Constraining Labour: The integration dynamics of working-class horticultural migrants in rural areas of Norway, the UK and the US.

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**Abstract**

This paper argues that many low-wage migrants moving to work in rural areas of the developed world end up in very specific and precarious employment and housing contexts: working in temporary/ seasonal jobs within horticultural labour markets; and often living in employer-provided tied accommodation. This context – which we profile by drawing on qualitative case-study evidence from Norway, the UK and the US – makes integration virtually impossible. It is only after moving on from precarious temporary/ seasonal work and out from tied accommodation that rural integration becomes viable. Yet, even then, the integration of these workers is often limited. Migrants are largely "quarantined" and separate and invisible from the host society. Not surprisingly, migrants tend to treat their lack of rural integration as "liminal" i.e. a temporary and in-between life-stage. They also engage in "transnational simultaneity" by maintaining family/ communal relations back home, whilst focusing largely on work in the host country. This liminality and transnational simultaneity help working-class migrants survive their quarantined lives.

**Key Words: Class,** Housing, Integration, Labour, Migration, Rural.

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**Introduction**

International migration to rural areas of the developed world has a long history (Woods, 2017) but in recent decades such migration processes have accelerated and intensified. Across core economies,

principally due to low-wage labour migration – though also shaped by lifestyle/ retirement migration and asylum seeker dispersal – rural New Immigrant Destinations (NIDs)[1] have emerged. The paper is interested in the housing-employment integration dynamic within rural NIDs.

The issue of the reception and integration of rural migrants in NIDs has only recently been investigated (for reviews see: Bock et al., 2016: 76-79; Author A: 12-15; Lichter 2012), with studies tending to focus on migrants rather than the views and attitudes of 'locals' (though see Villa, 2019). Migrant integration, according to a recent definition: "depends on a complex range of determinants and involves the acquisition of multiple competencies ranging from rights and citizenship, language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability, employment, education and health and housing to social bridges, bonds and links" (Stachowski, 2020: 381). Each determinant is both significant and necessary to support migrant integration in migrant receiving destinations. In this paper we look specifically at the employment and housing aspects of migrant integration in rural areas.

In focusing on employment and housing, we argue that precarity is key to understanding the integration (or lack of) of working-class migrants in rural areas. Precarity is a complex concept (Strauss, 2018) and we use it here in a multi-dimensional way to include both precarious work (i.e. work that is low-wage, insecure and non-standard) (Author H) and broader precarity in everyday life (which may include a sense of uncertainty, marginal housing, social isolation, etc.). In extreme, precarity may also underpin the emergence of a new class (Standing, 2011). Migrant labour markets are often characterized by work that is "segmented" with migrants largely doing jobs that local labour avoid: essentially precarious jobs in the "secondary" labour markets of rural NIDs (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Piore, 1979). These jobs are often temporary or seasonal in nature – tied to the agricultural economy – and so the migrant workforces engaged in these employment arrangements have often been characterized by circulation and transnational lifestyles (with clear implications for integration) (see Author B; Author C).[2]

Aside from the precarious working environment, there is the added phenomenon of many farm workers living onsite in tied housing provided by the employer (Perry, 2018). These onsite lives are all-too-often invisible to established residents in NIDs and, along with precarious employment, help make integration into the surrounding communities extremely difficult, if not impossible (Simpson, 2017).

Yet, precarious work in secondary labour markets and onsite living are not always seen as negative by migrants themeselves. For migrants, given the conditions they would have faced had they not migrated and a reality that low-wages in the host country often seem quite lucrative when invested back home (cf. Waldinger and Lichter's (2003) "dual frame of reference"), experiences in NIDs may be viewed positively. Moreover, some migrants use the secondary labour markets and onsite accommodation as a platform for subsequent integration in the host society: using it as a "liminal" (Author E) 'spring-board' from where better pay and conditions can be accessed and from where 'normal' housing can be acquired or rented. Workers also often position themselves across both home and host countries to allow a work-life balance to be struck, demonstrating what Hedberg (2021) refers to as "transnational simultaneity".

The paper explores the relationship between precarity in employment and accommodation and integration in rural NIDs. We begin by reviewing the literature on migrant integration (or lack of) in rural areas of the Western world and outline our qualitative case-study methodology based on in-depth interviews with migrant workers, horticultural employers, and community stakeholders in rural Norway, the UK and the US. The main findings are then profiled, and we highlight the importance of precarious work and housing contexts in limiting migrant integration in rural NIDs. We argue that the resultant "quarantining" (Horgan and Liinamaa, 2017) of migrants is tied to a particular political-economic orthodoxy in core economies whereby a mobile and transnational working-class is clearly needed, but not always wanted or welcomed. We also suggest that migrants'

quarantining is made bearable by its assumed "liminality" (Author E) (i.e. its temporary nature, leading to upward class mobility) allied with the maintenance of "transnational simultaneity" (Hedberg, 2021) (where work is perfomed in the host country and social reproduction performed in the home country).

**Migrant Integration in Rural NIDs**

A significant literature, mainly focused on the US, has emerged over the past two decades documenting the movement of migrants to NIDs. Some of this literature prefers to use the term 'gateway' but we maintain that 'destination' is more accurate given that for many working-class migrants in rural areas there is no gateway experience; and instead they remain segregated from the wider rural community and usually unable (rather than unwilling) to integrate.

