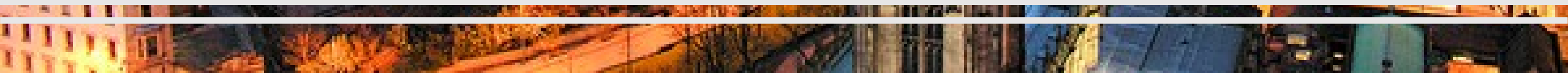# There's no place like home:
Attitudes towards staying in the North West

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Happy to be here

The 'landscape'

- North West as a region
- Graduate mobility & migration
- Aims & objectives
- Why it is timely

Methods/data used

- Mixed methods

- 'Practitioner research'

- Interviews from 2 doctoral studies (n48), students graduating between 2013-2018, three NW universities

- Survey – graduates (n80), graduating between 2014-2017, five universities

- Immersion in the field, professional conversations

- Greater Manchester & WP focus

Survey findings – attitudes to mobility

- 73.8% wanted to live and work in North West.
  - Asian graduates (93.8%) cf white British (and Irish) (70.6%)
  - Young graduates (77.5%) cf graduates over 30 (64.7%)

BUT

- 45% reported they would move for the right job, only 25% would not
  - Men (51.4%) reported a willingness to move for the right job compared to of women (39.5%).
  - Young graduates expressed a greater willingness to move for the right job (47.5%); only 15% reporting that they would not move cf 35.3% of over 30s.

My friends and family are all here

- **Word frequency in answers about reasons to stay in North West**

Multiple reasons for choice of location

- **Firstly**, I have family ties to the North West. My mum is a single parent, and so I would like to remain living close to her so that I can be there if she is ever ill. **Secondly**, I feel like the North West is 'the place to be'. There is a lot of growth for the region's economy (especially in Manchester) and so I would like to remain here to take advantage of that. Linking to this, I would like to buy a house in the North West soon, as it is still somewhat affordable to do this. **Thirdly**, in the future, I may consider postgraduate study. By staying in the North West, I will have access to a wide variety of quality higher education institutions at which to complete my studies.

I'll go where the opportunities are

- **Word frequency in answers about reasons to leave the North West**

Moving away – negative and positive reasons

- I hate Manchester, it's busy and very work-centred so people are always darting around and stressed. Would prefer to live somewhere more rural and where I don't have to travel (for more than about 30 mins) to get to work.

- The world's becoming more open and collaborative all the time, and I think we're moving away from the constraints that geographic region sets on your careers. My current employer is an SME that works with offices and customers across 4 continents, and that's an example of where I see businesses moving to. I'd love to work in United States, or in China.

The lure of London and the South East

- I did move to London for a job but gave up on that after about a year because I was so lonely!

- There are more relevant jobs available in the South East, however the salary is not sufficient. I have remained in the North West because it is more affordable, but there will be **fewer opportunities** for me to progress.

- I do believe that the bigger and "better" companies are based in London. I work in marketing and all of the big brands were working with agencies in London at the time I graduated, so I had to move down there if I wanted to work with big names and have a really great career.
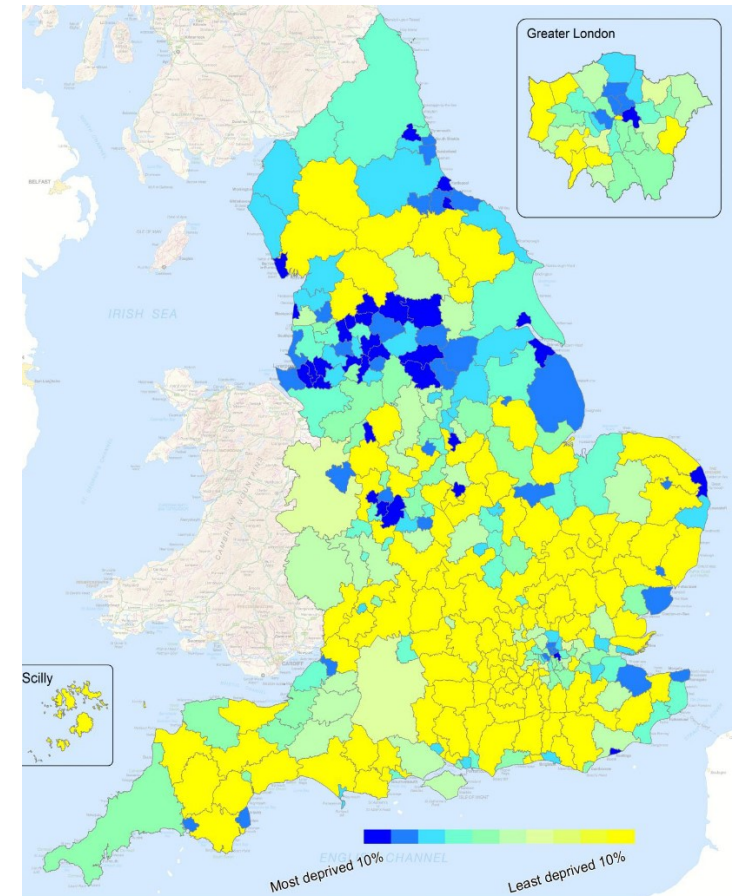
Returning "back up north"

