



FINAL SYNTHESIS REPORT

# Experiences of Young Migrant Men and Their Well-Being

An Empirical Study from Seven European Countries



MIGRANT MEN'S  
WELL-BEING IN DIVERSITY

The Project Migrant Men's Well-Being in Diversity (MiMen) was co-financed by the European Commission (EC) in the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (EIF) and ran from 2014 to 2015.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

In public debates and in the media, young migrant men (YMM) frequently feature as a problematic group: They are regarded as failing in the education system, potentially upholding sexist attitudes and exhibiting violent and criminal behaviour. This situation led us to design this project in 2012/2013. After the terror attacks in Paris in 2015 the public image and stereotyping of young migrant males in the public discourse has certainly not improved and the focus on their experiences and life-worlds seems even more important.

Research has pointed out that the experiences of YMM are influenced by negative stereotyping and they face discrimination more often than their female counterparts (FRA 2010, Leiprecht 2012). At the same time, YMM have to cope with high expectations of their families to succeed. These various expectations and preconceptions contribute to gender-specific risks of marginalisation of YMM. With our project “Migrant Men’s Well-Being in Diversity”, short MiMen, we explicitly seek to make visible the needs of young migrant males in contrast to the perpetrated public images and thus show the vulnerability of the target group. Counteracting the discrimination and marginalisation of YMM from non-European countries and implementing policies to support their well-being constitute significant European challenges. The project was co-financed by the European Commission in the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals.

In social policy migrant men are just slowly being recognized as a vulnerable group. In the field of education, research has put a specific focus on boys for quite some time, mainly as a problematic group displaying special needs and under-performing in comparison to girls (OECD, 2015a). The MiMen Project seeks to evaluate the experiences of young migrant men in different domains such as at school, at work, in the neighbourhood / community, with the authorities / families / peers as well as identify their notions of well-being through in-depth interviews and focus groups in seven European countries (Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy and the United Kingdom). In the empirical research we identified specific “domains” in the life-worlds of young migrant males which are relevant to their subjective well-being. We understand well-being as a core element of a successful “integration” in the society one is living in.

During 20-month project runtime 2014-2015 a total of 282 young migrant men from 16 to 27 years of age participated in the interviews or focus group discussions in the partner countries.

Of the experiences of the young men an international sample was created and all partners wrote English-language summaries of their qualitative interviews. This allowed for a transnational approach towards the data and the transnational analysis of specific “domains” of relevance to the young men. To our knowledge, this is an innovative perspective as the target group and the topic have not yet been approached in a European research perspective, albeit the well-being and “inclusion” of young migrant males constitute significant European challenges. This report presents the results of the transnational analyses of the empirical material and the well-being domains of young migrant men.

## **Structure of the Report**

In the following report, we will first outline the methodology of the empirical work in Chapter II and describe the sample. In the same chapter we will also describe briefly the concept of well-being. In the subsequent chapters the partners summarise their transnational analysis of the interview data<sup>1</sup> each focusing on a specific well-being domain of the young migrant men, as deduced from the interviews. The transnational analyses start in Chapter III with the evaluation of the emotional ties and bonds of the YMM by Antti Kivijärvi and Kai Mathias. Chapter IV takes a look at the education and career choices of the YMM and has been analysed by Pavel Bareš, Jan Kubát, Milada Horáková and Danica Schebelle. Péter Szlovák and Justyna Szewczyk describe in Chapter V the nature and importance of the various social networks of the target group and how and where these networks are established. The Chapter VI Eckart Müller-Bachmann and Iris Dähnke describe the different spheres of belonging of YMM, from the (material) neighbourhood to the immaterial, in particular discussing the relevance of religion to some young men. It also describes how young men deal with perceptions onto themselves, in particular by the media. Following that, in Chapter VII Jon Spencer, Necla Acik, Jo Deakin and Claire Fox stress the importance of safety, security and authorities for the well-being of the young men. Although experiences of discrimination and stereotyping feature repeatedly in the accounts of the young men and subsequently the chapters, a specific chapter has been devoted to this topic, as it plays a central role in the well-being of the YMM. Thus, in Chapter VIII Luc-Henry Choquet,

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<sup>1</sup>Interview quotations are marked with country code abbreviations and number, e.g FR\_02. The abbreviations show in which country the interview took place (CZ-Czech Republic, DE-Germany, FI-Finland, FR-France, IE-Ireland, IT-Italy, UK-United Kingdom) and the number distinguishes interviews conducted in each country. ‘a’ and ‘b’ is added in cases of multiple interviews with the same person. The sign ‘FG’ refers to the discussion in a focus group. All names used in reference to the interviews and focus groups are pseudonyms.

Patrick Simon and Maud Choquet describe diverse experiences of discrimination, from “othering” to its most offensive forms, and how the interviewed young men react to them. In Chapter IX Alessia Mefalopulos and Marco Troiani look at the specific ‘before’ and ‘after’ dimension of the migration experience. They argue that the expectations brought with them, either by themselves or their families and the extent to which they are fulfilled, impact decisively on the overall satisfaction of the young men and their well-being. The final Chapter X proposes the *Young Migrant Men’s Well-Being Index* and summaries some main results from the previous chapters and discusses these in respect to existing well-being surveys. It points to important omissions in existing indexes, suggests how a well-being index for young men should be constructed and lists subjective indicators – both existing and new – and implications for policy.

The annex contains the bibliography, the common guideline for the qualitative interviews and the guideline for peer researchers and the ‘blob tree’, a tool used in some interviews especially with young respondents. More research reports and policy analyses on YMM, specifically in the national perspectives, are accessible via the partners respectively downloadable on their websites.

## **Chapter II: Methodology**

**Necla Acik** (University of Manchester), **Eckart Müller-Bachmann**, **Iris Dähnke**  
(CJD Hamburg + Eutin)

### **Project Working Steps and Deliverables**

The MiMen project consisted of consecutive analytical working steps to bring together the national and transnational perspectives, starting with desk research. Each project partner reviewed existing research and policies on the target group of young migrant men in their country. The results of the desk research review were written down in reports and discussed among the partners. The individual desk research reports can be requested via the partners respectively and are downloadable from their websites. Following that was the main research phase where each partner interviewed approximately 40 young migrant men in their country either individually in qualitative-narrative interviews or in focus groups (more details on this working step in the following chapter). The main findings were related to the outcomes of the aforementioned national policy review in each country and the results were presented at national stakeholder seminars. There, stakeholders from national and regional levels gathered with practitioners and young migrant men themselves to discuss the well-being needs of YMM and the implications for policy. This resulted in national policy briefs containing recommendations, which can also be requested via the partners respectively are downloadable from their websites. The empirical interview material was then analysed in the transnational perspective, then structured into well-being areas relevant for the young men as deduced from the interviews. Finally, the transnational results were summarised in relation to existing well-being survey, resulting in the Young Migrant Men's Well-Being Index.

### **What is Well-Being?**

The concept of subjective well-being describes how an individual evaluates their overall quality of life. This subjective evaluation is the most fundamental indicator of how happy someone is with their life in general. It is mostly directly captured in the question 'how are you?' However well-being goes beyond evaluation of momentary happiness and encompasses the overall evaluation of how one's life is going. Following the Statistical



Office of the European Commission Eurostat, “subjective well-being encompasses three distinct but complementary sub-dimensions: life satisfaction (or evaluation), based on an overall cognitive assessment; affects, or the presence of positive feelings and absence of negative feelings; and eudemonics, the feeling that one’s life has a meaning” (Eurostat 2015). Whereas affects or ‘hedonic well-being’, the preponderance of positive feelings over negative feelings describes the pleasure-oriented aspect of well-being, the eudemonic dimension is based on Aristoteles’ concept of Eudemonia and means having a sense of purpose in life. This definition used by Eurostat follows social psychology theory (e.g. Keyes 1998, Ryff 1989). Accordingly eudemonic well-being is for example linked to long-term life-goals, meaningful social relations, autonomy and self-esteem.

Well-being implies a positive self-image and congruence between the individual’s expectations about life and their life reality. If the individual’s expectations about their life do not conform with their life-realities, for example due to experienced injustice, discrimination or unequal opportunities, well-being is affected negatively. The gap between expectations and reality can also be widened by high parental expectations or overall societal expectations, negative or positive, which are transported via the media or educational institutions. The fact that well-being is a subjective concept means that “in a European comparative context, we need to take into account that these widely differing priorities and values are also shaped by societal structures, norms and cultural background, which may vary between the different countries” (Eurostat 2015). In our study the variations in understanding ‘well-being’ and ‘what constitutes a good life’ are potentially even greater, taking into account additionally to European diversity the various non-European backgrounds of the young men. However, beyond the cultural variation in understanding this subjective concept, the individual’s expectations play a great role for their well-being. Many immigrants gain a significant increase in well-being due to the fact that they have access to (free) education and can live in safety, calm and peace.

With regard to the sample of our study it is important to note that we are focussing on those who are already to a certain extent established in their country. All young men had been living in the country for at least one year, with the average length of residency being seven years. About half the interviewees immigrated after the age of 13 and a minority of the young men are second generation. The men in the sample reside permanently in the country and can speak the language, at least enough to converse in their everyday environment. They

participated to different extents in the life-worlds of the autochthonous population. Thus, how they evaluate their well-being rests on very different factors than for newly arrived immigrants, in particular recent refugees. For the latter group, shelter, housing, physical safety, orientation in the new system, translation and assistance with authorities are the most pressing necessities, whereas the needs of the MiMen-target group are mostly more 'advanced'.

## **Interview Guides**

The interview guide for the individual and group interviews was developed by the coordinator fusing biographic-narrative questions with other open questions on their live worlds. During the interviews topics such as school, vocational training, work, family, peers, migrant communities, participation possibilities, leisure options, intercultural interactions, gender relations and many more were raised. The interviewees were contacted through the individual, personal and institutional contacts of each partner organisation and through further multipliers such as peer-group-researchers, trainees, students, advisors for migrants other NGO and migrant organisations employees and so on. The topic areas for the focus group and the individual interviews were discussed and decided upon at the first meetings of the partners in early 2014.

The individual interviews aimed to elicit the experiences of YMM in relation to various areas of everyday life such as education, employment, family, community, social and political participation, legal status, their leisure time, bridging to (members) of their new homeland. The interviews focused on what barriers they faced in these different life-spheres and how they coped with these challenges. Specific questions on their perception of well-being and its relation to gender and age were also explored. These topics were developed into an interview guide with specific questions and areas to be covered as well as probes to achieve consistency across the countries (see Appendix I). While this interview guide was used as the base for interviews by most of the partners, the use of peer researchers in Manchester meant that the guide had to be adapted to peer researchers. These were from the migrant communities who had no or little experience in carrying out in-depth narrative interviews. Thus the Manchester team transformed this interview guide into a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix II) to make sure that peer researchers covered all the relevant topic areas. In order to elicit

responses on happiness and well-being questions the blob tree (see Appendix III) was also introduced. Respondents were shown a drawing which depicts a tree with various characters on it reflecting different stages of life as well as moods. They were asked how they felt at different life stages and which character reflects their past or current moods. This method proved to be a very useful in terms of getting various narratives and particularly on aspirations, achievement, well-being and happiness.

The focus group-interviews aimed to get the opinions of YMM on migration and the challenges it brings for YMM with a particular focus on well-being and gender. The guide for the focus group suggested to use a video, news clip or the blob tree as an icebreaker and to facilitate the in-group discussion among the young men.

For this purpose the CJD Hamburg + Eutin used a short video from the ZDF programme 'Berlin Direkt' entitled 'Turkish and Arabic Immigrants – Support or Challenge?' (*Türkische und Arabische Einwanderer: Fördern oder Fordern?*, Spiegel TV 2010), which included stereotypical reports from Berlin's social services, integration deficits of petty criminal migrant youth with unrealistic aspirations for the future and uneducated migrant families. The video provided a useful discussion point for the young men to comment on the stereotypical images. The interviewers consciously did not comment on the report or its stereotypical nature, to evaluate how the young men would position themselves in the light of this. The team in Manchester used a different technique. In collaboration with Simon Ruding from Theatre in Prison and Probation (TiPP) they utilised the TiPP group working model 'Jo Blagg'. The process encouraged participants to compare life narratives and to project personal experiences onto a fictive character that inhabits a real world very much like their own. Each participant was therefore able to personally invest in the narrative, as it was partly generated by them and they shared common experiences with the final character.

## **Fieldwork**

The MiMen project includes the experiences of 282 young migrant men, who were either interviewed individually (145) or through their participation at the focus groups (137). Follow up interviews were carried out in all of the countries with the exception of the UK and France as they experienced delays in starting with their fieldwork (see below: summary of fieldwork). Again for the same reason, France could only arrange one focus group but they

on the other hand exceeded their target of individual interviews and interviewed 32 young men. The UK on the other hand reached the lowest number of participants, yet their interview summaries were more detailed than the average. Overall, all partners felt that they have collected sufficient data to commence with the data analysis.

**Table 1: Number of YMM interviewed**

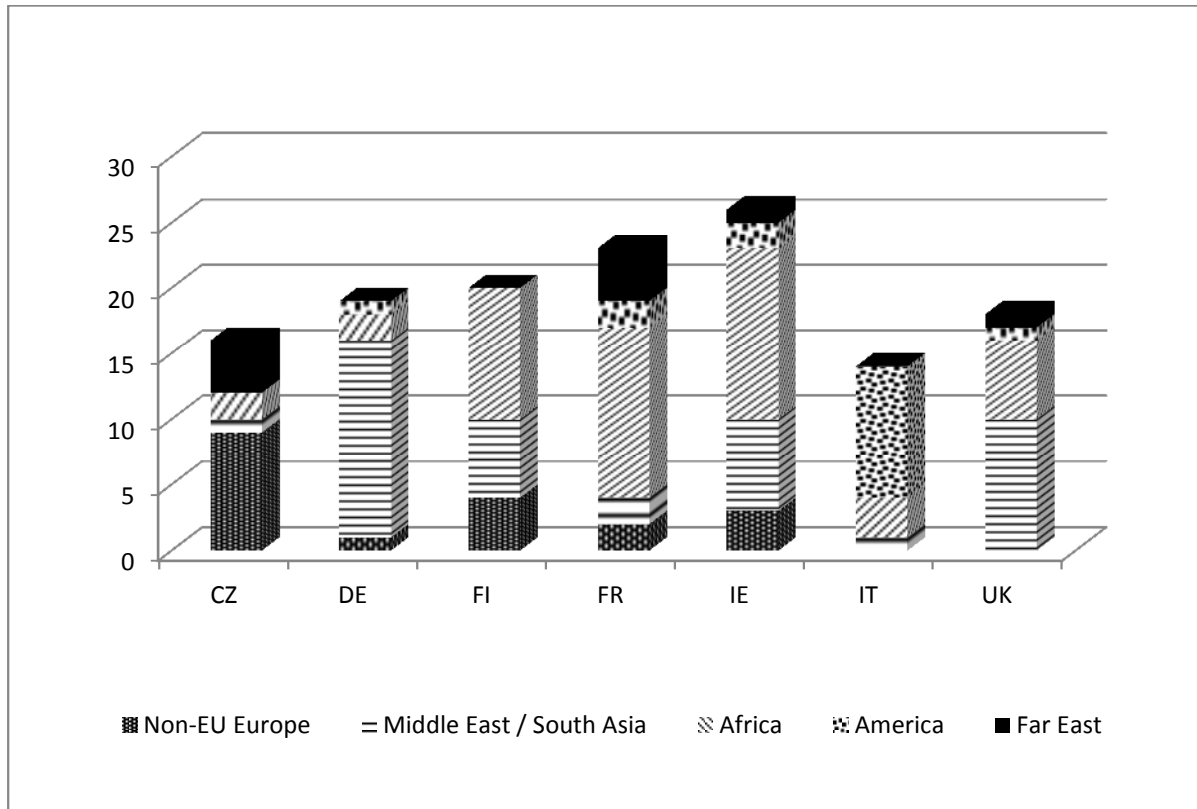
	<i>No of individuals interviewed face-to-face</i>	<i>Follow up interviews</i>	<i>Total no of individual interviews</i>	<i>Focus groups</i>	<i>Focus group participants</i>	<i>Total participants</i>
<b>CZ</b>	16	7	23	3	24	40
<b>DE</b>	19	2	21	3	19	38
<b>FI</b>	20	6	26	6	24	44
<b>FR</b>	32	0	32	1	8	40
<b>IE</b>	26	11	37	3	22	48
<b>IT</b>	14	6	20	3	24	38
<b>UK</b>	18	0	18	2	16	34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>282</b>

In addition to the summaries the partners were also asked to fill in basic demographics about the participants they interviewed individually in an Excel spreadsheet including, age, years in the country, country of birth, and religion. Figure 1 on the next page shows the number of participants by country of birth and country of residence. Respondents from Africa formed the biggest group with 36 per cent, followed by respondents from the Middle East and South Asia incl. Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (30 per cent). Moreover, 14 per cent of respondents were from non-EU Eastern European countries, 7.4 per cent from the Far East and 11.8 were from Latin America. The graph shows that in Italy a much larger proportion interviewed were from Latin America and in the Czech Republic the majority of respondents were from China, Vietnam, Russia and Ukraine. This reflects the main countries of immigration to these.

