consistently identified that migrant workers experience considerable exclusion in accessing services (Aitken, 2006; CAB, 2005; de Lima *et al.*, 2005; McKay and Winkelman-Gleed, 2005). However, the tendency has been to discuss exclusion from services mainly from the perspective of migrants and service providers, with little insight from the perspectives of local communities.

In this study, the experiences of exclusion from services were a consequence of two issues. On the one hand, lack of support and advice about services and entitlements was exacerbated by language and communication issues and a lack of understanding of the norms and how things work in a new country for migrants. On the other hand, service providers in rural areas often lacked the necessary experience, skills and resources to address the requirements of a growing and culturally diverse migrant population. Furthermore, issues of distance and lack of economies of scale also posed particular challenges for service delivery in rural areas. If exclusion from services is to be effectively addressed, these aspects need to be tackled simultaneously.

The complexity of the relationships between migrants, service providers and local communities can be illustrated in relation to accommodation issues. Access to appropriate and affordable accommodation in some rural areas has consistently been identified as deeply problematic, and is a potentially divisive issue, as migrant workers and local communities compete for scarce housing[6] (de Lima *et al.*, 2005). Whilst one local authority in the Grampian area perceived the allocation of 'low demand' housing to migrants as a success, migrant workers who were housed in these areas expressed concerns about being housed in 'undesirable areas' :

> The council is living in the nineteenth century. They consider people from abroad as second-class citizens. The houses that are offered are not liveable. Just because they say the electrics are fine doesn't mean the house is. (Portuguese, Aberdeenshire 4)

Furthermore, local communities were cited as complaining that migrant workers were favoured over them in the provision of accommodation. This highlights the importance of acknowledging and addressing the conflicting perceptions on an important quality of life issue, such as housing. Placing people in 'low housing' demand areas seemed counterproductive to the local authority's objective in attracting people to live and work in the area; living in 'low demand housing areas' conflicted with migrant workers' interests in improving their quality of life, while also creating potential areas of conflict with 'local' residents. Additionally, despite efforts by employers and service providers to ensure access to appropriate accommodation, migrant workers often opted to live in homes of multiple

occupation as their key objective was to earn and save as much money as possible. This and other situations discussed in this article highlight some genuine dilemmas that are not easy to resolve. For example, how can policy decisions and the standards of services which should be provided be upheld when recipients may choose to forgo their own welfare needs or rights?

The extent to which migrant workers in this study utilised other services (e.g. health, social work, police etc.) suggests that understanding the barriers they faced in accessing services is not enough; it is also important to understand cultural and political influences. For instance, some of the research participants had different expectations of the role of the state in providing services. For many of the interviewees, strong state involvement in the provision of services may have seemed reminiscent of 'Soviet' style governance and one to be avoided. However, there is some evidence that Scottish people support a relatively high degree of state intervention, particularly in the fields of health and education (Curtice, 2005). Many of the migrant workers who were interviewed were reluctant to engage with services such as the police and social work. However, there was a view that services such as the police experienced extra pressures from migrant workers due to their different cultural norms; for example, participants reported 'more relaxed attitudes' to driving without a licence or insurance, and a tendency to settle disputes violently.

The importance of understanding different perspectives (migrants and service providers) and taking into account cultural norms and the social and policy contexts of migrant workers also manifested itself in health. Expectations varied with regard to patient–doctor interactions:

> I had a problem with not straightening my elbow and I was in a lot of pain for three or four weeks. I don't how it happened. I just got this pain one day in my elbow and I decided to go to see the doctor. He asked me to describe the pain. He just listened to me and was asking me what I think is wrong. I was puzzled by the doctor's response because I thought he should tell me what was wrong, not for me to tell him. He did not look closely at my elbow to see if there was anything wrong. He just listened for a while and gave me a prescription. (Polish, Moray Focus Group 1)

From the health service provider perspectives, asking the patients for their views was seen as a 'normal' part of the UK health service culture of treating patients in a non-patronising manner and physical examinations were not part of the routine. In the health and other service contexts, the norms and expectations of migrants and service providers if not made explicit and understood by both sides can not only result in potential misunderstandings but also in unrealistic expectations of services.

Social interaction between migrants and local communities. While migrants in this study commented on the friendliness of local people, most also stated that they did not engage in social activities with local communities, due to a variety of factors including lack of time/irregular working hours, poor communication skills, lack of things to do, travel distances and the need to save as much money as possible. Cultural differences or norms with regard to socialising were also consistently highlighted:

> Parties are better in Slovakia . . . people don't just sit around and eat and drink but play music and dance . . . we like to dance a lot. People in Scotland are a bit conservative. (Slovakian, Moray 4)

Concern about the 'drink culture' was frequently cited as a negative factor in relation to socialising, acting as a deterrent to going out, both because of the costs involved and because of 'drunken' behaviour. However, engaging in sporting activities (e.g. football) in the case of young men in particular was a route into interacting with members of local communities.

Despite the view that social inclusion 'has to be perceived as a two way process' requiring adaptation on the part of both migrants and local communities (Cooke and Spencer, 2006), much of the research has tended to focus exclusively on the perspectives and experience of migrants. Hence little is known, except from media reports and anecdotal information from service providers and employers, about the views of local communities towards migrant workers, which on the whole is reported as being negative.

Staying or leaving? From the perspective of policy makers and their emphasis on addressing population decline, the long-term intentions of migrant workers with regard to staying or leaving is of great importance. Increasing emphasis has been placed on this issue following indications of a reversing trend, with Polish workers returning home (Pollard *et al.*, 2008). Overall, it was difficult to obtain meaningful information about migrant's long-term intentions. While a small number of the research participants expressed an interest in exploring the possibilities of longer-term work in Scotland, most indicated their intention to return to their countries in the long-term (however, the relationship between stated intention and future action is not always straightforward, cf. Spencer *et al.*, 2007). For A8 migrants in particular the situation was dynamic: low paid, seasonal work and poor quality of life (e.g. poor access to basic services) combined with economic changes in their home countries were potential key influencers in decisions about staying or leaving.