Waters and Jimenez (2005: 122) have argued that: "more than ever immigrants are settling in areas that have received virtually no immigration in recent history" (see also: Goździak, and Martin, 2005; Lichter and Johnson, 2006; Marrow, 2011; Massey, 2010; Singer, 2004; Zúñiga and Hernández-León, 2005). Following this early US-focused literature, there has been a proliferation of research "too numerous to review in one publication" (Winders, 2014: S151). The proliferation of NID studies in the US has been accompanied, more recently, by a growing European analysis of low-wage labour migration to rural NIDs largely to supply labour to food growing, packing and processing businesses. Following the seminal work of Hoggart and Mendoza (1999), on international migration into Spanish agriculture, the literature has developed considerably (Corrado et al., 2017; Gertel and Sipel, 2014; McAreavy, 2017; Author A; Rye and O'Reilly, 2021). In addition, adjacent rural migration literatures now exist on lifestyle and retirement migration (Benson and O'Reilly, 2009; King et al.,

2000; Krivokapic-Skoko and Collins, 2016; Nelson and Nelson, 2011) and on asylum seeker dispersal (Schech, 2014) to rural areas of the developed world.

Having established the presence of rural NIDs, a key question for scholars has continued to remain around integration: and the extent to which migrants, especially low-wage working-class migrant, remain excluded and isolated in rural areas and the reasons behind this. Academics have examined whether NIDs are accompanied by positive integration processes or whether there are more worrying exclusionary dynamics at work. The literature suggests that low-wage migrants' integration in rural society is, at best, quite challenging (Author A) and replete with complexity. It also seems clear that migrant integration in rural areas is not the same as in urban areas, although there are certainly many similarities.

The more positive interpretations of the impact of migration to rural NIDs have talked of the benefits migrants' encounter when living and working in rural areas. Torres et al. (2006: 37), for example, underline "a lower costs of living and a lax enforcement regime against 'illegals' (through) to a strong desire to replicate the experience of rural lifestyles back in Mexico". They label this the "allure of rurality" but, at the same time, note that the choice of a rural destination also carries with it a particular set of disadvantages for migrants. Oliva's (2010) term "rural melting pot" is also significant as it draws attention to how migration – in various forms – challenges and transforms traditional rural values and ways of life, especially when this migration is connected to demographic revitalisation. In relation to international labour migration to rural areas the hope is that some kind of positive "rural cosmopolitanism" (Popke 2011; Schech 2014; Torres et al., 2006; Woods 2017) will prevail.

Underlining the potential for rural areas to accommodate diversity, Kasimis et al. (2010) claim that less developed rural regions are generally willing to accept migrants into the local

community. Similarly, where there is rural depopulation a "demographic refill" (Hedberg and Haandrikman 2014: 129) is often assumed to be welcome (see also Aure et al., 2018; Kasimis and Papadopoulous, 2005). Building on these positive rural integration perspectives, McAreavy and Argent (2018: 274) conclude that migrants: "are just as, if not more, likely to integrate and feel an attachment to place in rural than in metropolitan settings". Similarly, in the context of population decline in rural northern Norway Aure et al. (2018) show how migrants' integration beyond the workplace is happening.

It is important not to over-generalise, however. In rural areas certain groups of migrants may be more or less welcome: families may be preferred over single men and women (Viruela 2008, quoted in Bock et al. 2016: 11); and particular nationalities may be favoured over others (Pumares and Jolivet, 2014). There may also be differences in the way different NIDs respond to growing migration-based diversity (McAreavy and Argent, 2018: 268; Author G). Moreover, different migrants will have different sets of skills and capital that together shape integration on worker-by-worker basis. Language skills and family ties, for example, are particularly important in forging social connections (Flynn and Kay, 2017). Finally, and as Rye (2017) demonstrates, different rural actors often perceive migrants to have integrated to lesser and greater degrees (with migrants themselves often the most (self-) critical).

There are clearly limits to the positive interpretations of rural integration. One of the first key studies in this respect was carried out by Preibisch (2004) who focused on rural migrants' "social exclusion" (*ibid*.: 205) within Canada. Preibisch's analysis was nuanced, however, in the sense she noted the establishment of personal ties by migrants and the emergence of supportive non-state actors to advance worker rights. The picture, then, even under a highly restrictive agricultural visa regime, as is the case in Canada, is not entirely negative.

In line with the social exclusion observations of Preibisch (2004), though in a different policy context, Lever and Milbourne (2017) talk of the "invisibility of outsiders" with respect to low-wage migrant workers within NIDs in the UK (Wales). Drawing on the concept of "liminality" they link this invisibility and outsider status to the nature of employment and the need to: "draw a veil over employment conditions and working practices" (Lever and Milbourne, 2017: 319) in the interests of capital. In a similar vein, Torres et al. (2006) talk, of a "silent bargain" (see also Schech, 2014) that occurs whereby locals 'accept' increasing rural diversity as long as labour migrants are prepared to do (restructured) low-wage work (mainly in food production industries) and remain largely hidden from view. They conclude that:

> "It is one thing to demonstrate a degree of acceptance toward 'outsiders' whose presence in the region is a short-term economic benefit. But it is quite another to offer to Latinos a form of hospitality that would extend beyond the region's workspaces, and include the full benefits of social and community citizenship" (*ibid*.: 64).