On average the age of the respondents interviewed is 22 and the average time they have been in the host country is seven years. Yet, some came as young children, others as teenagers or young adults and either as part of family reunification, refugee incl. as unaccompanied minors or as students. In a few cases the young men were born in Europe and constituted second generation. Statistics were also collected about their religious background. 44 per cent

of the respondents were Muslims and 40 per cent were Christians. The rest was a mix of no religion, other religion or missing information as the topic religion did not occur in the summaries.

**Figure 1: Number of YMM by country of birth**



Note: Includes young migrant men interviewed individually only (N=145). In case where the participants are second generation, country of birth refers to their parent's country of birth.

## Data Analysis

The interviews were carried out in the languages of the respective countries in which the migrants lived and interview summaries were produced in English. The summaries were anonymised and uploaded to a shared Dropbox folder. The guideline for summaries was three pages, and most of the summaries were between 2-4 pages, yet a few summaries were as short as one page and a few over 6 pages. The summaries included background information about the interviewee and the interview setting, a summary of the narratives with respect to various topic areas and relevant original quotes from the original interview. This produced over 500 pages of interview summaries. To ensure consistency in coding, all summaries i.e. the summaries from the individual interviews, the follow up interviews and the summaries of the focus groups were coded by one person. This was done by Necla Acik at the University of

Manchester using the software NVivo10. The codes were developed based on the interview schedule as well as based on the topics that emerged from the summaries. The coding structure was presented and adjusted at the meeting in Dublin in March 2015 and finally aggregated under 7 main domains:

**Table 2: Coding of well-being domains**

<p><b>Belonging, Environment &amp; Identity</b> (<i>CJD Hamburg + Eutin, Germany</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neighbourhood</li> <li>- Cultural differences</li> <li>- Housing</li> <li>- Religious identity</li> <li>- Belonging</li> </ul>	<p><b>Family Relations, Partners</b> (<i>Finnish Youth Research Society</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family relationships</li> <li>- Lack of family relationships</li> <li>- Girlfriends / partners</li> <li>- Conflict with parents</li> <li>- Masculinity</li> <li>- Gender roles</li> <li>- Marriage</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discrimination and Racism</b> (<i>Ministry of Justice France</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Language</li> <li>- Discrimination: at school</li> <li>- Discrimination: with authorities</li> <li>- Discrimination: down playing</li> <li>- Perception on Muslims</li> <li>- Perception on respondent</li> <li>- Media</li> </ul>	<p><b>Education and Employment</b> (<i>RILSA, Czech Republic</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education: positive</li> <li>- Education: negative</li> <li>- Financial situation</li> <li>- Employment</li> <li>- Employment: discrimination</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Networks, Friends, Recreation &amp; Sports</b> (<i>Immigrant Council of Ireland</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friendships</li> <li>- Community</li> <li>- Socialising</li> <li>- Work socialising</li> <li>- Voluntary activities</li> <li>- Gym</li> <li>- Leisure activities</li> <li>- Football</li> </ul>	<p><b>Safety, Security &amp; Authorities</b> (<i>University of Manchester, UK</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encounters with the Police</li> <li>- Encounters with the Authorities</li> <li>- Illegal activities</li> <li>- Feelings of safety, changes</li> <li>- Safety: appreciation</li> <li>- Safety: lack of it</li> <li>- Avoiding trouble</li> </ul>
<p><b>Achievements and expectations: the migration trajectory from past via present to future outlook, optimism/pessimism, (IPRS, Italy)</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Role models</li> <li>- Achievements</li> <li>- Opportunities</li> <li>- Positive outlook</li> <li>- Future plans</li> <li>- Future plans - uncertainty</li> <li>- Autonomy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Happiness</li> <li>- Coping strategies</li> <li>- Health</li> <li>- Difficult times</li> <li>- Depression</li> <li>- Finance</li> <li>- Background</li> <li>- Changes due to migration</li> </ul>

The seven identified domains of well-being emerged from the coded data. The coding helped to identify overlapping topic areas which were then aggregated based on how much material existed for each code. For example while education and employment are usually treated as separate domains of well-being the data indicated a lot of overlap in the case of young migrant men as they are often in transition from education to the labour market or experience both areas simultaneously. Discrimination on the other hand was hardly ever identifiable as a separate domain of well-being. The empirical data clearly indicated that experiences about discrimination were existent to a large extent in the coded domains of the data so that it was decided to treat it as a separate domain.

The programme NVivo allows producing extracts for selected aggregate codes. Once the detailed codes were aggregated under the seven domains of well-being, each partner received their part of the data for the transnational analysis of their domains. In addition to that all partners had access to the common shared folder with all interview summaries and were able to look at the respective relevant full summaries if needed. Due to the very late start of the French interviews, their summaries were not coded on time and thus not included in the extracts produced by NVivo. However, any remaining summaries in addition to the French were uploaded to the common shared Dropbox folder and all partners included them in their transnational analysis.

The transnational analysis of each partner focused on the analysis of the empirical material with regards to the specific domains shown above. These analyses summarised the empirical material of the belonging codes to each domain. In a next step the well-being index was drafted. The well-being index sums up these main results from each domain and relates them to existing well-being domains.

## Chapter III: Love or Anarchy? Emotional Bonds and Well-Being of Young Migrant Men

Antti Kivijärvi and Kai Mathias (Finnish Youth Research Society)

*If we now speak of well-being, then you can say thank God I'm healthy. I have enough money to live. I have my duties which satisfy me. I have a family that supports me. I have good friends with whom I can share something, discuss things and whom I can trust. And I have a religion, I have a purpose in life and I know for what I am working for. [DE\_9]*

*It is difficult when you are alone in Finland. There is nobody who tells you what to do, what is good, what is bad. And now, my family is not able to help me. I moved here to live alone. [FI\_3]*

Men are often defined as public actors. Thus, the well-being of men is considered mainly in the fields of education, work and social networks (Lewis 2012). However, in this chapter, our focus is on men in private spheres. We examine the lives of young migrant men in the form of intimate and communal attachments. We call these types of relations emotional bonds that provide support, a sense of continuity and feeling of belonging. We ask the following question: What kind of connections are there between emotional bonds of young migrant men and their well-being? Moreover, within the framework of transnational analysis, we ponder whether there are any group-based differences in the emotional bonding of our informants.

Trusting and supportive attachments are themes that are strongly emphasised in the literature on well-being and happiness. Many scholars have claimed that relatedness is a basic human need (Baumeister & Leary 1995) and a resilience factor across the lifespan of people (Small et al. 2010). Moreover, strong attachments are essential in promoting subjective well-being, and, as expected, feelings of loneliness have the opposite effects (Abrams et al. 2005).

Emotional attachments vary during the life-course of an individual. For infants and children, the most important relations are grown-up care givers, during youth peers often become more significant and as adults, people begin to couple and have children of their own. As young men between 16 and 27, many of our informants are in a transitory phase. They might be strongly supported by their parents or be totally without their care, some might rely on their



friends or some might already have their own partners and children and form fundamental attachments with them. Some might have all of this, some none.

In the context of migration, family ties, in particular, have been considered an essential topic of research in classical literature (Thomas & Znanieck 1918-1920). Firstly, relationships in the form of transnational unions are often the reason for migration in the first place. Secondly, particularly in regions outside the wealthy west, migration is a way to escape poverty. Parents attempt to provide a better future for their offspring by migrating themselves or investing in their children by sending them to create a better future (Juntunen 2002). Thus, it is likely that familial relations as well as gender and generational roles are in turmoil as a consequence of migration (Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Olwig 2011). The aim of this paper is to analyse these upheavals and their connections with the well-being of young migrant men.

### **Conceptual Framework: Emotional Bonds and Eudemonic Well-Being**

To analyse the connections between emotional bonds and well-being, we must define our two key concepts. By emotional bonds, we refer to positively experienced social relations consisting of two distinctive aspects:

- 1) Providing a feeling of continuity and belongingness (emotional aspect)
- 2) Providing material support and advice (bonding aspect)

By harnessing the notion of emotional bonds, we wanted to avoid forcing normative concepts and our probably biased preconceptions of how peoples' social relations are organised. For example, the dominant notion of a family is loaded with everyday assumptions about heterosexual, intact and small-numbered nuclear collectives. The notion of emotional bonds allows us to look at the attachments and their meanings more analytically. For some migrant men, the concept of a family might be too narrow, excluding, for example, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Moreover, in some cases biologically determined family relations can be replaced / supplemented by other supportive characters such as foster parents, partners, friends or wider and even imaginary communities (Al-Sharmani 2007).

When studying the well-being of young people in particular, the two-fold implication of emotional bonds is quite feasible. Both emotional and bonding aspects are intrinsic in the

notion of eudemonic well-being. Since Aristotelian times, eudemonic well-being (as opposed to hedonic) has been defined as a feeling of continuous growth across an individual's life-span and the ability to realise one's potential (Ryan & Deci 2001, 146; Vanhoutte 2012, 6). It can be claimed that peoples' ideas about their potential and desirable direction of growth are strongly determined in relation to significant others and communal attachments. For example, according to Schoon and Schulenberg (2013, 54), young peoples' 'active engagement in and commitment to meaningful social roles predict higher levels of life satisfaction and well-being'. In other words, emotional bonds provide a platform on which eudemonic well-being can flourish (*cf.* Huppert et al. 2009).

As is rather self-evident, the emotional aspect of the concept of emotional bonds illustrates a life-course perspective for people -knowledge of where they have come from and ideas about where they want to be in the future. In the data, the young men often describe chains of generations in which they position themselves. Through the stories of their grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins and -in some cases- their own children, they are able to identify a path they consider worth taking.

In turn, the connection between well-being and the bonding aspect of our notion is more concrete. In the existing research literature, it has been indicated that particularly close ties anchor people to certain communities, thereby providing them with material support and advice. More distant acquaintances and peers are often important in transmitting new knowledge and opening access to new networks (e.g. Granovetter 1973; Briggs 1998). Consequently, for particularly young people, bonds provide a foundation from which to build one's life without having to worry about subsistence or fulfilling basic needs.

Finally, in the research literature on well-being there is plenty of evidence on the likely consequences of a lack of emotional bonds. It has been indicated that living without significant relations easily leads to an 'anarchic' orientation towards life: cynicism, lack of generalised trust, feelings of disconnectedness and rejecting help offers (e.g. Scherwitz et al. 1991). In the light of this discussion, an empirical scrutiny of emotional bonds against the backdrop of eudemonic well-being seems more than necessary.

## Diversity and Transnationalism: General Remarks on Emotional Bonds of Migrant Men

Before attempting to answer our research question, it is important to examine the quantity and quality of emotional bonds of our informants. The first remark from the data is that the emotional bonds of migrant males are diverse. They consist of those with family and extended family members. Occasionally, the interviewees saw themselves as more family-oriented than the majority of people in their countries of residence and often highlighted that:

*[Family is] the most important thing in life. [FI\_FG1]*

*I feel better in Turkey because I've got family there. Lots of family members. I feel more alone here, more like the only man of the house. My friend has got lots of uncles and cousins and if I had that here I would feel more safe. [UK\_1]*

*They [Czech people] do not keep together, whereas for Vietnamese the family is a basis and it represents the most important thing. We keep together notwithstanding they are aliens such as a Vietnamese or a person from our community, so we help each other. [CZ\_FG1]*

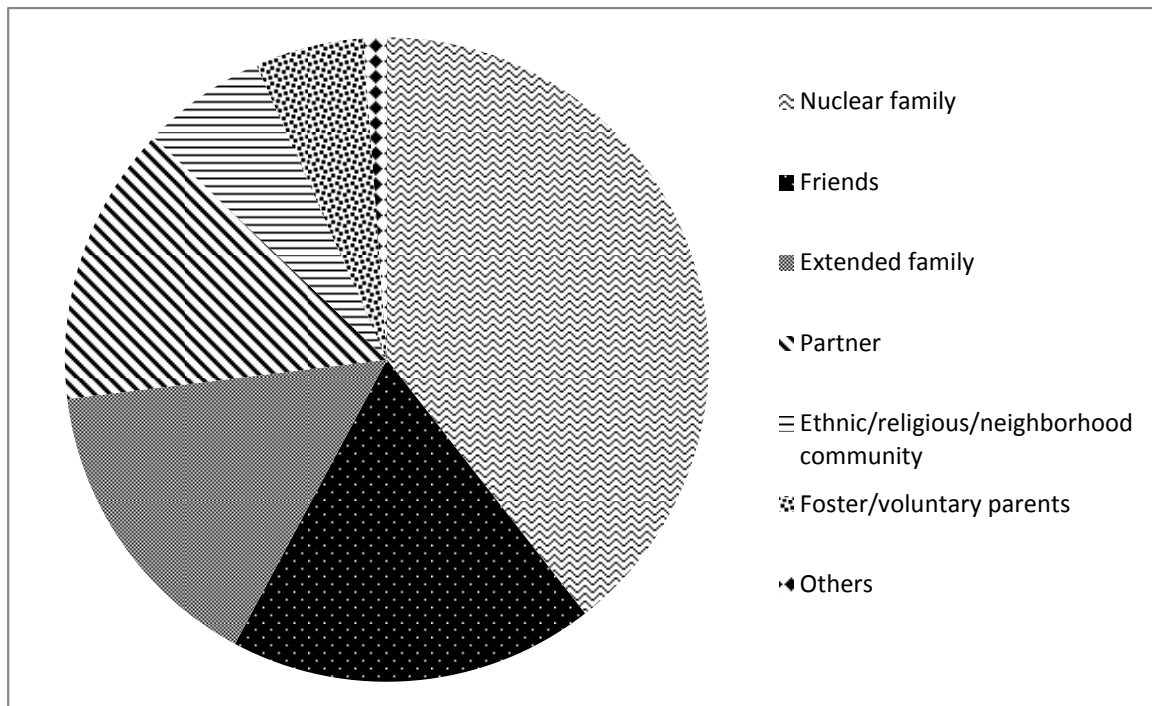
Not surprisingly, for many, their relationships with parents were the most important and closest. However, according to the data, it appears that the role of siblings and cousins might be emphasised in a new society. The social networks and everyday life of young people during school hours and leisure may be unfamiliar to their parents. Thus, mutual understanding and support can be received from peer relatives.

*We were at school together and he [my brother] looked after me, he had my back. When he skipped school I would cover for him. Then in 2nd and 3rd year he told me that I was able to look after myself. [IT\_13]*

*Yes, where work and the future are concerned she [my sister] is a role model. She also prepares me a little for later on. She says how things are and how she got where she is. [DE\_20]*

In addition to (extended or blended) family members, partners, friends, wider communities and even foster and voluntary parents were defined as emotional bonds. Figure 2 illustrates the diverse nature of these bonds.

**Figure 2: Type of emotional bonds among young migrant men**



Note: This is only based on the individual interviews and does not include the focus groups.

The second finding from the data is that emotional bonds are transnational. This implies that many of the close relations of our informants reside in different countries and continents—usually, this means one or both of their parents and siblings. Approximately half of the men who were interviewed individually have family members both in their country of residence and in other countries. One third has all their family members in their countries of residence, while family members of approximately one out of five live in another country or countries. Transnational life, which includes aspects such as remittances, yearning, travel plans and IT connections, is common for young migrant men.

However, being far away does not necessarily mean diminishing the significance of one's familial bonds. In certain cases, the distance may actually highlight the importance of being on good terms and having intact relations with one's family members.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the distance might make parental support more apparent and interviewees' gendered role in his family more concrete.