Conclusion

Areas like Grampian have come to depend heavily on migrant workers to fill vacancies, which, since 2004, have come in large proportion from the A8 countries. This trend is also reflected in the English studies on labour migration in rural areas (e.g. Green and Hardill, 2003; Mackay and Winhelman-Gleed, 2005). While this surging in-flow was enabled by EU legislation promoting the free movement of workers, it has become apparent that the long-term success of this strategy for rural areas is more precarious than initially envisaged. Several studies have noted the perceived financial, social and cultural attractions of the UK for new migrant workers, including an environment of economic growth, beneficial taxation, an open society and entrepreneurial culture (Stenning *et al.*, 2006). However, the economic downturn that began in 2008 is likely to make it unattractive for A8 nationals to work in the UK. Without a favourable wage gap or beneficial exchange rates, many of the lower quality jobs that new migrants have filled are likely to lose their attraction, particularly for over-qualified workers and especially in cases where job opportunities have improved in home countries (Pollard *et al.*, 2008; Spencer *et al.*, 2007). While having a detrimental impact in rural areas in Scotland, ironically this trend is precisely what the free movement of labour in the EU is about. Within this context, rural areas may have to devise flexible strategies for addressing the high levels of churn in labour migrants.

This study also demonstrates a need for new ways of conceptualising the complex interaction between migrant workers, local communities, employers and service

providers. This could be developed fruitfully in two directions. Firstly, there is potential for notions of agency to be developed in order to acknowledge the active roles played by different social actors involved in labour migration. The results presented here show that changing patterns of migration, combined with the differing strategies and choices of employers, service providers and migrant workers raise genuine welfare dilemmas. There are unresolved questions about how services should be provided, or standards upheld, when migrant workers are positioned differently in relation to welfare needs. On the one hand, there are clearly migrants who are at risk of exploitation and in need of empowering and supportive intervention. On the other hand, there is evidence of some migrants who consciously and voluntarily forego their immediate employment and welfare rights in exchange for longer-term financial gain. This means that migrant workers cannot be easily labelled or viewed as homogenous. It also raises questions about the boundaries of intervention and the welfare needs and rights of different social actors with potentially conflicting interests, including employers and service providers who may come under pressure to permit practices that they find unethical or against the best interests of the immediate welfare of migrant workers, and may even contravene protective legislation. The agents of migration are, therefore, not simply migrants, but all of the local actors involved in negotiating, enabling or resisting migration (e.g. local communities, service providers and employers). Recognising all as active agents, with varying degrees of power to influence their situation leads to a shift in focus with regard to the target and scope of intervention in relation to labour migration and social inclusion strategies. It also provides a framework for making sense of broader cross-cutting issues related to restructuring of work and employment practices.

Secondly, there is scope to challenge the traditional 'social integration' approaches which have focused exclusively on migrant workers' perspectives and ensure the incorporation of missing perspectives from local communities in terms of the adaptive skills they require to cope with increasing cultural diversity in rural areas. This would allow a shift of focus from what is sometimes perceived as 'assimilationist' tendencies to inclusion, with both local communities and migrant workers being seen as the subjects of inclusion, intervention and action.

Policy makers at UK, Scotland and local authority levels will need to engage actively with the likelihood that patterns of labour migration are less stable and permanent than before 2004 (Penninx *et al.*, 2008; Pollard *et al.*, 2008). The possibilities for short-term labour migration within an enlarged Europe are now more flexible and complex, enabled by permissive legislation and assisted by the current possibilities for cheap travel and convenient communications. Nonetheless, the challenge of attracting migrant workers to rural parts of Scotland should not be under-estimated. It is likely to become increasingly important that UK-level immigration arrangements make special provisions for Scotland's labour market, particularly in relation to rural areas. Immigration policy seems set to remain a key site of contention between the UK and devolved Scottish governments.

Notes

1 Although 2007 saw a record change with immigration to Scotland from every region of Great Britain exceeding out-migration (GROS, 2008).

2 For a decade, Scotland's population growth has lagged significantly behind the rest of the UK. However, in 2007, the total population was higher than at any time since 1983, accounted for by more births than deaths overall and greater gains from in-migration (even excluding short-term migration for

seasonal work, e.g. from A8 countries, which is not counted in migration estimates) than any year since comparable records began in 1952 (GROS, 2008). Long-term projections suggest a sustained rise to a high of 5.37 million in 2031, before a slow decline to below 5 million in 2076 (GROS, 2008), dependent on patterns of fertility and migration.

3 Although there has been a recent upturn, fertility rates in Scotland are still well below replacement level, at a level higher than the EU-15 average, but somewhat lower than in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (GROS, 2008). This contrasts with the period before 1980, when, for several generations, fertility rates were higher in Scotland than England (GROS, 2008: 70).

4 Covering the local authority areas of Aberdeenshire and Moray.

5 For the purposes of this article, we have excluded data from Aberdeen City, since this is not a rural area. The study was commissioned by Communities Scotland, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Moray Council, Scottish Enterprise Grampian and NHS Grampian and Communities Scotland. We would like to acknowledge the contributions of Rob Whelton, Rowena Arshad and Maaruyah Masud to the study.

6 We explore housing issues here in relation to migrant workers' perspectives of local authority practices. However, we recognise that many migrant workers are housed in the private rented sector.

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