The "rural cosmopolitanism" they identify in their conclusion is essentially a hope for the future only.

Building on the idea of "exclusion", "invisibility" and the "silent bargain", Horgan and Liinamaa (2017) link the spatio-temporal dimensions of migrants' lives in rural Canada (under the much critiqued Seasonal Aagricultural Worker Programme (see Hennebry and Preibisch, 2010)) to a situation of "social quarantine". Defined as: "the spatial and temporal isolation of workers from the rhythms of everyday social life in the broader communities where their housing and workplaces are located" (*ibid*.: p2) social quarantining emerges out of the specific uncertainty associated with the legal, immigration, and employment status of seasonal workers under the SAWP visa regime. Visa consideration were relevant more in the US case than in the UK or Norwegian case, though Brexit

(UK) and general labour supply issues (in the UK and Norway) now appear to be increasing the relevance of visas across all three study locations. The point on visa regimes is especially important because in many parts of the world temporary 'guestworkers' prevail. Such workers have very limited citizenship rights with their visas often: ensuring migration is seasonal/ temporary; separating workers from families; and, providing limited opportunities for labour market mobility (see for example Basok and George, 2021). In other words, the state, in conjuntion with employers, can actively prevent migrants (usually working-class migrants) from integrating.

Aside from the obvious visa/ citizenship restrictions: "multiple factors constitute social quarantining" (*ibid*.: 10). Migrants may be quarantined by virtue of the temporary/ season nature of their work and a resultant lack of permanence in rural areas. Hennebry (2012), for instance, refers to this as a state of "permanent temporariness" whilst Andrzejewska and Rye (2012) emphasize the circulatory nature of harvest labour, especially in Norway where the season is short. This is also something Hedberg (2021) stresses through the concept of "transnational simultaneity" whereby Thai wild berry pickers work in Sweden for only a very short season and thus become embedded in both home (as rice farmers) and host contexts (as berry pickers) simultaneously (see also Author B).

Samuk (2020) argues that the number of temporary migrants globally is now increasing. She draws on UK and Canadian research to advance the notion of '(Dis)Integration' (see also Collyer et al., 2020), stressing in the process how temporariness does not fit with integration as conventionally conceived. Although Samuk notes some steps taken by circulatory migrants towards integration – language development, social and cultural knowledge in particular – overall temporary/ seasonal work rhythms enable labour market integration but are associated with (dis)integration in other spheres of migrants' lives.

Alongside temporary/ seasonal work 'rhythms' (see Neis et al. 2018 for an exploration of this concept), migrants may also be "quarantined" by the fact they live onsite (Horgan and Liinamaa, 2017: 10-13; Perry, 2018) and often work long hours and/ or need to be effectively on-call given the vicissitudes of the weather, the crops, and consumer demands. Indeed, for many rural migrants maximising working hours and pay takes priority over integration (Andrzejewska and Rye 2012; Fialkowska and Piechowska 2016). On top of this, there is potentially rural xenophobia and racism/ elitism to contend with against a backdrop of a largely white and middle-class 'rural idyll' that has been historically unaccustomed to diversity (Eriksson and Tollefsen, 2013; Hedberg and Haandrikman, 2014; Moore, 2013; Torres et al., 2006; Author H).

Those migrating within the context of European freedom of movement (as in our UK and Nowegian case studies) may be less constrained than where temporary 'guestworker' visas are present, which essentially enshrine non-integration in law. Similarly, where horticultural workers live offsite and where they are less circulatory and more permanent (as in our US case-study) rural integration may be more likely. Nonetheless, despite these contextual nuances, we will show below that "quarantining" (Horgan and Liinamaa, 2017) is still key to understanding low-wage migrant integration (or more accurately (dis)integration) in rural areas of the developed world even where temporary 'guestworker' visas do not prevail.

**Onsite Lives**

Whilst there is limited literature on migrant integration in rural areas, even less attention has been directed to rural migrants' housing trajectories (Doyle, 2018; Perry, 2018; Reid-Musson, 2017). What we know is that a lot of workers in rural areas are precarious and employed on a temporary/ seasonal basis. This makes onsite housing within caravans, pods, bunkhouses and apartments

relatively ‘appealing’. Onsite lives were most evident in Norway and the UK; in the US only really those on H-2A visas were in employer provided accommodation.

Providing workers with cheap accommodation onsite, and the various fringe benefits associated with this, may appear to be an act of benevolence by the employer. Workers find it easy to get to work and there is no commute to pay for, socialising with colleagues is easy after work, accommodation costs are typically lower than in the open market and housing gatekeepers are not a problem, and employers provide social spaces and activities for their workers, as well as sometimes providing transport for shopping, medical needs etc. The apparent ‘benevolence’ of employers, however, has been critically examined by academics and shown to be more complicated than it might first appear (Author D; Tone, 1997).