<sup>2</sup> In the data, even deceased family members might be emotionally significant in the sense of belonging and feeling of continuity.

*If they [my parents] want money I am happy to send them everything because they looked after me for 21 years. [UK\_7]*

*I have the feeling that someone is supporting me [while talking with father who lives in the country of origin] and that makes me stronger. [DE\_12]*

The third remark from the data is that the manifold and transnational bunch of attachments function as emotional bonds for most of the men interviewed, providing both feelings of belonging and more concrete support in the form of material benefits or advice. The closest social relations were often considered the foundation of a happy and stable life and sources of security, which countered the occasionally harsh living conditions that included experiences of discrimination and material deficiency in a new society.

*[F]airly ok, because my mum was there (...). She just told me where to walk, how to walk and speak to people, what time of the day to walk. [IE\_19]*

*A: People we know who have lived here for six years maybe. They are friends of our relatives and they helped us in the beginning. First our relatives then us. All people. We help each other.*

*Q: So do you think that Russian speaking people form a cohesive community in your city?*

*A: I think so. All communicate and help each other. It is a good thing. [FI\_19]*

The bulk of our informants have emotional bonds. Almost all of them receive emotional support. Moreover, receiving material support and advice is rather common as well. More than two out of three interviewees have these types of relations (See table 3).

**Table 3: Receiving emotional and material support/advice**

	<b>Emotional support</b>	<b>Material support / advice</b>
Yes	95%	70%
No	4%	26%
Missing	1%	5%
<i>Total (n)</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>131</i>

Overall, our informants appear to be quite well-off when considering their social attachments. The great majority of them have emotional bonds as a source of identity (they are able to answer questions such as who am I, where do I belong and where am I going?) and many other forms of support.

What probably distinguishes many young migrant men from ethnic majorities is the diversity and transnational nature of their bonds. Transnational family networks are important to many informants, while simultaneously several of them are strongly attached to local peer groups. For some young men, local peer groups might imply ethnicity or religiously determined communities in which cultural identity is strengthened and reciprocal support shared. As for others, local peer groups might mean ‘communities of difference’ (e.g. Vestel 2004). In these types of groups, any assumed ethnic or linguistic differences do not prevent cohesion. However, majority representatives are often a scant part of peer circles of this kind:

*[W]e are just like brothers, who are also from here and from all over the world.* [DE\_20].

The cohesion is often built on shared experiences of (ethnic or social) otherness in the fields of dominant society: *“Many black people live there and I feel comfortable”* [UK\_3].

### **Emotional Bonds as Generational Continuums**

Despite the diversity of emotional bonds, family or extended family relations are rather dominant in our data (see figure 2). It can be claimed that most of our informants are in a transitory age in which the significance of peer relations begins to fade, while the importance of familial relations increases. Young people begin to assume adult positions in their respective societies by finishing schooling, entering the labour market and having families of their own. Consequently, less time is invested in peer relations.

In the interviews, the transitions toward adulthood are manifested as accounts in which cultural identities and intergenerational relations are reflected quite thoroughly. Often, this implies that the interviewees depict generational chains by positioning themselves between their predecessors and descendants (born and unborn children). Many young men see themselves as transmitters of cultural heritage and material assets between the two generations. This mediator role is defined by their mobility and minority positions in their current living spheres. Their intergenerational relations are in a flux as a consequence of migration, and their cultural heritage often becomes tangible in the context of differing majority cultures.

In the context of eudemonia, for many interviewees, generational chains represent continuity and feelings of belonging to something bigger. Parental upbringing and support in addition to stories told and photographs shown are essential in enhancing socialisation into a specific group of people. The meaning of individual life-courses are formed through an acknowledged relationship among the past, present and future generations. Thus, for many young migrant men, emotional bonds imply ‘generational continuums’. A position in the continuum gives purpose to life and a comprehension of one’s (cultural) identity—an understanding of ‘*what is good, what is bad*’. In the data, men describe their positions in the generational continuums in the following manner:

*I am French above all, but I don’t forget my background, I know that over there (Algeria) I have things I can’t give up because my father was heir to a legacy and I’ve always felt a responsibility towards this. [FR\_8]*

*My parents and grandparents worked here. They built up everything we have. Now we try to achieve something more for our descendants. [DE\_FG1]*

As hinted above, for migrant men in particular, intergenerational relations become significant. For many of our informants, it is important “*to have a better life than our parents*” [FI\_FG2]. By making these types of statements, men refer to the many sacrifices their elders have made for them by either migrating themselves to new countries or investing in their children by sending them to study or work in the wealthy West. Thus, many young men feel gratitude and respect toward their parents/relatives and want to be worthy of the expectations placed on them.

*My father always says, we did this for you. Our life is over, we are old enough, we cannot do anything here. (...) Stay on the path, so my parents can be proud of me later. [DE\_1]*

*Ten, twenty years ago it was so that my parents thought that the Western Europe is like a gold mine for us. (...) But when people arrive there, they see what it is about and how difficult it is and they must start from scratch. [CZ\_16]*

*I feel like I have a different role now. I’m not a child anymore. I’m an adult who is their child. I’m going to take care of them now. I want them to be comfortable in their old age. I want to watch out for them because they’ve sacrificed so much up till now. [FR\_3]*

*I see it as a privilege to support my parents or my brothers and sisters. They had such a hard time to bring me up and support my education, so I*

*don't see it as a burden but a privilege to give them something back.*  
[UK\_9]

Men's positions in generational continuums are gendered in many ways. Fathers or other male relatives often function as role models for them. For some interviewees, respectable older men who have successfully fought against obstacles are a great source of inspiration: “[My father] is the greatest role model I could have ever ask for” [IE\_7]. Such persistent role models show the importance of hard work and how to overcome obstacles: “No matter what happens [my father] has a solution” [DE\_7].

In the case of immigrants from ‘third countries’, it is often men who attempt to cross European borders in the hope for a better life<sup>3</sup>:

*They [mother and sister] have not had the opportunities I have [...] I should give back a little to everyone* [IT\_1].

‘Giving back’ or ‘staying on the path’ often requires adopting a masculine position in the chain of generations. Not surprisingly, this means the role of provider in relation to both previous and future generations. (cf. Donaldson & Howson 2009.) Some men are expected to send remittances to relatives in their countries of origin as soon as they have established their position in a new country. Simultaneously, men wish to have sufficient material success to be able to have families of their own.

*Yes, of course [it is my responsibility to earn money]! Also for the children; you need to have a profession and good work, then you can marry but before nothing is possible. [...] That is my tradition. [...] It is not a matter of money but of good work, so that the children will study well and say, ‘we want to become like our father’.* [DE\_4]

For many young men, it is important to find an accepted role as a part of the generational continuum that suits their gendered identity. Feeling that they are needed as men in their (extended) families evidently promotes many men's well-being. Thus, an ability to transmit cultural values and material resources across generations is essential. Without masculine qualities such as independency and ability to take care of other people as well as protect child and female family members, one's value as a man is easily questioned. Therefore, feelings of belonging and continuity and a will to fulfil one's potential often arise from intergenerational attachments. Moreover, for the interviewees, ordeals related to migration and difficult

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<sup>3</sup> The interviews conducted in Italy offer many examples of women/mothers who have migrated from Southern America to work as caregivers in Italian middle class families.



conditions in both countries of origin and residence might affect the process of becoming the ‘man of the house’.

*It is definitely different than before. You have more responsibility. As a man [...] I would say that I have some obligations to my family. We are a faithful family and I also feel obliged to take care of my sisters and my brothers. [...] My father cannot do everything on his own. [DE\_7]*

*I have my mother and two sisters, my father died during the war. I am the youngest but I'm the man of the house and had to think about taking care of them. [IT\_FG3]*

*When I came here I relied on my own. [...] I am very proud of what I have already done. [...] My brother might see me sometimes as role model, I tell them stuff sometimes. My sisters see me as independent, like my parents. I am proud of being independent. [UK\_2]*

For some men, there are other types of attachments that eudemonia enhance as well. Ethnically, religiously or—in certain cases—locally determined communities offer attachments of this kind. In a few cases, relatedness to such communities can be described as emotional bonds providing both feelings of continuity and belonging (emotional aspect) and support and advice (bonding aspect). For certain interviewees, locally determined neighbourhood peer communities function as a source of identity, future perspective and immediate material benefits:

*We stick together. [...] it is like a big family here in Friedrichsburg. You help each other, makes life easier. [DE\_FG2]*

Sometimes, ethnically and religiously determined communities are more ‘imaginary’ and do not provide material benefits and advice. For some migrant men, particularly those interviewed in the United Kingdom, minority communities and religions functioned as emotional attachments. These men might be strongly committed to their countries of origin, races, religions or minority ethnicities that they represent in surrounding societies:

*I'm just proud of where I'm from, my colour, my race. [IE\_15]*

Strong ethnic or religious identities are occasionally connected to intact emotional bonds with one's family/relatives. Attachments to generational continuums anchor certain migrant men to group-based identities and enable them to comprehend the goals they want to achieve during the course of their lives. Occasionally, group-based identities of minority representatives are contrasted against majority cultures.

As seen above, most of the young migrant men interviewed have familial and/or communal bonds which attach them to some collective. In the context of eudemonic well-being, these attachments can be considered protections against current conditions of late or liquid modernity. In today's European societies, young people are forced to choose their life-paths from an enormous number of options. There are no readymade paths and goals in life. The responsibility of making the right choices is left to the individuals themselves. According to some writers, these conditions lead to 'ontological insecurities' (e.g. Young 1999)—feelings of disconnectedness, fear of making the wrong decisions and longing for the certainty of the past.

In the light of the above analysis, emotional bonds in the form of generational continuums or communal attachments protect young migrant men from ontological insecurities. Emotional bonds offer young migrant men a foundation against which individual life paths can be safely planned even in precarious conditions:

*Growing up you also learn that your origins are important too. It's important to know where you come from, to know family, traditions. [FR\_4]*

Consequently, according to certain scholars, the significance of families, in particular, is highlighted during late modern times as supportive forces for young people (e.g. Allat 1998). For the informants of this study, the significance of both families and other communities is evident.

### **Who are not Well-Off?**

In addition to answering our primary research question regarding the connections between emotional bonds and well-being of young migrant men, a comparative stance is inherent in this research. The original idea was to explore nation-based differences in the data. However, when examining our quantitative analysis, no such differences can be found. The only (statistically significant) group-based differences in emotional bonding of our informants are related to the location of their family members, their length of stay in countries of residence, migration statuses and the timing of their migration. Those men whose family members live in different countries, who have migrated less than eight years ago and after turning 13 and men from refugee or asylum-seeker backgrounds receive less material support (bonding aspect).

In qualitative terms, cross-country comparisons are rather problematic with the available data, particularly when analysing private issues such as emotional bonds (as compared to issues directly related to public policies such as education and labour market). The men interviewed in different countries do not share the same backgrounds. In some countries, mostly recently arrived asylum-seekers from Africa and the Middle East were contacted, while in certain other countries, second-generation young men were interviewed, while in some others young men who have migrated due to family reasons from South America were the major target group. Therefore, when defining group-based differences in the well-being of migrant men, we have to look elsewhere.

In the light of the previous section on the importance of intergenerational relations, it is quite evident that the breakdown of generational continuums hampers the well-being of young migrant men. In other words, ‘an expectation that men can cope with [...] the loss of family’ (Lewis 2012) is simply false. For some men, at worst, the breakdown of the generational continuum might lead to social disintegration and anarchic orientation towards life, as they live without meaningful links to the surrounding social world. However, such men are few in number in our data (also because it is difficult to contact them for research or any other purposes).

However, a few such men were interviewed for this research. They tended to have similar life stories. Due to harsh conditions in their countries of origin, some of them had lost contact with most of their family members. Some of them had gained access to Europe with the help of some relative already living there. In practice, these young men entered Europe through family reunion processes to live with their uncles, aunts or distant fathers and their established family settings. Consequently, the families of these young men were not reunited in the actual sense of the word. Instead, they came to Europe to live in completely new familial settings. In such settings, these young men remained outsiders in cramped apartments. In these types of circumstances, the risk of conflicts with their guardians tends to increase and generational continuums begin to unravel.

*My life is like... I don't have my mother in here and I've been fighting with my father. And my brothers live separately. You can understand how life is. Loneliness. [FI\_12]*

*It's hard of course, but there's no-one I can talk to. It's my problem. [...] No, I don't want to discuss them. I want to work them out myself (he sighed). [DE\_17]*

*It's not been easy, living in a country that's not your country. [...] It's not easy because you live alone. [...] You don't have your parents to discuss things with. It's not the same talking to your older sister – you have to hustle. [IE\_2]*

Furthermore, in the data, there are examples of homosexual men who have been abandoned by or left their conservative family members. In any case, this small-numbered group of young men seem to be in a highly vulnerable position. They suffer from mental problems and some of them are homeless. Thus, lack of emotional bonds and breakdown of generational continuums can have very tangible consequences. Moreover, some of these young men have a fragile identity, little trust toward other people and low expectations for the future. In other words, they are detached from supportive social relations—they are neither attached to their communities of origin nor to their countries of residence. Such rather extreme and anarchic conditions stem from mental loneliness and not so much from physical distances.

Generational continuums rarely break up as dramatically as in the examples above. More often, the men report that they are not able to fulfil their roles as a man in their new surroundings. At the time of the interviews, some of them felt that they were not able to 'give back' to their elders or raise the living standards for the next generation.

*If I don't apply for work, I'm nothing. This is on my mind always. [FI\_17]*

*It's [earning only little money because not being able to work as an asylum seeker] like feeling like a child again. [IE\_1]*

*I'm going to have children but first, as I live in a hostel, it's a bit hard, you know, maybe they will transfer us to other hostels after with the kids, with a lot of noise, with... it's hard, it's really hard. (...) Now we cannot [have children] because I do not know, I don't have a job today, I do not know about tomorrow. [FR\_18]*

It can be claimed that paid jobs are not ends in itself, but rather means through which an acceptable position is earned in generational continuums. In many ways, the informants of our study face the problem of the 'second generation'. They expect themselves to and are expected by their families to do well in their respective localities. There is probably less pressure on the first generation. Migrating in middle-age or older and not having great success in the labour market of the receiving country is more acceptable. However, it is different for men who have migrated during their childhood and youth.

The great majority of our informants (76 %) have migrated to Europe between the years 6-25. Moreover, almost two-thirds of them (63 %) migrated after turning 13. This implies that expectations of/on them are high, but the possibilities of them having great success in European labour markets are lower. According to several studies, migration during adolescence or late adolescence exposes migrants to poor educational and occupational attainment (e.g. Crul & Vermeulen 2003; Heath et al. 2008; Mussino & Strozza 2012). Therefore, many of our informants, particularly those who have not had the possibility of receiving a high standard education in their country of origins, are in a challenging position. These men face difficulties when attempting to redeem the gendered positions in their generational chains.

Not being able to find work or working in low-paid jobs has very direct implications on the emotional bonds of migrant men as well. These implications particularly concern our target group—third country nationals (TCNs). Often, public policies in the form of family reunions and visa regulations come in the way of fostering emotional bonds of the young migrant men in our data. To overcome these regulations, men are required to prove their ability to support themselves and often other people too. Thus, unemployment and low or irregular incomes deny many men the possibility of physical proximity with their loved ones.

*I have tried to find a job but nobody will help. [...] If I want to bring my wife from Iraq to Finland, I have to have a job and salary of 2000 euros per month. This is really bad. [FI\_FG1]*

*I dream that my family is together. Things like this, which I cannot make possible. For this you need, besides money, the city and the opportunities. My siblings just cannot come here. [DE\_2]*

Thus, the tightening of European border control policies has very direct consequences on the well-being of migrant men. It can be assumed that uniting with one's partners and children would enhance the eudemonic well-being of many migrant men. It might be that uniting with family enables migrant men to focus on more long-term planning instead of just living day-by-day and trying to attain certain income limits. In one empirical case, even the son of a family saw the importance of having all the children in the same country:

*'My sister is the angel of our family because everything just went well since she came'. [IT\_5]*

## Conclusions and Policy Implications

In the data, there is definitely more love than anarchy. Young migrant men have a diverse array of emotional bonds and they talk about their families, relatives, friends, partners and many other attachments with love and respect: '*[My parents] just want me to be happy and I want them to be happy [IE\_24]*'. Moreover, it is important to remember that migration in itself does not put men in vulnerable positions in relation to social attachments. Even emotional bonds are not solely based on physical proximity. The abundant number of transnational emotional bonds young migrant men possess speaks for itself.