- I would move away for the purpose of a dream job or a once in a lifetime opportunity, however I do see myself always settling in the North West eventually.

- Frankly, I was quite flexible with the location and this attribute was resonant among my circle at University as restricting ourselves to a particular region would limit career opportunities. However, if given the choice, I would consider moving back to North West if the right opportunity comes by!

Interview findings

- Two additional conceptual types are proposed which extend Ball's (2015) typology ('*loyals, stayers, returners and incomers*') which we call 'explorer' and 'tourist'

- Narratives around these two types highlight the need to consider mobility and migration as dynamic, fluid and highly personalised

Interviews – the explorers

Daniel (Journalism graduate)	Planning to leave his job in PR for a short-term volunteering opportunity in Africa
Robert (Film studies graduate)	Travelling and working in Canada in a bar
Isabelle (Graphic Design graduate)	Travelling and working in New Zealand in a tax office
Sophia (Performing Arts graduate)	Studying in France
Ibrahim (English graduate)	Planning a short study trip to the US as part of postgraduate studies

Interviews – the tourists

Imogen (Biomedical Science graduate)	Came from the USA to study at NW university, spent a year travelling, now studying Medicine in London
Justyna (Journalism graduate)	Came from Eastern Europe to live in the North West at the age of 16, studied at local university, now working in Spain
Mary (Business and Marketing graduate)	Came from Surrey to study in the NW, now living and working in Malaysia
Brad (IT graduate)	Graduated in Scotland, came to work in the NW, now returned to Scotland to live and work
Hassia (Nursing graduate)	Came from the Midlands to study at NW University, now returned to the Midlands to work

Interview findings

I wouldn't go back to London, it's mainly the cost side, so I was paying £800 a month for a room and if I had a partner or friend or family then I'd be more willing to reconsider it but as a single person who is constantly looking to the future I've always got my finances and financial independence in mind then I want to focus on the picture, the ability to build a life and that just isn't realistic in London

Interview Findings

- I'm probably the happiest that I've been in a long time being here (In NZ)...So I'd say that I'm really happy with my situation at the moment even though I don't actually have a job! [LAUGHS].

- I'm having this sort of emotional sort of existential change, I'm still really in the same place as I was financially possibly, you know a year and a half ago... another twenty something year old cliché, which is what we all are. I'm that, I'm doing that at the moment as well, finding myself.

Summary

- For many, staying in the region was a positive choice influenced heavily by family and friends as well as an affinity to the region itself because of culture and environment.

- Many participants expressed hope and confidence in the opportunities available.

- Place emerges as not just a physical location but as representing deep connections to people, culture and identity.

- Challenges lazy assumptions that immobility might represent a default option or a lack of ambition.

EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED

Summary

- Most participants would consider moving for the 'right job'.

- There was a perception amongst many participants that they 'should' consider working in London although some had bad experiences there.

- Attractive international destinations also featured, often as a potential temporary relocation.

- Some people planned to work away in the short-term and ultimately 'settle down' back in the North West.

- For those who did want to leave the North West, frustrations with transport and infrastructure emerged as perceived barriers to developing a career.

Recommendations

- Employers, policymakers and careers services could usefully focus upon increasing the systematic and accessible profiling of regional work opportunities.

- Regional universities, individually and collectively should explore the creation of accessible labour market information about career opportunities, in order to inform graduates about what options exist in the region, and whether leaving will be necessary for the career, that they are interested in or not.

- Additional work could also explore innovative solutions that can support options for short-term outward mobility.

Recommendations

- Careers and higher education professionals need to examine their own attitudes to mobility as they could unwittingly influence the brokering and discussion of opportunities.

- Student and graduate mobility, the benefits and challenges and how to navigate the practical and emotional obstacles is an aspect of employability which deserves more attention and needs to take into account personal circumstances in order to ensure that choices are informed and proactive rather than a default option.

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