Associated with this, scholars have challenged the phenomenon of employer-provided accommodation. Most obviously, the compression of home and work into a single site affects migrants’ identities and experiences in the host country. Crucially, it can limit migrants’ ability to establish an “autonomous and dignified life” (Perry, 2018: 1021) as employer control extends beyond the realm of work and as continual peer worker engagement is unavoidable. It is also a strategy, according to Perry (2018), that has an economic logic: helping to produce/ reproduce a more reliable and compliant workforce. Not to mention the fact that: “while some employers do provide well-maintained and spacious housing facilities, descriptions of overcrowded and dilapidated accommodations abound” (ibid.: 1025). In various ways, the benevolence associated with employer accommodation can be critiqued.

Horticultural work, when people live onsite, has been described by some (see Perry, 2018: 1028) as a contemporary example of a “total institution” (Goffman, 1962). Whether or not one agrees with this assessment, which may be especially relevant in Perry’s (2018) Canadian example,

given the SAWP visa regime, it is clear that living onsite blurs the boundaries between work and family/ social life to a degree rarely seen. It is also the case that farms are more isolated than most housing sites, a factor that is known to limit integration especially as few workers have their own transport (Andrzejewska and Rye, 2012).

The critique of tied accommodation advanced above is further supported by the historic literature on employer provision for workers. Up until the 20th century, for example, a 'truck' barter system operated in many countries whereby labour was essentially exchanged for food and sometimes accommodation (Hilton, 1957; Johnson, 1986; Stevens, 2001). In such systems, workers were effectively trapped within a closed employer-controlled circuit. Thus, there is a long history of employers providing for workers, but often in ways that can tie them to the workplace and in ways that essentially disempower and/ or help to more effectively activite labour power.

Interestingly, the phenomenon of employer-provided tied accommodation applies to other low-wage sectors of the economy. There are parallel literatures, for example, on manufacturing 'dormitory labour regimes' (Ngai and Smith, 2007), as well as coal and mining jobs related to energy sources such oil, wind, and gas in the US (Caraher et. al 2017), and for live-in domestic workers (Parreñas, 2001; Schwitter et al., 2018; Yeoh et al., 2017). It is perhaps worth noting at this point that between, and within, these different sectors there are important gender differences in mobility regimes that are now well documented (Pavlovskaya et al., 2019; Roseman et al., 2015; Walsh et al., 2013). Crucially, all the sectors have similar issues to horticulture: with migrants' citizenship status and precarious employment, alongside their tied accommodation, combining to ensure transience, deference and a strong work ethic. Thus, although this paper focuses specifically on horticulture it is worth noting that working-class migrants' "(dis)integration" (Collyer et al., 2020; Samuk, 2020) is evident across a range of precarious labour markets and appears to have an economic rationale.

In some countries, employer provided accommodation is not the norm in horticulture. In the US, for example, there has been a notable decline in employer housing provision over recent decades (HAC, 2011) and, aside from those on H-2A visas, accommodation is now largely independent and offsite. Living in rural areas whilst employed on a temporary and/ or seasonal basis can obviously make regular rental or mortgage payments difficult. On top of this, there are: "acute affordability problems" (Gkartzios and Ziebarth, 2016: 497) in relation to rural housing access across the developed world. Low-wages and high property prices explain why many low-wage migrant workers in rural areas become reliant on (often dubious) privately rented HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupancy) if they are not living onsite (Doyle, 2018). Migrants in Southern Italy, for instance: appear to "inhabit abandoned houses or large 'ghettos' and slums in rural areas" (Perrotta 2017, p.59; see also Perrotta 2015, pp. 198–9). They form distinct communities, which are conceived of as distant, and even deviant from the viewpoint of the locals. Thus, Even where housing is not provided by the employer (as was evident in our US case-study) there can still be segregation within the wider community.

**A Liminal State?**

To what extent is low-wage migrant workers' initial employment and housing precarity, and thus limited integration, a liminal state: an inbetween 'stepping-stone' leading to upward mobility in the home and/or host country?[3] Well, the main way to move on from precarious work and accommodation is to advance professionally via what Bock et al. (2016) characterise as either intra-sectoral mobility (finding better work within agriculture) or inter-sectoral mobility (moving out of agriculture into more desirable labour markets). This may occur in the host country and/ or through migrants returning home. It might also be inter-generational as part of migrants' transnational

livilihood strategies (see for example Yeoh et al., 2017). Many stress the potential 'liminal' effect of the temporary/ seasonal work and onsite accommodation: though actual evidence of migrants' upward mobility from initial harvest employment is rare (Papadopoulos, 2009; Author E; Simpson, 2017). In the US context, where there is most research, Martin (2002: 1141) notes that:

> "First generation immigrants pick fruits and vegetables seasonally as needed for about 10 years. However, when they age-out of the seasonal farm work force, they have few skills to enable them to climb the farm or nonfarm job ladders, and they are poor and often jobless if they remain in the area. Their children, educated in the US, tend to reject seasonal farm jobs - if they remain in the area, they are often poor and on welfare".