We asked what kind of connections there are between emotional bonds of young migrant men and their (eudemonic) well-being. In our empirical analysis, we conceptualised the most obvious connection as generational continuums. Many of our informants position themselves between past and future generations. It is important for them to be able to fulfil their (masculine) roles as a part of this continuum. Young men respect their parents or other older relatives for all the sacrifices they have made to enable their offspring a better life. Their gendered task is to take the next step in a new society by establishing positions in the labour market, social networks and eventually be able to provide a readymade platform for the next generation. Being successful in this task is essential for their feeling of self-worth. Emotional bonds in the form of generational continuums provide a life-course perspective for many young migrant males—an idea about one's roots and potentials and eventually a vision of the future paths. In other words, in the accounts of young men, parental expectations are mainly manifested in the forms of support and internalised duties, not as coercive control.

The main conclusion of our research is that for young migrant men, belonging to a certain community is important. These communities often include (extended) family members and ethnically or locally determined attachments. In any case, the feelings of belonging of young migrant males are often derived from affiliations with people who share the same ethnicity or people from various immigrant backgrounds.

The above fact has certain important policy implications. It has been claimed that during recent decades, politics of community cohesion and inclusion have been emphasised throughout Europe (Vasta 2007; Joppke & Morawska 2007; Joppke 2007). Consequently, public support for multicultural politics is decreasing because of the rise of assimilationist

and nationalistic ideologies and a fear of promoting ethnic segregation. Concretely, this implies diminishing support for ethnic minority organisations and a stance according to which certain ethnic minority communities and even families are a threat to societal cohesion. However, together with several other studies ( Elling et al. 2001; Spaaij 2012; Harris 2013), our data provides knowledge that challenges assimilationist stances. Families and often ethnically determined (minority) communities are essential in promoting feelings of belonging and enhancing motivation of becoming integrated into the various fields (education, employment and networks) of receiving societies as well. In other words, attachments to minority communities do not mean decreased societal cohesion but quite the contrary: minority bonding might even increase interests of seeking contact with ‘mainstream societies’. Therefore, nationalistic politics of assimilation might have harmful consequences for migrant men in particular and the ethnic minority population in general.

Finally, it would be beneficial to view young migrant men as caring actors in private spheres, not only as workers or security threats. What distinguishes them from many other men is that their emotional bonds are often transnational. Therefore, on national policy levels and in the context of professional practices, it would be beneficial to recognise the transnational motivators underlying the actions of migrant men. Rethinking family reunion policies, particularly in the case of adult men, seems necessary. Furthermore, it is necessary to develop tools to recognise and support socially disintegrated young migrants (not only unaccompanied minors).

## **Chapter IV: Building a Career in a Host Country: Educational and Occupational Determinants of Migrant Men's Well-Being**

**Pavel Bareš, Jan Kubát, Danica Schebelle, Milada Horáková (VUPSV – Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic)**

This chapter focuses on the domains of employment and education, which play a substantial role in a person's life not just in terms of their personal success in the society but also with respect to their overall well-being. This is particularly the case for migrants as these two domains play a key role in the acculturation process.

The importance of these domains lies in reasons which are both specific to each domain and those which have common or similar causes. Most of the factors which contribute towards the importance of both domains have a very complex nature, overlap with each other and can be distinguished in different ways. This was also reflected in our interviews which revealed many layers, influences and specific features of these domains. These include briefly issue-related internal personal characteristics (emotions, attitudes etc.), opportunities for personal growth, personal and professional skills (and the reflection thereof), specific influences on family or partner relations, participation in the social environment, the fact that both these areas support individuals in their efforts to find their own place in society, and future orientation or the efforts to ensure financial security.

However, a detailed discussion on this matter is beyond the scope of this chapter and some relevant aspects will be picked up by other chapters in this report. Education and employment are of different nature and feature several specific issues. Firstly, the area of education relates predominantly to children and young people whereas the employment domain concerns graduates and older adults. Further, it is important to point out the different positions of an individual in the education system and in the workplace and the significantly different nature of relations between teachers and students on the one hand and with work colleagues and supervisors on the other. Despite overlaps, our interviews have pointed to a number of key differences between students and employees:

- Family life (living with parents, alone, with a partner or with own family), position within the family and relations with family members, partners etc.



- Income situation and financial (in)dependence, the position of work in everyday life (student who don't participate at the labour market, working students, employees) and
- Living arrangements such as living with parents or moving out of the parental home.

Although similarities and common features allow education and employment to be considered in one chapter, it is also apparent that these specific areas need to be distinguished and described separately. The clear distinction of these two domains, however, is not always possible since they often overlap and, moreover, the qualitative approach particularly provides opportunities for them to be addressed together and highlighting their mutual interconnections. In what follows this chapter will focus on the education and employment aspirations of the YMM and analyse the patterns and circumstances that determine the (past, recent or expected) position of YMM's in the two domains, as well as which domains had the greatest effect on their well-being, as far as the interviews revealed.

## **Education**

Firstly, it is important to mention that the interviews covered individuals with often completely different experiences of the educational system in the host country – students attending grammar and secondary schools, respondents who have no experience of the educational system in the host country and those who commenced study at university level in the host country. The interviewees represented both YMM who were still considering starting their studies in the host country, and YMM for whom such thoughts were not relevant, as well as those who were currently studying, who had abandoned studying in the host country and those who had completed their education at one or more schools or subject areas (or one or more educational levels – i.e. primary or secondary school or university).

The position of interviewees regarding their experience of education was also influenced by a number of other factors including: the mastering of the host language, YMM's expectations of schools in the host country (or of studying abroad in general), educational establishment requirements (or those of the educational system of the host country in general) and several other specific features and experiences such as sense of belonging to the class and attachment to other students, experiences with teachers, experience of bullying. In addition to the mainstream educational system, the attitudes of respondents to the field of education were

also influenced by their experience of vocational and professional training courses, including language courses. Here are some examples from the summaries that illuminate such cases:

*The respondent did not like the way some things work in Ireland, he claims that it was not fair to be admitted to an English course in one part of the city and then sent to another. On the other hand the teachers were professional and he made friends there. [IE\_7]*

*All of the focus group participants have finished middle school or have achieved an equivalent education. They all attend a professional training course (mechanic or plumber) of which they claim to be satisfied. Many of them enrolled in the course after being advised to do so by a teacher at middle school, or because their father did the same job in their country of origin, the rest heard about it through word of mouth. All of them decided to do it because of the increased job prospects offered by such a course in the immediate future compared to regular education. These kinds of training courses especially introduce you to the job market through apprenticeships and collaborations with some companies. [IT\_FG2]*

However, the position of YMM in the area of education and the importance of this area for YMM's well-being was primarily determined by their perception of the importance of education in a person's life and by their motivation to study. Whereas the latter aspect was not mentioned by all the respondents, the majority of the YMM interviewed referred to the latter. The interviewees themselves stated that they had strong motivation to study but many added that support from their social environment, in particular support from their families, was also a very important factor:

*If they [refugees housed in a facility] were sent to school for two years where they could learn something... then they could work instead of claiming benefits. [DE\_18]*

*Salah began studying at university but left after one year since he did not like the subject. [UK\_18]*

*The offer of a really interesting job would lead Borys to consider interrupting his studies. However, he would consider it more seriously if he was offered a job in another country. [CZ\_13]*

*Fuat has received support both from his parents and friends: 'They always said: stick at it, keep learning, you can do it... I made it my aim and I achieved my aim. [DE\_20]*

*It was more or less my parents' decision that I go abroad [to study], but I also wanted to leave. [CZ\_11]*

The next crucial decision consists of the choice of subject of study. A large number of factors were identified with regard to what and where to study and can be summarised as follow:

- The choice to study abroad was determined by family reunification and motivated by the invitation of relatives living abroad or by the wish to be closer to a girlfriend who already studied abroad.
- The wish (of an individual or his parents) to go abroad in the search for better opportunities.
- The recommendation of friends or teachers.
- A similar language in the country of origin and the host country.
- A comparison of the potential for future employment opportunities in the host country, the reputation of the educational establishment or the subject of study.
- A comparison of experience with rigid curricula in the country of origin and more flexible curricula in the host country and comparison of the quality of the educational establishment.
- The search for a subject of study which suits the individual and (in the case of specific subjects) the subsequent search for an institution or even a country which is perceived as fulfilling their educational aspirations.

Here some examples from the interview extract:

*When I finish university here and return to Belarus my chances of getting a good job are twice as high as that of those Belarussians who have graduated from a Belarussian university. The quality is better here.* [CZ\_14]

*I did not know what to do. My teacher asked me what I liked the most. I answered that I can draw nicely and she said that I could study arts. So I started to study arts. I had my relatives in France and my aunt told me – ‘France is in fact the place for art’, isn’t it? – O.K. I will go there. The French have huge animation and comics studios, it is so big there, nothing like that here.* [CZ\_16]

In some cases, the YMM did not choose the school or subject of their study or their choice was limited. This occurred most frequently if the YMM commenced his education as a child and related mostly (but not exclusively) to primary and secondary schooling. In many cases it was the parents who made decisions about their schooling. Sometimes, the parent’s lack of finances had also had an influence on their study as they could for example not afford to pay

the tuition fees. Some interviewees revealed that the parents decided the subject of their study for them, even at the university level. This was motivated by the parents' expectation that their child would receive an education and would find a job that they perceived as prestigious or would be best in terms of providing them with promising career. Such cases led often to conflict or feelings of ambivalence between the YMM and his parents. However, as reported by the YMM, in most cases parents eventually accepted their children's decisions to study their subject of choice as they saw them succeeding in them.

Both the perception of the importance of education and the choice of subjects had a significant influence on the future well-being of YMM. University graduates and students reflected that these factors were crucial with regard to their current work position (or work-related preferences, skills and ambitions in the case of students). However, not all the respondents accepted the importance of university study; indeed, some respondents stressed the importance of work experiences for their careers, the use of their own social capital for job-search purposes and the desire to start their own business. Yet, the process of making these decisions (i.e. whether and what subjects to study) was often a difficult process and affected also their current well-being. For YMM decisions about their educational and employment aspirations were interlinked with growing up, the search for an own identity, ensuring financial and emotional independence from their family, taking ownership of their lives and starting to plan for a family etc. Decisions about key life priorities are often accompanied by experiencing difficulties, taking risks, leading to imbalances and contests and can lead to stress and discontent.

With regards to school attendance and the study course, respondents pointed out many different factors which determined their position in the educational system or influenced their lives and well-being. Four topical areas can be distinguished:

- Relations with teachers
- Relations with other students
- Expectations and parental support
- The education policy of the host country

The role of teachers for YMM's well-being differed from positive attitudes and experiences and appreciation of support factors to negative opinions, bad experiences or even maltreatment; "*Rashid feels that his teacher does not like him and is 'a little bit racist'*"

[FI\_12]. The appreciation of supportive teachers was recorded frequently in our data. Some of the respondents attributed teachers' attention to the fact that they were talented students and that teachers wanted to push them forward. However as the following summaries show, the teachers seemed to offer support to a variety of students regardless of their academic achievements:

*He left college after a year; it was alright and good; was doing Art and Design. One particular teacher was mentioned as good and helpful. He was often going out with his school colleagues then. He left as he wanted to work instead. He had English language classes at school before he went to college. [UK\_15]*

*Kemal is happy with the guidance he has received in his current school: 'We have good teachers who guide us. They tell us what we can be and what we have to do to achieve this'. Kemal has been thinking about going to the senior secondary school and having a higher education afterwards as well. However, he has doubts about his abilities and persistence in further (theoretical studies): 'I'm not that good in studying'. [FI\_11]*

Also the relations with other students varied from mutual trust and willingness of students to help each other [DE\_12, DE\_20] to distant relations or experiences of bullying, racism etc. Both the characteristics of YMM's surroundings and their own behaviour or attitudes should influence the occurrence, reflection or impacts of negative experiences among YMM:

*Ihor had no bullying experience, mainly because he was not afraid to fight his strongest classmates from the beginning. [CZ\_8]*

*Joseph experienced racism in school but didn't take it seriously and believes it didn't have any effect on him. [IE\_3]*

*Dardan attended three grammar schools in his childhood (both private one and public one in a big city and a public one in a smaller town). He encountered both close and distant relations with other students. According to his experience, in a big city, the relations are calmer in general. However he reported good atmosphere in a private school in the big city as well. [CZ\_10]*

Parent's expectations, their financial support or their pressure on YMM's studies essentially shape YMM's positions in the field of education and act as key determinants for YMM's well-being in this area. The interviews revealed two most important circumstances in this regard; differences between YMM's own and their parents' attitudes and financial security as the following case demonstrates:

*Anatoly still receives financial support from his parents for his studies. When he finishes his studies, financial support from his parents will stop as well. Therefore, finishing his studies is worrying him and is stressing him out already. This might be a key reason why he became ill. He did not told his parents about his worries as they would like him to return home. [CZ\_6]*

## **Employment**

The narratives of the YMM with respect to employment is exhaustive and relates to various aspect of working life such as type of employment or self-employment, permanent or occasional work, volunteering, economically inactive students, length of work experience, type of work, profession, qualification requirements, salaries, income stability, working conditions. This is further dependent on the specific situation of the YMM such as age, length of stay in the host country, language skills, education, professional skills, work experience, social capital, and situation in the labour market, experience of discrimination or the employment policy. Thus employment experiences vary considerable between the YMM interviewed and are a subject to constant changes as they are dynamic process.

Both the recorded positions of YMM in the area of employment and the factors which influence them therefore represent somewhat “hazy” topics which are naturally resistant to systematic classification and comprehensive description. For this reason, only a brief overview of the most important key points in the careers of YMM can be provided here. The various positions of YMM in the area of employment and its influencing factors were grouped into the following four general sections:

- Preconditions: work preferences, job aspirations, qualifications and professional skills, and social capital etc.
- Career: searching for a job, entering the labour market, career growth and the determinants thereof.
- Work-related experiences and attitudes: workplace, teamwork, discrimination, perception of employers, employment policy etc.
- Benefits: position in society, participation, salary, income stability, financial situation etc.

This distinction is, admittedly, somewhat schematic and is intended simply to capture general patterns. Conversely, it minimizes overlaps and provides a relatively clear insight into the position of YMM in this area.

The respondents showed both high ambitions and a systematic effort to improve their skills and willingness to accept a variety of jobs, including low-paid jobs. Both these general job search strategies have their advantages and disadvantages as regards the concept of well-being. The first approach multiplies the chances of succeeding in the labour market but in the case of failure could result in disillusionment and a strengthening of the distinction between migrant men and society. The second approach provides YMM's with income in urgent cases but often involves "3D" employment (dirty, dangerous, demanding) or, more generally, lower-paid and less prestigious jobs. Some respondents stressed that they did not perceive their work itself negatively, but that they were not satisfied though because of their low status in society or because of the fact their work does not allow them to "get further". However, some respondents had no objections in this respect and, indeed, often assessed it positively by emphasizing that they have a stronger desire to work than those in the majority population. The variety of approaches and their different impacts (both positive and negative) on well-being could be illustrated by these examples:

*Carlito previously worked part-time (during his studies) as an assistant at a training centre for the disabled. He has been in his current job for two years. He claims to have enjoyed both jobs. However, he has started thinking about making a change and to study for a new profession in the social sector. Moreover, in his opinion, in the current situation (the economic recession) it is good to have a range of qualifications and certification. He envisages employment in the health care or youth work sectors. [FI\_4]*

*The path that leads to becoming a professional chef is extremely tiring and highly competitive: 'you have to be very motivated or you may as well just stay at home'. [IT\_6]*

*I worked at the car wash at my friends' dad's garage. ... It wasn't that bad but people look down on you if you work there. I quit the job, not because of that but because it was actually a hard job. ...I worked there for 3-4 weeks. ... My friends accepted the job, but girls in my class looked down on me and said 'just keep everything clean in your cars!' [UK\_1]*

*I can do a lot of jobs: in printing, on construction sites, 'electrician jobs', I have a driving licence for cars and lorries, I have a long list of what I can do and in which field I can start looking for a job. [CZ\_2]*

The comment of one of the respondents illustrated at the same time the dynamics of YMM's expectations related to their career and the capacity to mobilize their own resources in order to overcome physical handicaps:

*Ahmed is paralyzed in the lower part of his body and thought it would prevent him from studying. Now he feels this is not necessarily the case; he is pursuing a career in business. [FI\_18]*

Some respondents pointed out that social networks are crucial in helping to find a job and YMM may be limited by this factor when searching for a job:

*The way the Irish system goes when it comes to jobs is it's not about what you have, like qualifications, but who you know. I'm a man of few words, so I don't know so many people which make it a bit tough finding a job. [IE\_34]*

*With regard to job searching, Taras knows a Ukrainian who provides him with work on construction sites. His Tunisian friend helped him to write a résumé in French which he handed out in restaurants. [FR\_10]*

Career growth represented a very important aim for many respondents and remaining too long in low-qualified jobs was perceived negatively or respondents expressed a fear of it. The vision of future progress in employment area acted on the one hand as a hint to follow (and motivate them to study, participate in vocational and language courses etc.) and increased their chances to succeed in society and fare well. On the other hand it also set a benchmark according to which the respondents assessed their position and success in society, their well-being and general sense of happiness, satisfaction etc.

In our sample, we recorded both the respondents with high or even not much realistic expectations for future and respondents who tend to have more pragmatic aims. Not necessarily in terms of lower ambitions, but rather in terms of awareness of their own abilities, such as the awareness of the fact that experience with two cultures and a knowledge of two languages is seen as an advantage and may enhance their "value" for employers and help them to choose a job which suits their expectations [CZ\_16]. We observed both cases in which YMM's achievements matched their expectations and cases which were far off it. Repeatedly it was documented that both the compliance and discrepancy between expectations and achievements affect overall YMM's well-being.



The potential for career growth depends on a large number of aspects, i.e. not just on the YMM themselves (ambitions, language and professional skills, personal characteristics etc.) but also on the labour market situation, employment policy and anti-discrimination and equal treatment policies, the regulation of illegal migration and work, work limitations applied to foreign students, the length of stay and other conditions regarding the residence procedure, nostrification etc.

*When Taras moved to France he worked for nearly five months on construction sites which were difficult since he had no experience in this field. He can only work illegally in France because he has no papers and this is an enormous complication in terms of job searching. [FR\_10]*

*We speak English and Arabic. Czech differs greatly from these languages. At the beginning we could not communicate with people. The language was too difficult. ... There is a lot of bureaucracy here. We have been here for more than two years. ... We arrived here and we wanted to work and study. But when we asked what we should do, we were told that we can send documents to universities and they will carry out the necessary nostrification. We sent papers to Charles University and were told that nostrification is not possible because we did not study philosophy and a number of other subjects. So we sent papers to Olomouc University. There they told us they needed more papers. We arranged for papers to be sent from Syria and that was expensive... Nostrification is free but the posting of documents from Syria by DHL was expensive. And they wanted more and more papers, so then we wrote directly to the Ministry of Health and my father sent papers confirming he was a dentist. All the signatures were genuine. They said that we would have to wait for one year and we waited and were not allowed to do anything. We had no money so we went to the Labour office where we were granted housing benefits. Just recently we were informed that we are eligible for nostrification. They sent a letter and my father started the preparatory course. He waited for about five months for another course and during that period he was not allowed to work. He is sitting exams today and we believe he will pass them. [CZ\_12]*

Both positive and negative assessments of the situation in the workplace or in the working team were recorded. Negative experiences included e.g. discrimination, maltreatment and the infringement of health and safety regulations. The time demands related to their work represented a further negative aspect which resulted in e.g. YMM having few friends [IT\_6] and the worsening of relations with partners [FR\_12].

Positive references included the friendly and accepting approach of superiors and colleagues. Some comments were ambivalent, e.g. some respondents were very happy in their work but viewed commuting to work as demanding [FR\_3, CZ\_15].

YMM benefit from participation in the area of employment in many ways not only due to the fact that they and their families are financially secured. Employment was seen as helpful in finding a place in society, in providing them with opportunities to interact with different people in different situations and in providing opportunities to be a part of a company and to cooperate with work team members. The interview documented all these benefits form YMM's well-being positively. This was not only the case of well-paid jobs, but also voluntary work and jobs without a guaranteed income:

*I volunteered in Tallaght. ... I was involved there doing summer camps for the kids there and we weren't paid at all. You go there of your own free will. It's a lot of work but, you know, we were doing it to help the kids. It was like a summer camp so there were a lot of sport activities and I taught the kids how to play various sports. We did rock climbing, we did hikes and went paintballing. I was a kind of supervisor there. He admitted that because the job was unpaid he did not feel pressurised and had the "freedom" to be himself. He could easily place himself in a position of "one of them" without stressing his role as a supervisor. He pointed out that it was fun for him as well as for the children and he regarded this as a form of payment. [IE\_21]*

*Ihor's income is based on a commission system therefore his income varies with the number of orders he obtains. That is the reason why he sometimes has to earn extra money in occasional jobs, mainly on construction sites (bricklaying or welding). He is, however, happy with the fact that his job provides him with considerable freedom and he is free to organize his work according to his time schedule. [CZ\_8]*

## **Conclusions**

Features which appeared to be relevant to YMM's well-being in both the two areas discussed in this chapter influence not only YMM's well-being during the education process or their position in the labour market and in their workplace, but they often also form YMM's future position in the host society in general, their chances of success and they general sense of happiness. Apart from all specific circumstances and various formative experiences (such experience with bullying at schools, prejudice of employers etc.) which influence YMM's well-being directly, the well-being of YMM is to a great extent determined by the general position of YMM in these two domains.

## Chapter V: From Bonding to Bridging: Social Networks, Friends and Recreational Activities

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Social networks, made up of individuals and organisations, hold key importance in people's lives and are seen as a key resource (Poros, 2011). Putnam played (2000: 19) a prominent role in the development of the concept of social capital, defined as “social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from”. Most scholars differentiate between bonding capital, connecting a person to his/her close group, and bridging capital, connecting a person to the wider society (Putnam, 2000). A recurring debate, particularly prominent in the migration context, is the possible trade-off between bonding and bridging social capital; Putnam (2007) argued that in the short-term increased ethnic diversity in neighbourhoods leads to a reduction in social contacts. Further research revealed a more complex relationship showing that ethnic diversity affects social capital simultaneously with socio-economic and other contextual factors and the quality of neighbourhoods often has a bigger effect on social capital than ethnic diversity (Kindler et al., 2015). Sturgis (2013) also highlights that the actual cause for lessening social contact is segregation rather than ethnic diversity. Importantly, he claims that young people are more likely to relate to diversity positively and associate it with cohesion. In her review of several studies Kindler (2015 et al., p.18) concludes that:

*Bonding social capital, including in the form of ethnic networks, can be conducive to integration at the local level (...) [when it] leads to the establishment of spaces of encounter.*

However, she does alert to the risk of strong embeddedness in small networks, defined by ethnicity as well as residence status and education, which are rather exclusive.

Ager and Stag (2008) in developing a conceptual framework for integration argue that the dynamic forms of social connections – social bonds, bridges and links - are closely related to the integration outcomes in structural domains such as education, employment, housing and health. Using a deficit-oriented approach, theorists of social exclusion outline the nature and negative consequences of such phenomena, described as inability to participate in social, economic, political and cultural life of the country, recognising again the inter-dependence of

social factors with others, particularly economical (Hartgeen and Klasen, 2008). It was also shown that participating in social activities with friends is a strong factor affecting one's happiness and well-being (Bechetti, 2008) and that people with high-level of social well-being are surrounded by people who encourage their development and growth: such finding highlights the eudemonic aspect of well-being (IOM, 2013). The Worldwide Gallup survey found that people who migrated from the Global South<sup>4</sup> to the Global North were somewhat less likely to have strong ties (91% vs. 84%) and to report friends (or relatives) they can count on (91% vs. 82%) than their native counterparts but were much more likely to have friends (or relatives) in other countries (26% vs. 70%) (IOM, 2013).

How to build social bridges between migrants and natives is a critical question often revisited in the context of social integration. One of the most influential theories, developed by Allport (1954) focuses on how to create a neutral space where inter-ethnic contacts could be formed that removes bias and prejudice. He identified necessary conditions for such positive encounter to occur: equality of status, a common set of goals, co-operation and support from institutions. Meta-analysis of his theory confirmed his hypothesis on the importance of inter-ethnic group contacts and the significance of contact conditions but suggested those factors may not always be essential (Pettigrew and Trop, 2006). More recent work also highlighted the importance of the quality of the contact that develops further such acquaintance-making (Goodwin, 2009). Both Goodwin (2009) and Kindler et al. (2015) warn that contacts cannot be forced upon communities. Therefore, providing opportunities for encounters seems a more effective approach than direct policy interventions and programmes. Schools, work places but also recreational activities can offer such potential places of encounters. A recent study found a close link between social interactions and desire to participate in recreational sport (Lee and Funk, 2011). On the whole, the emerging conclusion is that recreational activities undisputedly offer a platform for reciprocal community engagement (Burnett, 2005) but such development cannot be taken for granted (Krouwel et al, 2006).

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<sup>4</sup> The definition is adopted from the World Bank that uses Gross National Income per capita. North include countries defined as high-come while South include upper-middle, lower-middle and low income ones.

## Importance of Social Networks and Friendships

Emerging theme in the research was the communal aspect of well-being: young migrant men's own well-being is both aided by their friends and peers and influenced the well-being of their friends and peers. Some felt that this is also embedded in their cultural heritage:

*No matter how rich you are, you do not want to live alone. I need my friends, a circle where I feel well.* [DE\_FG2]

Sometimes young people simply but powerfully expressed their gratitude for being able to share happy and sad moments of their lives with their friends. Such recognition gave young people a perspective of how significant mutual support is for their well-being. As well as confiding in to them, young male migrants received assistance in addressing their problems:

*There are no real problems, as long as you can go for help or work out your problem with.* [DE\_15]

It is also clear from the interviews that the initial acculturation process required significant adaptation even by young people and their local peers offered valuable assistance in that. Friends helped in improving their language skills and developing a deeper understanding of the host society's culture in terms of behaviour and values. Such mentoring role often played by established migrants but also locals and involved advice and assistance in dealing with authorities and agencies:

*I found no one back then. It was really hard being alone. When I look at other Somalis who are new here, I know straight away what they need.* [DE\_18]

Young migrant men also saw their personal development linked to their peers and vice versa: “*If you have lots of people, you can move forward*” [FI\_12b). In doing so, they recognised the link between social and structural integration. Several highlighted the influence that friends have on them. This was often described in positive terms showing how opinion and encouragement of their friends were valued by them: “*My friends are a great motivation for me...*” [DE\_FG2]. They admitted comparing themselves to their friends but stressed that this functioned as a positive incentive:

*They are proud of me, that I'm taking my A levels. (...) My friends are proud [of me].* [DE\_FG2].

On the other hand, a few examples were given where friends exerted a negative influence over the young male migrants, spurring them into decisions they came to regret:

*I quit the school because of my friends. I was with them every day, drinking every day. I couldn't go to school because I stayed up every night. [FI\_8]*

Recognising friends' influence was instrumental in being more conscious how they build and manage their friendships:

*I had times when I did not want to go to school...meet people...went to parties... Now all my friends also want to achieve something in the future. You compare yourself to your friends. My friends are a great motivation to get further in life. [DE\_FG2]*

It is confirmed that personal development of young men is strongly linked to their social environment. It should be accepted while young migrants showed considerable capacity to negotiate their social environment, not all young persons have the strength to overcome negative influences of their own accord.

### **From Old to New Networks**

Many young migrant men intuitively and naturally searched for fulfilling their need to have social relationships that would be both supportive and rewarding. However, we can clearly see from the research that migration cuts young male migrants off their family and particularly friends' connections or reduces them significantly. Therefore, as newcomers one of their biggest needs and challenges is to develop new social networks and in consequence friendships to fill the vacuum they are experiencing in the new place of living. The absence of benefits mentioned earlier is clearly detrimental to the well-being of young male migrants:

*It is difficult when you are alone in Finland. There is nobody who tells you what to do, what is good, what is bad. And now, my family is not able to help me. I moved here to live alone. [FI\_3a]*

A number of other young migrants talked about their sadness of being removed from their former friends. Although they remained in contact with friends in their countries of origin through the internet – often social media - and by phone, many experienced “slipping away” from their former social circles. It was also felt by some that initially it is easier to form friendship with their co-ethnics, although even that was not straightforward.

*(...) so far I have virtually no friends and I am lonely here. I would like to find more and integrate. I shall be probably looking mainly among Vietnamese, because the understanding between Vietnamese is better than between me and Czechs (...) I do not know how would be my language then, so the language barrier also matters. [CZ\_11]*

As a result of migration therefore their social networks shrank and in particular the role of family members grew in importance. As pointed out in the previous chapter, bonds with family members were beneficial for young male migrants in particular in the initial period of settling in; however, their pre-dominance at times also hampered the expansion of young migrants' social networks. As time progressed, many young men grew in confidence in engaging with their new social environment and forming friendships. They also seemed to become aware of the need to be selective in terms of whom they would like to form a closer bond with:

*If you are good enough you can never have bad company, you can turn a bad person good. You have to be very selective, if you choose good friends. [UK\_4]*

The speed to form close relationships depended on the personal attitude and character of young male migrants. Several adapted relatively quickly and build new social networks at relative ease. Building those social networks strengthened their sense of belonging and as such their well-being.

*I found friends relatively quickly - German and foreign ones. This makes me feel sort of like at home. I am almost never alone. (...) It just gives me a good feeling. [DE\_12]*

For others it took a longer time to build friendships. A minority reported no or only one friend: several of those explained this by their introvert character but they might have masked their struggle to find friends. The opportunities for social encounters also affected the ability of young male migrants to make friends. We turn our attention to that question in the next section.

## **Leisure Activities and Well-Being**

Recreational activities play a pivotal role in socialisation and developing networks with both migrants and natives. Often as a first step, young migrant men took part in more organised

leisure activities, most prominently sport. Then, when the social bonds became stronger and when the trust level was on sufficient level young men expanded their social activities to more informal ones e.g. visiting each other homes, cooking together, watching films and meeting in public places etc... Importantly, through leisure activities young migrant men not only made friends but developed vital language, interpersonal and leadership skills which are very useful and can determine successful integration in the host country. Furthermore, leisure activities provided an opportunity for migrants to receive stimulation and use their creativity.

Young male migrants participated in art activities, youth clubs, joined churches or volunteered for a smaller community organisations or more mainstream organisations e.g. cancer foundation, organisations helping people in developing countries. Sport emerged as a crucial area of leisure: in particular, team sports such as soccer were pursued and valued by many young migrant men:

*The good thing in hobbies that you get to know new people. It helps you a lot. Sport and leisure activities unite the group. [FI\_FG6]*

Sport in the masculine environment can be a key platform to achieve recognition and by extension, respect from peers in the group:

*You get respect if people know that you know how to box. Then they begin to cause fewer troubles. [DE\_FG3]*

*If you are good at football, everyone just likes you. [IE\_17]*

Young migrants, through involvement in sport, may become leaders who can exercise influence:

*Sometimes even teachers tell me: Do something! The class is paying more attention to you than to the teachers! [DE\_FG3]*

Sport also is seen sometimes as one of the best remedies for diverting young men from harmful substances like alcohol or cigarettes and for de-stressing:

*When I play football, I forget all other things. It's like alcohol, even though I don't drink or smoke. [FI\_1]*

However, in some cases, sport did not produce benefits as its potential was distorted by some forms of racism or favouritism towards natives that affected young migrants negatively in local sport clubs:



*They put you on the reserve team if you are good... Most of the managers got sons, they say most managers have kids in the team, their kids, their nephews, it's a family thing... You are just strangers, you don't even know.* [IE\_FG1]

Furthermore, not every young male migrant was interested in sport or sustained his interest over the long-term.

## **Bonding and Bridging: Building Networks Within and Outside Ethnic Communities**

Discussion on migrant's social integration often differentiates between three major groups: migrants' own ethnic groups, the native population and other ethnic groups. It is interesting to note that for some young migrant interviewees such distinction was seen as somewhat artificial; they tend to talk about having friends from diverse backgrounds and did not report experiencing notable differences between making friends among their own ethnic groups and others.