Thus, there may be exit from precarious work and accommodation, but it does not imply advancement. Martin's rather bleak assessment of the US situation should not be seen as the end of the story, though, as there is some evidence of precarious migrant workers exiting low-wage work and advancing (Alberti, 2014).[4]

In light of the above, it is clear that low-wage migrants are diproportionately concentrated in sectors, such as horticulture and domestic work, that make exlusion from communal and family life (i.e. (dis)integration) highly likely. The prevailing neoliberal political-economic logic would rather a mobile and transnational workling-class not fully integrate: evidenced, for example, by the now widespread use of temporary 'guestworker' visas. The mechanisms that prevent integration are complex and, beyond the non-integration associated with temporary 'guestworker' visas, we will show how a seasonal/ temporary work situation allied with living at work are central time-space elements. Rural NIDs also play a role in the sense that they can contribute to migrants' invisibility and isolation and ensure the othering of migrants against a prevailing class, nationality and race-based rural idyll.

The paper now seeks to explore how mobile and transnational working-class migrants are kept at arms-length by states and employers that need rather than want them. Put another way, we will show how we now have labour mobility regimes across core economies – and especially in sectors like horticulture – where the integration of low-wage migrants is avoided. Thus, when migrants are criticised by host societies for not integrating and leading 'paralell lives' it is worth remembering that states and employers now actively covet such outcomes in pursuit of a low-wage work ethic and greater profitability.

**Methods**

The paper is based on an international comparative qualitative case study of three rural communities from: south-west Norway; the west of England (UK); and rural central California (US). The case studies include 51 qualiative interviews: with migrant workers (N=18), horticultural employers (N=15), and community stakeholders (N=18) over the 2018-2019 period. These 51 individuals were selected given their ability to represent diverse populations and their experiences surrounding migrant integration of horticultural workers in rural areas. In Norway (N=18) researchers (who are not part of this publication) interviewed 6 migrant workers, 5 employers, and 7 community stakeholders. In the UK (N=18) Author X interviewed 8 migrant workers, 5 employers, and 5 community stakeholders. In the US (N=15) Author Y interviewed 4 migrant workers, 5 employers, and 6 community stakeholders.

Migrant workers came from central and eastern Europe (for Norway and the UK) and from Mexico (for the US), whilst employers and community stakeholders were largely native-born (however some were foreign-born (Mexican) in the case of the US). The majority of the migrant workers interviewed were male (16) with only two identifying as female. Of the 18 community

members interviewed, 10 were male and 8 were female. In addition half of the community members interviewed in the US were once migrant workers themselves. Community members included representatives of government agencies and regulatory bodies, community advocacy groups, city governments, and migrant labour organizations. In addition, fifteen employers were interviewed for the study across the three case study sites. Circa 80% of the employers (N=16) were male and either farm owners or HR managers for large farms.

The in-depth qualiative interviews lasted about 45 minutes to 90 minutes and were augmented by observations taken while in the rural communities for fieldwork. Interview guides were the same across all three case study sites and focused on: Background, Migrant Labour in the Community, Employment Practices, Integration and Inclusion across all three groups of interviewees. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Data underwent three stages of analysis, moving from descriptions to themes to assertions (Creswell 1998). Open and closed coding techniques were utilized to identify themes that emerged across all 51 interviews. Data were triangulated with the primary goal of capturing plural and contested perspectives from multiple data sources across both sites, and a secondary goal of identifying convergence and minimizing bias the three settings. Such a process is appropriate for understanding complex social phenomena across scales and contexts – particularly when aspects of the subject of interest are not well understood (Mathison, 1988; Yin, 2004).

The three case studies were selected because of the different spatial-temporal work-life "rhythms" (Neis et al., 2018) they contained. In Norway the peak season is shortest (June to September), labour circulation is the norm for horticultural work, and workers live on site. In the UK the peak season is longer (April to October), labour circulation is again the norm, and workers live on site. In the US, the season is longest, settler migration prevails over labour circulation, and workers often live within the wider community and commute to work. All three country case studies were

interesting from an integration perspective because the migrant workers we focused on had not moved within temporary 'guestworker' schemes. Since our research, however, the situation has changed with Brexit meaning that the UK is now reliant on temporary visas to bring in horticultural 'guestworkers'.

**Findings**

The findings profiled below highlight that integration, for many migrant horticultural workers, appears to be limited even when they move outside the confines of a temporary 'guestworker' visa. Labour circulation (rather than permanent settlement migration) linked to temporary and seasonal farm employment is an important underpinning variable in the context of Norway and the UK where seasonal workers often returned year after year to do work that was insecure (temporary) and low-wage. In addition, the co-presence, on the farm of work and personal life, through the provision of tied accommodation, is also highly significant in limiting integration. However, even when workers do not circulate and do not live onsite (as is generally the case it the US) exclusion is still an issue. The key it seems, as far as rural integration is concerned, is for temporary/ seasonal migrant workers to experience upward mobility in the home or host country, either intra- or inter-sectoral (Bock et al., 2016), and also to live away from the employer/ farm (Horgan and Liinamaa, 2017; Perry, 2018). Working-class migrants must move through their initial employment and housing precarity therefore – and establish it as a mere "liminal" state (Author E) – if they are to integrate in rural areas.

***Precarious Work and Onsite Lives***

The related concepts of “exclusion” (Preibisch, 2004), “invisibility” (Lever and Milbourne, 2017), the “silent bargain” (Torres et al., 2006) and “quarantining” (Horgan and Liinamaa (2017) show how problematic migrant integration in rural areas can be. Many low-wage labour migrants end up in specific rural employment and housing contexts: working in precarious (temporary or seasonal) jobs within secondary labour markets; and often living in employer-provided accommodation. This context can make integration very difficult, if not impossible. However, it is a context that has a political and economic value to it for host states and employers.

As far as employment is concerned, a key feature of horticultural work in Norway and the UK was seasonality, which meant labour circulation rather than permanent settlement migration predominated, albeit with migrants often returning season after season. In the US, there was some presence of labour circulation, but due to recent political shifts and long term migration history, much of the labour force had settled in the region.

Labour circulation created a particular context, as Beth, argued:

> **“**It's not migration. Yeah, it's labour. They're coming in for six months and then they're going and we're happy to prove that (they’re) coming in and then they're going. They're not coming in to settle in this country. They're coming in for a short period of time to do a job and then to leave. That's what we need. We don't need people to come over [for] long periods of time” (Beth, Employer, UK).

The’reference to “it’s labour” that is “coming…to do a job” shows just how strong the emphasis on working-class migrants as economic units/ inputs actually is. Such migrants are conceived as ‘*homo economicus*’, loyally rooted within a context of work and employment and positioned outside of the social spheres of family and community. A “transnational simultaneity” (Hedberg, 2021) thus emerges for circulatory migrants that involves productive work and economic integration in the host

country alongside reproductive work and social integration “offshored” to the home country (Author B).

Alongside the seasonal rhythms of work, there was also daily and weekly uncertainty in terms of employment and therefore income:

> **“**As I said when you are working in farm...you cannot...make any plan, you cannot make any plans for few days forward, because you never know...all depends on weather. If it is good weather, we can work two weeks without days off or something like that. But after that we have this days off which are compensate our...our time” (Gabriel, Migrant Worker, Norway).

This uncertainty made the prospect of sustaining a familial and communal life in the host country, of paying regular market rates for privately rented housing, or of paying for a mortgage, extremely difficult. Here we see evidence of a transnationally mobile working-class verging on a precariat (Standing, 2011). Arguably, however, they are insulated from the extreme marginality associated with the precariat by virtue of their mobility being associated with a temporary liminal state (Author E) and with transnational simultaneity (Hedberg, 2021). This particular time-space context, or “rhythm” (Neis et al., 2018), is vital in understanding why working-class migrants work as hard as they do against a backdrop of “quarantining” (Horgan and Liinamaa, 2017).

Despite the insecurities of the of work, many migrants returned each season and thus had a permanence and stability of sorts. Employers were proud, for example, of their ability to keep the rate of return high and emphasized this during interviews:

> “We invited 75% of our workforce from last year back this year. Those were predominately people that had been here more than two years previously, so there was less of those in their first year that were invited back last year. And we hit, or anticipate to hit, a target around

> 56% returnees, which for us is...I think that's quite high. So we're quite happy with that. If half of our workforce are people that have been here and know what they're doing, then that makes it easier, we've only got half the workforce to work on" (Brian, Employer, UK).

Nevertheless, even migrants with the security of returning season after season remained excluded from the wider rural society.

One of the major factors accounting for this was housing and the fact that migrant horticultural workers tended to live in employer-provided tied accommodation even when working for most of the year in the host country. Perry has argued that living at work limits migrants' ability to establish an "autonomous and dignified life" (Perry, 2018: 1021). Illustraive of this, Gaspar talked of his life living at work:

> "Usually we stay on the farm and we are maybe not a closed group, because we have some friends in different places, but we have no time to go for meetings…No. It is not necessary. Because we stay for some months and...so we can survive without close relationships…Maybe…we should have more time to go somewhere and meet other people. We...yeah. We stay on the farm. We just work, and sleep and rest. It is a simple life, but boring also…It is hard to make relationships if we do not go anywhere and we have no time for that" (Gaspar, Migrant Worker, Norway).

Similarly, Arthur identified a simple work-based existence whilst employed on the farm: "Especially after eight, nine hours, which you're working. You're not interested, just to have shower, eat and sleep" (Arthur, Migrant Worker, UK). The work "rhythms" (Neis et al., 2018) are such that whilst engaged in precarious employment, and even whilst waiting for such employment, there is little time or opportunity to cultivate family or communal life in the host country.

Having migrants onsite was clearly of benefit to the employers because of the ways in which life revolved around work:

> **"**They keep themselves to themselves. They come here to do a job and then they go home. They come pay the tax, pay the national insurance, and then they leave. That's my opinion on it...we don't know from one day to the next what days the shifts are going to be. So with the guys working here, living here, there are a lot more flexible. They kind of give the hundred percent of their time and their life to the farm once they're here" (Beth, Employer, UK).

Illustrating that migrants "give the hundred percent of their time and their life to the farm" was the fact that when respondents were asked about wider ties with the rural area reference to the briefest of encounters at the grocery store and supermarket was the norm:

> "Most don't come with any independent transport. Farms are by definition rural so it could be they are four, five miles away from a central population, so other than the maybe weekly trip to go and do their shopping, it would take a large effort for them to go and actually want to join a local society or stuff like that. Plus they're there to work. Their work ethic is, and it's not like a 9:00 to 5:00 job, they can't make that appointment to go and sing in the local choir at seven o'clock on a summer's night because quite possibly they could still be out in the fields" (Charles, Community Stakeholder, UK).