*As with guys out of here... we get along well – both Italians and non-Italians.* [IT\_FG1]

*France is very diverse in that way so, yes, I have friends from all backgrounds. There are whites, blacks, Chinese, a bit of everything.* [FR\_4]

These people often lived in diverse areas and went to school with a diverse student population. Some argued that certain ethnic groups are more like to have diverse friends, and in particular friends with natives, than other groups. In the Czech Republic, the example of Ukrainian and Russians were contrasted to that of Vietnamese and Chinese. In Finland, the experience of several Russians suggested that they saw themselves more connected to the Finnish community than many who arrived from Middle East. This would suggest that cultural proximity may be an important factor; further research however would be needed to examine this in more depth.

Many respondents in the research acknowledged the difference between friendship with locals and friendship with their own or other migrant ethnic groups. It was argued that friendship is formed on the basis of shared or similar experience and therefore young migrant men would be more likely to build friendship with other migrants sharing their experiences.

*It is easier to deal with international people because they are more and less in the same situation as me. [FI\_16]*

Even when playing sport or pursuing leisure activities clustering of migrants may occur. Some gave a more subtle view by pointing out that they had ties with locals but those were less strong ties than the ones with people from their own ethnic or, or even more commonly, cultural groups<sup>5</sup>, where their closer friends are drawn from.

*I have friends who, they will come to my house, I will go to their house (...). We came from the same country. The others there, well yes, when we go to training, we talk, otherwise they call me or I call them but that's all. Yes. [FR\_6]*

Such difference particularly manifested itself in informal social activities and how social groups were formed:

*If I hang out with them as individuals ... I wouldn't really move in groups with them as frequent cause I do feel kind of different ... and I have to get involved in the conversation I would kinda have to, you know, not be myself as much I have to kind of commit to their behaviour. [IE\_21]*

Another interviewee in France also detected an underlying difference in mentality between his fellow-migrants and natives in France, which exists in spite of being integrated in the local community.

A group of young migrant men was more critical pointing out the very limited opportunity to engage with locals. Some stressed that they had little contact with natives even when accessing formal activities by sport and youth organisations: “*Foreign people with foreign people, rarely with Finns*” [FI\_13b]. It was also mentioned that although useful, orientation and language programme can reinforce ethnic boundaries as a result of running classes attended by only migrants, often more than one person coming from the same country: “*There are 8 Albanians on my course. Sometimes I feel like I'm in Albania*” [IT\_FG3]. More worryingly, a number of people perceived an often subtle but existing barrier between them and native population that hampered building networks.

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<sup>5</sup> As noted later, some young male migrants would talk about broader groups, for instance Nigerians, Arabs or other Muslims instead of specifically referring to their own ethnic groups. A number of non-Pakistani interviewee, typically from smaller ethnic groups, named Pakistani as their most common friends in the UK.

*I feel that between me and the Germans there is sometimes a border. They take themselves back, do not treat me normally. Not meaning bad, but they speak differently to me, not like to each other. [DE\_FG2]*

Some argued that this is linked to linguistic and cultural deficit: migrant have to demonstrate strong command of the host language and good understanding of cultural norms to be accepted as if being required to pass an “assimilation barrier”. This can be exacerbated by a sometimes inferior view of people coming from so-called developing countries.

*That is the real struggle...to make people understand that we are the same and have the same capabilities. [IT\_7]*

Many others gave a different explanation: they perceived the source of such attitude to be cultural discomfort, sometimes fear or even prejudice towards migrants. Cultural discomfort can be triggered by different look, attire, some behaviour or other form of “otherness” attached to various markers present in migrant youth:

*Interviewer: Where do you think that cautiousness stem from?  
Interviewee: Different culture probably. A guy that looks different (laughs).  
Interviewer: Yeah. I think that in your case it is not about the language.  
[FI\_17]*

It is not possible to draw an exact conclusion due to the qualitative nature of this study, but it seems that where there was bigger perceived cultural distance between migrant groups in question and the host society, such problems were cited more commonly. Awkwardness and prejudice can lead to discrimination and racist remarks which then cast shadows over building networks with the native population. One man in the UK noted that mastering the local language and culture sharpened one’s awareness of existing negative attitude and treatment towards migrants and did not necessarily reduce the occurrence of it. Notably, a few men experienced a more open attitude from females than from males. One Irish respondent explained that this is the result of a rivalry between males:

*Females viewed as targets and [migrant] males are viewed as competitors.  
[IE\_12]*

A Finnish respondent passionately expressed his desire to know more Finnish males, which he found challenging due to a seeming discomfort and sometimes prejudices towards Iraqis; this was in contrast to the ease of how he could relate to Finnish females.

Interesting perspectives emerged in regard to ethnic and religious organisations and groups. It was observed that they can offer support for newly arriving migrants and also a platform to maintain heritage culture. Many interacted with their own ethnic groups both informally, usually based locally, and in a formal structure, through an organisation. Not all shared that experience, however. Some felt that ethnic organisations concentrated on traditional activities that were of little interest to younger migrants. They can be also dominating, trying to influence their members, and slow down their interaction with the wider society. There were young migrants who deliberately shun their ethnic networks and refuse to engage with ethnic organisations. In their view such separation gave them a space for development. A few admitted re-discovering the value and benefit of ethnic networks and organisations at a later stage, however, recognising their positive influence and help in preventing young people going astray. Religious organisations also served as a source of support that was particularly valuable when settling down in their new country. It was a place where they would meet co-ethnics, other migrants and also locals although the representation of locals in churches were often much less prominent than in the wider society. In the Irish context the role of student societies linked to migrant cultures at third level colleges was emphasised: African and Indian societies were seen as a space for cultural expression and mutual support.

### **Differences in Socialisation**

How social networks are constructed is determined by the modes and places of socialisations. Although differences exist among the very diverse groups of non-EU young male migrant population in those countries, respondents across most countries identified underlying common differences between socialisation in Europe and their countries of origin. To put it simply, it was noted by a number of participants that the more individualistic approach in Europe is in contrast to a more communal type of social life in countries outside Europe. The difference was also noticed in people's interaction with each other, with Europeans being seen more reserved and more individualistic.

*They are rather interested in themselves, they are not so cohesive.*  
[CZ\_FG1]

The perception was that people in Europe often appear to live in a bubble and it takes effort to establish relationship with them:

*Everyone tends to stay to themselves in their house: that is what I noticed in Europe. [IE\_34]*

Forming friendships with Europeans was therefore described as a slower process than getting to know people from their countries of origin:

*The process of getting to know people here is quite slow. I can ...say hello to an African man. I see him and immediately we are friends. But here you have to see people a couple of times. [FI\_7a]*

Closely related to this is the observed difference in the organisation of social activities: Europe was regarded as having more organised and structured activities whereas their countries of origin offering activities in a more casual and less organised manner. Several appreciated the range of activities and facilities available but somewhat missed the flexibility that was present in their countries of origin and the wider availability of free activities. Others were also critical of the limited choice of social activities, most typically lamenting the absence of options not involving alcohol. Some found that leisure activities popular in their countries of origin created little interest in their new countries: one example was given by a Finnish interview who noticed that dancing is much less popular in Finland as a recreational activity than in his country of origin. Furthermore, the limited amount of leisure time in their countries of arrival was also mentioned: a number of them lead an intense life pre-occupied with work, studying and family that they feel left little time for social activities. It was perceived that attitudinal difference also affects the formation of kin groups and how people support each other.

*In Egypt everybody helps each other even though they may know each other that well; but that does not seem to exist here, I don't even know the English word for it. In England it's like everybody for themselves, everybody minds their own business. In Egypt we don't mind just our own business. [UK\_5]*

On other hand some admitted that communities can be also over-bearing and dominating and a few decided to deliberately keep distance from their ethnic networks. It was also found that young migrant may hold a different perspective to their native counterparts who did not experience political turmoil and shortage or poor provision of basic supplies such as food, electricity and water.

*They don't know how it was for us in our home country. For them, they get pissed if they run out of cigarettes. [FI\_FG2]*

## **Discussions and Conclusions**

Firstly, a key finding of our research is that building social networks creates a particular challenge in that they are not done through the same formal route as someone completes his/her education or job-related tasks. Informality and uncertainty surrounds social interactions particularly where parties, at least initially, may be drawn to focus on differences. Young migrant men understand the importance of engaging in informal interactions and building relationships; nevertheless, precisely due this informality they may struggle to negotiate this new social space.

*In school you learn grammar but you need to have places in which to have informal discussions. [FI\_FG2]*

The advantage of recreational activities is that they offer a structure that reduces such informality and uncertainty surrounding social encounters and ideally also overcomes cultural discomfort or as Allport (1954) puts it, bias and prejudice among groups. However, as noted above, such structure has to be accessible and be managed in a manner that migrants can feel secure in occupying that space and building relationships. On the other hand, programmes cannot engineer building of friendships but can only create what is seen as favourable conditions for inter-ethnic contacts.

Secondly, the research highlighted several types of activities that can offer a successful platform for inter-ethnic encounters. Sport activities are often conducted in such a manner that fits criteria set by Allport (1954) but also Kindler et al. (2015): there are rules that guarantee participation on equal footing, common sets of goals and support from the clubs yet they tend not to be run directly to foster inter-ethnic engagement but rather offer spaces of encounters for participants. Nonetheless, the field work also revealed that sport may fail to live up its potential: examples were given where migrants were turned away seemingly due to being a newcomer to the area, were not treated fairly in terms of team selection or experienced racism during sport activities. It was also revealed that in some cases migrants may prefer playing with their co-ethnics. How mainstream organisations reach out to migrants and manage diversity in their organisations is critical: the research suggested that

the majority of migrant men want to partake in mainstream sport activities but some may also have the desire to pursue activities with their co-ethnics; the two are not mutually exclusive. If they turn to activities with their co-ethnics as a result of rejection or mistreatment in mainstream clubs, there are reasons to be concerned.

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, religion also presented examples for spaces of encounters among different ethnic groups. They often brought together different migrant ethnic groups, who are very diverse themselves, but also some locals. Of note is that such activities also provided participation on an equal footing, offered common goals and the institutional support and again were not directly set up to stimulate inter-ethnic contacts.

*We are just like brothers, who are also from here and from all over the world. And we always go to Friday prayers, and there it doesn't matter what your background is....Everyone is equal. [DE\_20]*

Similar experience was shared in regard to a Christian church where everyone was described as “*brothers and sisters*” [DE\_2]. It is safe to say that religious organisations may also dominate and hinder social interaction with outside community: nonetheless what those experiences indicate that in line with what Putman (2007) found in the United States, religious places have the capacity to feed the growth of social capital among ethnically diverse groups.

Youth clubs also created a safe space where young migrant men interacted with youth from other cultural backgrounds. In particular in Ireland and Finland, and to a lesser degree in Germany, they offered a less formal environment than schools; a place where migrant youth can discuss problems and debate issues, engage in art activities, play games and as a result, form friendships. Youth clubs also provide such platform where everyone feels equal, where there are common goals and institutional support. Nevertheless, in comparison to sport and religious activities, there is lesser emphasis on enforcing rules and while there is also less formalised commitment to activities. Therefore, the skills of facilitators are perhaps even more important. Another challenge is that the concept of a youth club is more difficult to understand for the migrant youth (and varies from country to country) than the role of sport clubs and churches. Similar conclusion can be drawn in regard to recreational programmes at third level institutions: while being praised by several young migrant men, not all felt attracted to those initiatives.

Some also highlighted the role of public spaces such as parks. Again, they present a neutral space where youth from different backgrounds can pursue activities and interact with each other although rules are less pronounced and there is very limited institutional support: this makes it more difficult to address prejudice and discrimination. Indoor places drew mixed views: some spoke positively about cafes and bars whereas others criticised the fact that in Europe social activities centred upon consuming alcohol, with limited alternative options:

*We need places to go out after midnight...in which you wouldn't have to get wasted. [FI\_20]*

Lastly, although those findings show that those social outlets can provide an opportunity for young migrants to build their new social networks, places may need to reach out and adapt to ensure that they do attract diverse groups and facilitate positive encounters between them. Such process of mainstreaming need not to be aimed at replacing culturally specific places: they are to offer additional spaces for inter-cultural encounters that can potentially lead to social bridges and thus to more cohesion in diverse societies.



## **Chapter VI: The Self in Society: Belonging, Environment and Identity**

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Belonging in a place and neighbourhood, feeling well in one's environment and a positive concept of self and identity are important for a person's well-being. The well-being of YMM can further be influenced by how they are perceived. They are faced with many ascriptions from the outside, foremost from the media, who produce and reproduce many stereotypical images relating to migrants in general, and young male migrants in particular. Studies suggest that young migrant men 'work' with these societal ascriptions and use them, adopt, reject or re-define them. In this process they seek to construct a congruent self-image, which is important for their well-being. Their physical environment and neighbourhood, their peers and their cultural sense of belonging offer points of orientation and resources for identity affirmation. This identity affirmation or identity construction is a process which is influenced by a wider number of internal and external factors. Identity construction continues over one's whole lifespan and especially young people 'face' the transitory character of their identity constructions.

### **Neighbourhood**

Many interviewed young migrant men have moved from one city to the next or from one area to another within the countries they or their parents have migrated to and they compare these different geographical areas. These young migrant men seem to have developed a rather sensitive view on incidents and occasions that influence their well-being with regards to their geographical situation. Those interviewees that have lived in 'their' neighbourhood for a long time have developed a positive relationship with it – mainly because of stable personal relationships and informal and formal networks.

Most of the interviewees report of personal discriminatory experiences that occurred to them during their stay in the receiving societies, some even mentioned massive racial motivated attacks that they were involved in, and some others told stories about racist insults in the neighbourhood and in public spaces of cities that they were not involved with. Others reported of experiences of being robbed, being bullied and being attacked without mentioning

a racist motivation behind these deeds. Also stories of gang fights and verbal abuses in the own neighbourhood have either been recapitulated by some or experienced by others of the interviewees. All these reported personal experiences, but also rumours and stories that circulate within peer circles do not help to form a feeling of belonging to a community, which has abstract geographical characteristics.

Then also statements have been made that underline a racist climate in some neighbourhoods – mainly deprived ones with high unemployment rates. Here even young native kids adopt the racist attitudes of their parents. This leads in the extreme to very radical perspectives on discrimination as one interviewee states:

*White only area, I don't feel safe, I feel discrimination. (...) in a white only neighbourhood I don't feel comfortable. [UK\_3]*

In consequence certain 'bad' neighbourhood(s) of their city, where troubles might be predictable, are avoided. These include areas where drunken people are regularly found as troubles and racial insults by them are expected. Areas are avoided where serious crimes and fights are happening (and where some interviewees already got used to it but also got used to know how to stay out of trouble). Finally, on the bad side it has to be mentioned that some interviewees felt like being perceived as 'trouble-makers' in public spaces because of their skin colour and/or presumed ethnic origin.

Avoiding to paint a picture here of a population of young migrant men that live in complete segregation one has to correct that there are numbers of respondents who perceive their city as a "safe" and as a "nice" place where one has no problems and where it also easy to live. This was stated especially for cities where other migrants and foreigners are living. Then "nice and safe places" [IE\_15] specifically built for younger people in the city were very much appreciated by some of the interviewees, but there was also a need voiced for more non-commercialised spots and meeting places. Meeting places that could be also used for an 'intercultural dialogue' with national youth and that are free of charge, entrance-fees or something alike:

*(...) in schools you learn the grammar but you need to have places in which you have informal discussions. [FI\_FG2]*

Most of the young men make contacts and are reaching out to peers –both to autochthones and peers with immigrant background – within the school they are attending. They also make

contacts through sports: most mentioned football as their sport, the football teams and the respecting facilities (one man was able to establish a local identity and a reputation within his peer circles as a “*locally famous sportsman*” [FI\_4]). These contacts were described mostly very positive. This well-being through personal and informal contacts is mirrored in a feeling of safety. These young men belong to peers and friends and consequently to a group that is ‘home’ to them. This sense for the community was described by one interviewee from Ireland as he was approached by a local politician. This contact evoked a sense of belonging, and as a consequence now he “*even votes*” [IE\_15]. Also, a sense of community and belonging emerged from friends of the same school living in one’s neighbourhood.

Migrant men living in a multicultural neighbourhood described these neighbourhoods as making interaction easier and smoother, because everybody has the status of an immigrant and speaks to each other from the same ‘hierarchical position’: “*we all play together on the big green on a multicultural soccer team*” [IE\_FG2] – this helps a lot getting to know people much faster. The socialising and interactions take place in these neighbourhoods with other migrants and not with nationals [e.g. FR\_5]. As a young migrant man from Germany put it: “*Here we’re all very much alike. We’re all people with an immigrant background and it’s just easier to live together*” [DE\_19]. However some report also of the bad media images about their neighbourhood that they are confronted with. In a discussion of boys living in a multicultural and traditionally deprived district, the boys believed that the media often “*make big things out of little things.*” [DE\_FG2]. Then finally there are also very positive attitudes regarding the own neighbourhood – independent from their socio-structural character. This positive view relates to educational opportunities and facilities (such as universities and schools) but also to commercial facilities (shopping malls, restaurants, shops, pubs, clubs etc).

Especially young migrants in Finland [e.g. FI\_FG3] were comparing these opportunities and further characteristics between smaller cities and rural areas on the one side and bigger cities and the metropolitan area on the other side. They stated that in smaller cities and rural areas there are different forms of interaction compared to the interactions and habits in bigger, metropolitan cities. It is easier to get contacts and ‘bridge’ to the local peer circles and societal institutions in smaller cities. It is easy to familiarize with people, people are friendlier. However on the other hand there are only few services and social life is also rare. Furthermore it was mentioned that the use of language differs from more formal in rural areas

to more colloquial and informal in bigger cities. All agreed that people in the metropolitan area are supposedly more open-minded and liberal.

## **Housing**

On the downside the interviewees explicitly mentioned the housing situation in metropolitan areas. For many young migrant men in bigger cities the housing situation is difficult or even delicate. Many are looking and searching for an improvement of their actual situation, which is not satisfying for different reasons, for example because they share with other people or pay very high rents. But opportunities to find other flats are rather limited due to financial restrictions or due to constrain of the public housing market [e.g. CZ\_15, FI\_13b, IT\_14, IE\_34]. Some respondents even reported discrimination in the selection process for rental flats on the free market [e.g. CZ\_FG3]. Another part of the interviewees was satisfied with their current housing situation. This satisfaction applied to positive and friendly relationships with the landlord and the neighbours, tidiness of the flat and cleanliness of the whole neighbourhood [e.g. FI\_2b].

## **Religious Identity**

In the following we want to take a closer look at the role of religion for well-being and feelings of belonging. Religion features as relevant topic in the interviews with a significant minority of the young men. At the same time, it must be noted that some young men explicitly stated their distance from religious concepts, their rejection of religion or their atheist self-concept. As reasons they state their dislike of moral prescriptions by (a specific) religion or by its followers [DE\_11, DE\_14, UK\_8, FR\_17]. A few interviewees rejected their own religious origins and upbringing, for example because their religious parents did not accept their sexual orientation [FR\_17]. Others who rejected religion had adopted their atheist or agnostic stance from their parents or simply considered religion to be irrelevant to their lives.

The topic religion featured in most of the individual interviews, although not in the focus groups. Out of the 145 young men who were interviewed individually, 44 per cent identified as Muslims, 40 per cent as Christians, and 15 per cent either as other religion, no religion or

the information was missing. Not all those that who called themselves Christians, Muslims or Buddhists also identified as ‘believers’. The vast majority of those of Muslim origin identify more or less intensely with their religion. However they practice their faith differently. They do not necessarily stick to the rituals such as praying five times a day, visiting the mosque or refraining from the consumption of alcohol. This does not infringe upon their identification as Muslims. Some call themselves moderate Muslims for those reasons. Religion was only one of many topics and in most in most interviews only played a (very) minor role. The following description can thus only provide a small insight into the religious practice of the faithful young men in the sample, and cannot in depth pay justice to its interconnectedness with cultural, social and traditional factors and the sometimes ensuing contradictions.

Their religious faith is a well-being factor for the religious young men. Their most common well-being denominators are the intrinsic benefits they feel they derive from their faith. Many state their faith gives them “*strength*” and “*security*”. It helps them to “*tackle difficult situations*” in life [UK\_10, CZ\_14a, CZ\_9, DE\_19, DE\_2, DE\_8, FR\_16, DE\_12 and more]. This is equally true for actively practicing Christians as for Muslims, although the number of respondents of Muslim origin who stress the benefits of their faith for their well-being is significantly higher than those of Christian origin. Great emotional attachment shines through the words of many respondents when they speak about their religious affiliation. Religion is located “*in the heart*” [UK\_20, UK\_7]. Religious practice such as praying helps to acquire “*inner peace*” and calms them down:

*Without [faith], I would not be the person I am. It keeps me ... on my toes. I keep a firm hold onto it so that I can continue to pursue my aims. I try to pray as often as I can. I go to Friday prayers, too. That really is very, very important to me. ... Praying frees you, takes the pressure from your chest, it's as if the stress [e.g. stress at school, when you mess up in a test, stress with the girlfriend] just flies away. A really beautiful feeling. [DE\_19]*

Practising religion can help the individual to see purpose and meaning in life and connect to a greater cause beyond the individual’s life and its ups and downs. This is a par-excellence eudemonic aspect of well-being. For the individual it is a source of identification, offers guidance and orientation. As such it can be an important part of one’s identity.

*I have always been a believer. I can say without religion I would have no reason to live. OK, if you are not living, then you cannot be happy in life. It is related to each other. I will not say that Islam is therefore to be happy, but Islam is there to show me how I am. [DE\_9]*

Religious rituals and preceptive practises, do's and don't offer further orientation in life. Especially young Muslim respondents stress that religion can be a guide through life, an "instruction book" [FR\_13]. It is interesting to note that several young men who speak about the benefits of their faith mention that it has helped them to "stay out of trouble" and refrain from "illegal activities" [FR\_13, FR\_21, DE\_19]. Moral values are transmitted in religion, such as respect for parents or sympathy with the poor. Several respondents of Muslim faith consider it as beneficial to their health to follow the prescribed dietary restrictions, namely refraining from the consumption of alcohol and cigarettes. This includes a couple of young men who gave up other religious practises such as praying and visiting the mosque and only stuck to the restriction of alcohol and cigarettes for health reasons [IE\_17, CZ\_7]. At the same time, several of those who identify as Muslims report that they themselves drink alcohol occasionally or have religious friends that do.

The above beneficial well-being aspects – offering orientation in life, a sense of purpose, source of identity and identification – can be regarded as intrinsic and relating directly to the individual's life practice. A couple of respondents stress that religion for them is a purely 'personal' matter, relating only to themselves and their relationship to god. For the majority of respondents however their faith also relates to their origins and their family. Many religious respondents had acquired their faith already in childhood. Their parents were also religious and a relative - their mother more often than their father - had taught them how to pray. A 17-year old living in the Czech Republic, says:

*Thanks to the belief I realize many things and thank to Him, I am now where I am. (...) Mainly my grandma in Ukraine brought me up in faith. Whenever we arrived there, we always went to church. Thanks to her, I have always believed and then I met my girlfriend and by chance, her grandpa is a priest by the way. ... it is not just about churchgoing. It is frankly about the life; not to preach water and drink wine ... It is important to practice, not preach others. [CZ\_10a]*

Celebrating feast is "very closely connected with our country of origin, our homeland" [DE\_20]. Religious practice, family traditions, cultural origin and religion merge. Attending church services or the mosque also can deliver a sense of "home" [IE\_15] to migrated youth. Communal aspects, socializing, meeting like-minded people, friends and acquaintances are important for many – though not all – of those who attend religious services. Two men in the sample report that they started going to the mosque because it was right next to their college

and their college friends went there [UK\_5, UK\_8]. A 19-year old of Kurdish origin cherishes the sense of community at the mosque:

*It's so multicultural! There they are, sitting next to each other, praying to the same god. There it does not matter where you come from. We Muslims stick together. It is a good thing. [DE\_19]*

A young man from Ecuador describes that he felt welcome and well-received in the local parish:

*Not everybody thinks the same, but in a parish, for us it is like that: We are brothers and sisters. We need to meet in order to talk about our love to God. This is why we meet. I know what the people in my parish think, because we share the same thoughts. [DE\_2]*

## **Negotiating Religion**

An 18-year old young man from Afghanistan reports that he was disturbed by the views held by some Muslims born in Germany:

*What I see here with some people is not what Islam says. Like, when terrorists kill they go to paradise. This is not true. ... I always try to stay cool. Stay out of trouble. When I say something against them, they say I am also an unbeliever. [DE\_1]*

He stopped going to the mosque, because he thinks young people got these views from the mosques. Similarly, the earlier quoted young man of Kurdish origin describes how despite the sense of community at the mosque, he does not want to hang out there and explains this as follows:

*There are these Salafist groups, of course. There are a few in this town. . . . I don't want to belong to any of them. I keep my distance from them. [DE\_19]*

Conversely, a young man living in France reports how he discovered religion when he was asking himself questions about life and how his “*big brothers*” at the mosque helped to give him orientation away from extremist opinions. He reports how he initially got “*very disturbed*” and “*disoriented*” by extremist sites he found on the internet. His “*big brothers*” at the mosque helped him by explaining that Islam did not convey a violent message and that extremists were preaching a “*false Islam*” [FR\_4].

These examples give a small insight into how young men are in-between different interpretations of religion and are seeking to find their own interpretation, often with the help of others. A small number report feeling constricted by restrictive Muslims who want to prescribe how to practice their religion [UK\_7, DE\_11].

When asked about the religious affiliation of their (existing or potential) partner, several of the religious young men were going out with or would like to go out with girls who were also 'believers' [DE\_5, DE\_9, DE\_12, DE\_19]. They thought it would be "*easier*" and create more understanding. For some religious respondents of Algerian descent, Kabyle origin of their partner was quite important [FR\_8, FR\_23]. A young Pakistani man reports that he values cultural diversity, as it enriches life and supports critical thinking and would therefore like his wife not to be Pakistani. However, he proceeds, she should have the same religion as him, as it is important for a child to choose the religion that suits them best and having different religions would de-stabilize the child [FR\_16]. Interestingly, religion was exempt from his understanding of cultural diversity.

One must be cautious to draw conclusions on the connection between religious affiliation and gender attitudes. For one, because this was not explicit focus of this study and only featured randomly in many interviews. Sometimes contradictions emerged in the young men's views. Attitudes reach from liberal to traditional gender views.

A few young men who describe themselves as strictly religious understand a traditional distribution of gender roles – where the man should provide for the safety and well-being of the family and the wife should look after household and children – as religious rules [DE\_9]. Other interviewees who uphold conservative concepts of family see this as rooted in their culture and tradition – not in their religion. Many then mix it with individualistic conceptions, for example rejecting arranged marriages, emphasising the importance of individual and voluntary decisions and the equal rights of women, who they nevertheless see as the partner primarily responsible for the rearing of children. Alongside these more conservative conceptions, there are also religious young men in the sample who explicitly reject and criticize the seeming supremacy of men over women, which is often stereotypically associated with their religion, and associate with progressive gender concepts [FR\_4, FR\_21, DE\_15]. In fact family traditions have a great influence on young men's perception of gender roles. Those who expressed very liberal views often cited that they followed their parents in that respect. There were also some young men who turned away from strict family traditions.



Given the youth of the respondents we can also assume some shifts in their views as they grow older and that theory and practice will not always correspond.

Other studies have shown that young men with low social status have a greater tendency to opt for hegemonic constructions of masculinity. These concepts of masculinity can be enriched with religious ideas and religion used as justification. However scholars claim that hegemonic constructions of masculinity are rooted in patriarchal rather than religious concepts. In public perception, hegemonic constructions of masculinity are often associated with ‘all Muslims’, ignoring that there are a variety of different interpretations and religious practices (Toprak, 2015, for concept of hegemonic masculinities see Connell, 1995). The sample of this study gives a small insight into the variety of interpretations and negotiations practiced by the young men.

### **Perceptions on Muslims**

The diversity in religious practice is juxtaposed with overall generalizing negative perceptions of Muslims in the public discourse. In the interviews, several young Muslim respondents distance themselves from terrorists without being asked to do so. Apparently they feel a need to justify themselves and explain that their understanding of Islam is peaceful, although the interviewer did not confront them with any allegations [FI\_3b, FR\_4 FI\_7b). Negative perceptions on Muslims feature frequently in the interviews and are referred to both by Muslim and Non-Muslim respondents. Commonly islamophobia is associating Islam with terrorism and/or it’s assumed cultural ‘alienness’ or strangeness. This islamophobia assumes a generalized intrinsic value system in Islam, which is thought not to fit with what are perceived ‘western values’.

Several respondents have experienced negative reactions to their faith, have been confronted with prejudices or discrimination. A young men, 20 at the time of interview immigrated to Ireland from Kenya at the age of two. He reports how at school the teacher once called him “*Allah*”, to the amusement of other students. When his friend stood up for him and called this a racist remark, the teacher suspended him. He felt bad but did not react, for fear of being suspended as well. In another incident he tried to comment on what he considered an incorrect portrayal of Muslims by the teacher in religious class. While some classmates showed interest in his corrections, other cited examples from the media to argue that

“*Muslims are terrorists*” [IE\_17]. Many YMM in the sample felt the urge to explain and justify themselves, drawing a clear line between them and extremists. The feeling of being misunderstood and stereotyped on the basis of their religion caused some to stop talking in public about their religion altogether [DE\_6, DE\_12].

## **Media Discourses**

A lot of origin of negative stereotyping was attributed to “*the media*” or “*the mainstream media*”. The media are criticised for their biased perspective which shows Islam almost exclusively in connection with terrorism, violence, suppression of women and ‘unbelievers’. They see the vast majority of peaceful Muslims being stigmatized because their religious practice is not reflected in the media. Many interviewed young men have a very suspicious and critical view of the media. Some talk of “*brainwashing*” by the media [DE\_FG2, UK\_1]. A few respondents believe the media would intentionally select the negative portrayal of Muslims “*to make a religion look bad*” [UK\_1, UK\_13]. Others see the lack of complexity in reporting rather systemically rooted and argue that the media would merely report “*what the people want to hear*” [IE\_8]. Power interests are also suspected as a reason for misrepresentation. In this perspective, the complex real origins of social problems are not discussed, but instead reinforce stigmas and fears concerning immigration or Islam. Some interviewees suspect very concrete geopolitical power interest of certain countries, like the United States. This for example concerns the representation of the Ukraine conflict and the perceived threat of Russia, which some interviewees describe as over-exaggerated by the media [CZ\_6, FI\_FG4].

It is echoed in many interviews that immigrants in general, but specifically from Arabic or primarily Islamic countries are stigmatised in the public discourse. Many young men interviewed have first-hand experience of these ascriptions. They are both objects and receivers of stereotypical images in media messages. They experience how media messages often seem to not reflect or distort reality. In the focus groups in Germany the young men were shown a stereotypically negative television feature about integration deficits of immigrants, who were shown not to be able to learn the language, fail at school, be ‘backward’ and have little future perspective (“*Berlin Direkt: Türkische und Arabische*

*Einwanderer: Fördern oder Fordern?*”, ZDF 2010). The groups discussed the public image of immigrants:

*When it says ‘immigrant background’, they always show women with headscarves [on TV] – but there are not only Muslim immigrants, there are also Italians, for example. On TV they always show people who cannot speak German. When foreigners see that, they must think they are despised. ... Instead of showing good things on TV, like more immigrants have university qualification now, they show so many negative things. [DE\_FG2]*

*I heard from friends of mine that they believe that this is true [Turks are unemployed, uneducated etc.] I do not believe such things, like that all Turks are unemployed or do not learn German. Look at him [points to his Turkish classmate]: He speaks German and goes to school, has no bad grades and is not criminal. [DE\_FG3]*

*[In the past] I had a very different impression of Turkish people, I thought they are all gangsters and selling drugs. But when I came to this school I realised they are normal people. The media give a bad impression. [DE\_FG2]*

A young man of Turkish descent but born in Germany reports his own preconceptions about Arabs. He believed “*all Arabs have strict rules*” before he met Arabs in his class and realized “*most of the times it is not like that.*” [DE\_FG2]. Their real experiences versus the media, the boys have to re-adjust their prejudices and to negotiate the negative imagery that they are confronted with. They also have to be prepared to take a stance against the ascriptions about themselves and about the area where they live. In the following we want to look some more at the nature of these ascriptions and outside perceptions on the young men and how they engage with them.