The briefest of encounters within the grocery store and supermarket is not sustainable over the long-term and migrants often survive this lack of host-country integration by seeing it as liminal (Author E) and by maintaining transnational links, lifestyles and identities (Author B; Yeoh et al., 2017).

In many respects the situation of (dis)integration (Collyer et al., 2020; Samuk, 2020) and associated quarantine (Horgan and Liinamaa, 2017) for low-wage migrants is unsustainable. It

requires an off-season for migrants to recover and reconnect socially and, for many, also requires longer-term upward mobility goals to be envisioned and (hopefully) experienced. We will now reflect a little more on migrants moving up (socio-economically) and out (spatially) from their initial precarious employment and housing situations and, thus, beginning to re-engage socially.

***Moving Up, Moving Out?***

In Norway and the UK, moving out from onsite accommodation seemed to be an essential element in establishing a "normal life" for migrants, as Adam explained:

> "For a better living. I mean, you need to step over, to go out from here because it's just like it's not good for...it's good for seasonal workers, but it's not good if you start doing full years. It's not good to stay in…Especially over the winter...During the summer it's fine. There are a lot of people, you have a lot of connections. But November, December they're going. So it's like, like a couple of people remaining. The [weather] is cold and it's not exactly the life we chose to live. So I said like I decide together with my partner just to go from here...It's not a big advantage, but I think that it's a normal life. And you come to a normal job. You have connection with the people. It is different. I mean, it will help you mentally, first of all…You are separating your personal life and jobs. So, it's like helping you. Not a lot but it's helping…So [before when I lived onsite] this is what I was doing. I wasn't having so much contact with the people from outside. So, for me, it was stressful, and I said: 'I can't live like this...So I have two options. One, to leave. To find somewhere else, another job somewhere else. Or, to rent something not far away from work'. And this is what I've done" (Adam, Migrant Worker, UK).

Obtaining a “normal life” in rural areas is possible, but only once migrants have experienced upward mobility within or outside the horticultural sector and moved on from low-wage temporary/ seasonal employment. The problem is that it is not in the interests or states or employers for this upward mobility to happen *en masse*: hence the preference in many countries for guestworker visa schemes that limit working-class migrants’ rights and help keep them ‘in their place’.

In the US, unlike Norway and the UK, farm workers are typically housed offsite (HAC, 2011) and circular migration is more limited (apart from via the H-2A visa scheme). It is not unusual for migrant horticultural workers to live in the rural communities off farm and to settle and raise their families in these communities for many years despite having irregular status. The migrant workers were, as a result: “older and had more ties with the community” (Faith, Community Stakeholder, US), and: “most had settled down and raised a family somewhere in the area” (Dennis, Migrant Worker, US). Thus, it was: “not surprising to have people work [at one job] 20-30 years, even more” (Elijah, Employer, US) on the same farm. Nevertheless, there still appeared to be processes of class and race-based exclusion in rural areas:

> “Even within community, [they] keep themselves to themselves: Well you know those, those folks they stay by themselves. You know they [are] isolated in their own world. The farmworkers [are] not gonna go to those areas. They may go downtown but they would not go to the affluent areas. Unless you know if you're uhh the gardener. Or uhm, or the entire type of person. But the farmworkers won't bother you. They stay in their own community” (Felix, Community Stakeholder, US).

Indeed, as Doyle (2018) notes, when low-wage labour migrants live away from the farm they are often confined to sub-standard rural accommodation. Moreover, the isolation that the US migrant

horticultural workforce faced, even when they lived within the community and off-site, highlights the fact that integration in rural NIDs is more than about simply moving away from the farm (though this is very important). It is also about upward occupational mobility by either finding better work within agriculture (intra-sectoral mobility) or by moving out of agriculture into more desirable labour markets (inter-sectoral mobility) (see Bock et al., 2016) and effectively integrating into the social norms and activities of the daily lives in rural communities. It is also about challenging class, ethnicity and race-based constructions of the rural, especially the rural 'idyll'.

The interviews did provide some evidence of migrants using their temporary/ seasonal employment as a platform for upward socio-economic mobility. The following quote is illustrative:

> "At first I worked only for the season, six months, and then it was extended to nine months. This year I have got a permanent contract to work here for the whole year. From this year. That is better and it makes it more simple [chuckles]. That makes me learn more Norwegian. At first when I came here I had to learn Polish, there were many Polish workers here, and many of them could not speak English. So I had to learn Polish...Every year I was here for three to four months [in the beginning] every season, then the season became a little bit longer each season, it extended to five, six, seven months, then it became nine months" (Granica, Migrant Worker, Norway).

There is, then, the chance of integrating in rural areas given the right employment opportunities emerging. Thus, for some, the initial (dis)integration and quarantine experienced through precarious employment and tied accommodation is a "liminal" state (Author E). Class advancement is central here and it may occur within the host country, back home, or across both contexts. It may also involve migrants directly or may be deferred onto their children, and may be envisaged rather than actually experienced. Whatever the situation, surviving such limited social integration and associated

familial/ communal dettachment is likely to involve perceiving the situation in some way as a temporary in-between state.

Indicative of the potential for class advancement, we found no evidence of migrants' children following them into temporary/ seasonal harvest work. According to Felix, for example: "The second generation is not gonna go back to the fields. It's very rare that the second generation of kids are gonna go back to the fields" (Felix, Community Stakeholder, US).

In summary, then, precarious work and housing contexts appear to constrain migrants and prevent their integration in rural NIDs. However, this precarity and associated lack of integration is rendered bearable by migrants "transnational simultaneity" (Hedberg, 2021) and by its perceived "liminality" (Author E). In terms of the former, migrants "offshore" (Author B) their social reproduction in the home country to focus on work in the host country, something that serves the interests of capital more than the interests of labour. In terms of the latter, it is expected that, over the long-term, there will be upward mobility either in the host country or back home, and if not for the first generation migrants then certainly for the second generation (see also Alberti, 2014). Thus, experiences akin to "(dis)integration" and "quarantine" are survived (even embraced) because of the temporal trajectories (liminal) and spatial emplacements (transnational) of working-class migrants.

**Conclusions**

Many have criticised international migrants for not integrating and leading 'paralell lives'. However, this paper has shown that a lack of integration amongst a mobile and transnational working-class may actually be desired by states and employers, and thus forces may be present that make integration difficult if not possible for international migrants. Across core economies, low-wage employers (in sectors like horticulture and domestic work) have become reliant on a certain form of

"(dis)integrated" (Collyer et al., 2020; Samuk, 2020) migrant labour. 'Guestworker' visas enshrine non-integration in law. Even when these visa schemes are not present though (as in our three case studies) integration is often still very limited.

In Norwegian, UK and US horticulture, migrant workers are clearly "quarantined" (Horgan and Liinamaa, 2017) by virtue of their precarious (temporary/ seasonal and low-wage) employment and associated housing situation (tied onsite accommodation). In addition, the rural geography of the horticultural sector may add to this quarantining given the invisibility and isolation of workplaces and the contrasts (especially around class, ethnicity and race) between migrants and the pervasive rural idyll. Integration is largely impossible within such a context and, even when migrant horticultural workers move off site and settle more permanently in the wider community (as was evident in the US), integration can still be extremely challenging.

We suggest that the lack of social (familial and communal) engagement amongst migrants is made possible in the short to medium term by two key mechanisms. First, the assumed "liminality" (Author E) of horticultural work – that it is temporary and will, in some capacity, be associated with future upward mobility – makes it initially acceptable for working-class migrants. Second, "transnational simultaneity" (Hedberg, 2021) – whereby work (the productive sphere) and social life (the reproductive sphere) are divided according to particular temporal-spatial "rhythms" (Neis et al., 2018) – allow migrants to maintain family and communal life, albeit outside of the host country. This "offshoring" (Author B) of social reproduction, allied with the liminality of low-wage work, combine to make migrants' social quarantining bearable over the short to medium-term. Not only this, but they are mechanisms that may well give insight into the much celebrated work ethic of migrants at the lowest echelons of the labour market.

Overall then, the paper shows how migrants can be kept at arms-length by core economies: needed by states and employers, but not always wanted or welcome. This reflects itself most prominently in terms of integration trjectories and it is a situation that appears to be true for a particular class of worker (working-class migrants) and for particular sectors of the economy (such as horticulture and domestic work). In some countries, visa schemes work to ensure migrants remain as 'guests' but in our case it was the temporary/ seasonal and low-wage nature of the work offer, allied with the tied accommodation, that appears to have prevented meaningful integration. The rural context itself also seemed to play a role, though more rersearch is needed here. In addition, the economic gains from importing workers but not human beings need to be challenged; as it seems that there are basic human rights being undermined by this orthodoxy, and that a particularly class of worker is most affected by it. This challenge may, though, be extremely difficult, given that the national and sectoral policies of core economies now appear orientated towards the creation and exploitation of a certain type of highly constrained low-wage migrant workforce.

**Notes**

[1] The term NIDs as used here is comparable to the notion of new immigrant gateways and is used in reference to the shift in migrant receiving areas throughout North America and Europe from the traditional urban context to include more suburban and rural areas.

[2] Note that we distinguish here between temporary work (work that is insecure and on-demand and varies on a daily/ weekly basis), seasonal work (work that has a particular consistent annual rhythm to it) and migrant labour circulation (workers that return year-on-year). In horticulture, the work available is often both temporary and seasonal and also reliant on migrant labour circulation.

[3] We use the concept of liminality here in accordance with that first outlined by Arnold Van Gennep (1909 [1960]) and later elaborated on by Victor Turner (1967, 1969). Liminality is essentially the marginal space that individuals temporarily inhabit after their separation from their old role and before they assume an expected new role. It is a temporary 'in-between' state that is expected (though does not always) lead on to a desired end state.

[4] There is also a wider literature on the relationship between precarious work and social mobility. Some stress that secondary employment acts as a 'stepping-stone', under certain circumstances, into primary labour markets (Booth et al., 2002). Others argue that precarious work may also act as a permanent 'dead end' under certain circumstances (Nielsen et al., 2019), especially for migrant workers (Friberg, 2016; Author F). This is particularly true for certain low-wage migrant-dependent industries and in a context of national and regional policies which can often allow and support the persistence of precarious work as a permanent 'dead end'.

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To be added.

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