## **Ascriptions on Young Migrant Men**

YMM are confronted with various ascriptions from the outside, which originate in public discourses and reach them via the media or in direct interaction with others. They need to engage with these ascriptions somehow: whether they reject them, try to ignore them, re-interpret or endorse them. In any case, they impact upon their well-being. Several respondents felt that they needed to overcompensate for their immigrant status and the negative anticipation it brought with it. This was especially true for those young men who on the basis of their skin colour belonged to a visible ethnic minority.

*People judge a lot on appearance ... If you're black you're already judged negatively, if your hair is messy and you're dressed badly, you do not make a good impression. [IT\_7a]*

Being black meant for many being put under “the black umbrella”, being classified as “African” although the origin might be different [IE\_26], visibly belonging to a minority which could not “*not really*” be Irish or German [IE\_1]. Being a “*refugee*” was also experienced as a reductionist and sometimes derogatory term. Refugees were either “*lazy*” or “*take all the jobs*”: “*You're damned if you do and damned if you don't*” [IE\_1].

Being perceived as potential ‘trouble-makers’ was a problem for many young migrant men [UK\_14, UK\_15, DE\_4, DE\_11, DE\_19, IE\_10, FI\_7b, IE\_FG2]. This happens in particular when they are out in public spaces. A young man living in Finland reports how he “*scans*” his environment before he enters a place and is often followed around in shops by shop assistants, who think he would steal [FI\_7b]. Another young man reports disapproving looks from people in restaurants in the city centre when he enters [DE\_19]. Common is negative door policy towards young migrant men who are refused entry in bars or nightclubs. A 23 year-old student from Lebanon is annoyed at having to justify himself:

*Do I look like that kind of trouble maker? Because I usually smile, I'm always friendly. So that hurts when people think I'm anti-social. That's not me. [DE\_11].*

The young men experienced this ascription as unjust. Some reacted in a defeatist manner: “*There is nothing we can do, it is up to us to show the difference*” [UK\_15]. Others claimed they did not care what others think. Common was a repeated justification against negative imagery and ensuing negative anticipation [e.g. UK\_14 who feels pressure to show that he is “*not ghetto*”], although some might also take on this image and turn it into their own “*bad boy*” image [e.g. DE\_19].

## Cultural Differences

Those who were asked about cultural differences between the homeland and the receiving society mention commonly on the positive side a number of factors in the receiving societies:

- 1) The good organisation of the societies which relates to a larger extend in the perception of the young migrants with regard to cleanliness and tidiness
- 2) The welfare system was also explicitly mentioned as something outstanding positive: the social support one receives from the state and the possibilities and assistance to find work which then allows people to live with a high living standard.
- 3) The democratic and participatory structures were deemed as unique - in comparison to the homeland. People were thankful for being enabled to learn the language and to receive financial and further support (e.g. search for flats) while acquiring the language. This language acquisition and the optional opportunities that emerge and could even result in the attendance at a university were as much appreciated. It helped when these learning or qualification opportunities are for free.

Furthermore “*security*” and “*freedom*” were mentioned as positive factors that help people to discuss, to decide and to act as individuals with an own will. This feeling of security helps one to “*walk around the streets and feel safe*”. This caused one respondent to say: “*here the government thinks about his people*” [IE\_2].

Additionally the high standard of living and the variety of options to fulfil material wishes were mentioned again as very positive. The same holds true for the existing sport and leisure facilities and possibilities to participate. Finally and mainly the good education opportunities (mainly) free of charge were as much appreciated as the corresponding optional ‘career opportunities’:

*(...) well I have everything, I have a family, friends, I have a school, I have a small job too. I am a youth leader. I have my BAFA youth worker diploma. And yes, that’s all positive, I can play football. I have everything.*  
[FR\_7]

Within the national education system the participative structures, the possibilities to discuss with teachers and the expression of one’s own opinions were seen as positive. The whole education system was also linked to the possibility to achieve good or better job opportunities – in comparison to the homeland [e.g. FI\_16].

Some respondents had more *ambivalent* feelings for their new homelands. They identified some interdependencies with regards to the topic of feelings of ‘belonging to one culture’: Some felt the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of immigrants from their home country gave an “*embarrassing*” impression of their country and its inhabitants for the ‘receiving society’ [CZ\_15]

Most of the respondents seem to be aware that the culture of the receiving societies changes due to huge immigration streams, which go together with huge demographic changes. The young men predict that pupils in school will get used to having a migrant neighbour in the near future [e.g. IE\_15]. The more they are socialised with ‘intercultural’ issues and interactions, the more they get used to it and the more these conditions become part of normal daily life. In other words: The growing numbers of immigrants in the receiving countries change these societies and their perception of phenomena connected to migration.

Further it was stated that on the one hand in the ‘home country’ one finds poverty and poor educational conditions, but on the other hand people there often have higher educational aspirations. They concentrate more on their educational achievements and see the future of their families as more dependent on educational aspirations. In contrast, people in the ‘receiving country’ have a high standard of living, but therefore autochthones act with low-risks and are not as flexible.

Some interviewees mentioned to proceed ‘tactically’. They take the “*best elements of both cultures*” [CZ\_16] and say „*I am picking out the raisins from the Irish culture and from the Russian culture*” [IE\_8]. Others felt caught between their different cultural identities. They felt they neither really belonged to their host country, nor to their families’ country of origin. This was especially true for second generation migrants and generation 1,5. “*In Germany, I am Kurdish, and over there, I am the German.*” [DE\_19], “*only successful immigrants count as French*” [FR\_15], “*deep inside his mind ... he is a Chinese, but he is different, he is rather a Czech*” [CZ\_16a].

One respondent said the “*biggest difference between the cultures*” is the holidays [DE\_10]: Christian holidays exclude persons of Muslim faith, but when Muslims participate on holidays like Christmas or Ascension Day they feel excluded for habitual reasons (e.g. drinking alcohol, exchange of gifts, praying to Jesus):

*What they did last weekend, what they are going to do next weekend, Easter holidays, Christmas holidays. (...) Sometimes it is hard to fit in if you don't drink, but all my friends, they know that I don't drink. [IE\_16]*

On the *negative* side it was mentioned that school education and other formal qualifications plus vocational training qualifications are not accepted in the national qualification systems of the receiving countries. Thus the educational status of most immigrants is either not accepted in the receiving societies or rather unclear. Especially those migrant men that felt the need to fulfil the role of a 'bread-winner' have a huge problem with the unclear or unaccepted professional status.

It was also criticised that in the receiving societies it was very hard to establish relationships to nationals, whereas in the home country people have much closer relationships. Other interviewees stated that there is a "*stronger sense of belonging*" and more open mindedness 'at home', whereas in the receiving societies one is confronted with a reserved and detached mentality, with hardly any cordiality and very rational behaviour in everyday interactions [e.g. CZ\_11]. Also the interactions with girls and young women were perceived as complicated, whereas the interactions amongst men were experienced as much easier or more uncomplicated in the 'host' society.

Some felt that too much alcohol is consumed in European societies. The nationals seem to "*need alcohol*"; it seems to make them "*strong*". Another person argued more diplomatically: Religion and faith keeps him from drinking alcohol which again excludes him from a number of social activities [IE\_15]. Finally it has to be mentioned that first-time experience of racial discrimination has a huge negative impact on the perception and evaluation of one's own migration. This was either described explicitly or implicitly by a number of young migrant men [e.g. IT\_4; IT\_8a; IT\_12a; FR\_12; FR\_15; FI\_5; IE\_7]. Many felt hopeless and expressed a certain fatalism:

*I learned quickly and was good at my job, maybe even better than some Italians and but I was treated differently. (...) it's not nice. [IT\_FG3]*

*We feel like foreigners because we have to give 160% to be accepted, 100% isn't enough. [IT\_FG3]*

## Conclusion

A sense of belonging in their lived environment is important for well-being. To the young men, feelings of belonging offer a sense of “home”. Belonging can be felt in the neighbourhood, in the city, and in communities with like-minded people. Belonging in the neighbourhood for example can support both hedonic and eudemonic well-being. Hedonic well-being is generated by pleasant personal encounters with people. A sense of community can arise even to the extent as offering a sense of identity, especially where geographical and emotional community merge. For some young men, religion can offer a sense of belonging. Its intrinsic values offer inner peace, a sense of purpose in life, connects them to “something bigger” (eudemonic well-being). For many of those, it is also tied to their family traditions, their parents and their country of origin. It has been speculated that this is one reason that religion becomes increasingly important for some 2<sup>nd</sup> generation migrants, being sometimes the only connection to their parents’ country of origin.

The young men’s sense of belonging is disturbed when they experience stigmatization: Being perceived as potential trouble-makers is an attack on their identity as young males, as Muslims or as immigrants. They are in a position to justify themselves and prove otherwise. The YMM have different benchmarks in life which are resources for their self-esteem and anchors for their identity formation (notably their family, school, their peers and the media). Often the expectations, ascriptions and understandings of a “successful self-concept” in these spheres are very different. Some YMM, especially second generation have “split identities” and have trouble to positively identify with the country where they live. Negative ascriptions sometimes obstruct their positive identification. They need to be supported in developing positive self-concepts which incorporate their various spheres of belonging for a positive construction of their identities.



## Chapter VII: Being Safe and Secure: Young Migrant Men's Accounts of Their Daily Lives

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*There is nothing more permanent than a temporary situation.* [FI\_16]

This transnational analysis draws on the data collected by each of the partners. Despite differences in immigration policies across the European countries, it is striking that young migrant men made very similar experiences, and this was particularly the case for interaction with authorities and the importance of safety and security for the young migrant men's sense of well-being.

The context of the migrant experience is one that has a number of competing, contradictory and contested elements. It is important to understand these tensions in order to place the narratives of migrant respondents within a framework that views the actions of young migrant men as attempting to resolve and strategically manage a number of problematics that are a daily feature of their experience in the 'host' country. This requires constant negotiation, the immediate environment is evident in other research (see for example Ruhs and Anderson 2010) and is an underpinning framework within which to understand how young migrant men comprehend the challenges of living in a new country. These challenges often describe a Kafkaesque type of world. In Franz Kafka's novel 'The Trial' Kafka writes of Joseph K and provides a commentary on how the state exercises power in relation to Joseph even though the nature of the accusations are never revealed and the sanction is seemed to be justified in terms of the law and ultimately accepted by Joseph.

Kafka's work highlights how once a 'process' is started there is little or no inclination to stop it by those in authority. It is this Kafkaesque type of world that Pavel, quoted at the beginning of this section, is referring; that there is a permanency in maintaining a sense of the temporary, however, for the migrant the sense of being temporary requires a constant series of negotiated encounters in an attempt to move to being permanent. The attempts to resolve the lack of permanency are more often thwarted at a number of levels that require a return to the cycle of negotiation. On the occasions where permanency is achieved there are times when the young migrant men's experiences were of being treated as though they were temporary despite their permanent status. So, one critical question is how do we understand this context of flux and churn for young migrant men?

There are a number of processes that appear to contribute to this world of uncertainty and lack of clarity and coherence. First, there is a bifurcation of how young migrant men are perceived and approached by those in the 'host' society. The process of bifurcation either defines the migrant as a victim. In the cases of those considered being 'victims' of human trafficking the response is one of understanding their plight. This category applies, usually but not solely, to women and children. The approach is to provide services for their care and a discourse that articulates the 'evilness' of the traffickers. The notion of victimhood for this group is, on occasions, subject to negotiation and presentation as a 'deserving case' (Spencer and Broad 2011). The other approach to constructing young migrant men is to define them as abusers of hospitality; young men who are coming to the 'host' country in order to exploit what it has to offer. For this group their day-to-day life is marked by incidents that define them in a negative and at times hostile way. It is not impossible for one person to be on occasions a victim and on another an abuser of the system. This bifurcation results in a tension between who the young male migrant is and how they are defined. The critical defining characteristic here is being a 'migrant', it is this status as a migrant that can only define the person, in this context, as being either a victim or an abuser of hospitality. Therefore, we need to consider the pivotal role that being a young migrant male has in gaining some understanding of the Kafkaesque world that has to be daily encountered.

One element of the dynamic is that young migrant men can never be sure how they are being defined by those in authority who they encounter and so each daily transaction is potentially fraught with traps and snares that are unknown at the beginning of the encounter. Consequently in order to manage these potentially problematic encounters it is necessary to be strategic in the approach to authority. What many young migrant men are required to do is to enter into negotiations with authority where there is a considerable power differential. This imbalance of power engenders feelings of powerlessness and a sense that there is a certain inevitability of outcome and so to try and ameliorate these differentials of power young migrant men have to take strategic decisions that they consider will disadvantage them less.

There are a number of key themes that this strategic decision-making is focused around, and these will form the main structure of the following sections of this report. The main themes are identity, permanency, citizenship, being safe, security and racism. These main areas are negotiated within a framework of how the young migrant sense they are perceived and their perceptions of the host society. There are also important issues of retaining a male role and

being seen as 'male' within their own communities and the role with the family and kinship networks that are generally viewed as protective. Alongside these issues there is a need to negotiate within a system that is unpredictable and, at times, incomprehensible where the outcome of encounters can have unintended and unexpected consequences.

Many of these encounters where young migrant men are required to negotiate between themselves and the state demonstrate the micro level of management that is in place to manage migrant populations. It is helpful to consider the reasons that young migrant men engage with the state, as their objectives are not homogenous:

*(...) it is useful to distinguish between three types of objectives: (i) security of residence in the host country; (ii) economic improvement, and (iii) social integration, i.e. the extent to which migrants are able to achieve a quality of life comparable to that of citizens (including participation in 'public life'). These are clearly interrelated, but for non-citizens, policies can create inverse relationships ('trade-offs') between these objectives. (Ruhs and Anderson 2010:198)*

These 'trade-offs' create spaces that can potentially jeopardise security; for example, to gain security of residence may result in lack of economic improvement and security, whereas the latter may be achieved more readily if the young migrant is undocumented. The constant need to balance advantage and disadvantage against security and safety is reproduced daily and forms the context in which the narratives of young migrant men have to be interpreted.

## **Managing Identity**

Maintaining an identity is a complex dynamic because for many young men construct their identity in different environment, family, peers, school or work place and so on. For young migrant men there is an additional need to manage their identity within these environments and within each encounter they have with authority.

A key component of YMM's need to sustain identity revolves around their legal status as migrants. They have to complying with the often complex and burdensome requirements of immigration laws and this has a great effect on both their well-being as well as on their sense of belonging and identity.

The narratives in our study showed that a lack of permanent residency and citizenship has often have an impact on their quality of life and aspirations such as securing employment, full access to further education, the right to rent or buy properties, the right to vote, family reunification or in its most basic form, the right of free movement.

One means of resolving some of the tensions within the need to sustain identity is to look towards permanence in terms of the right to remain or the granting of asylum. Vasyl age 21 from Ukraine has been attempting to secure permanent residence in the Czech Republic for a number of years and his lack of permanency has an impact on his ability to secure well remunerated employment [CZ\_10a]. The length of time that he has been negotiating his permanent residency has led him to see the constant negotiations as nothing extraordinary. However, not all of the respondents wanted to gain permanency, for example Melosa age 16 from Brazil commented:

*Not because I do not want to be Italian, but because I want to keep my Brazilian part. [IT\_5]*

So, an important part of identity is the connection to the ethnicity of birth. This concept of ethnic identity is critical in the second generation, Ricardo age 27 from Peru, in discussing his daughter is angry at the Italian authorities for refusing to grant her Italian citizenship even though she was born in Italy:

*She is practically Italian, it's not fair that she has to wait till she's 18 to decide yes or no. It's not right, she is growing up here. It is a globalized world, it doesn't make sense. [IT\_11a]*

Citizenship is viewed by many as being an intrinsic part of developing a new identity that is founded upon the permanency of residence that citizenship provides. A failure to obtain citizenship, and permanency, can lead to repeated attempts to gain citizenship as in the case of Orlando age 24 from Peru, who is trying to obtain Italian citizenship. Despite being in Italy since he was 6 years old and having submitted the request several times he has still had no answer.

*They must have lost my file...I even resorted to a lawyer but still no answer. I'm now waiting and after 3 years of paying tax (and 10 years of being a resident) I will start the process for citizenship on my own. [IT\_8a]*

The fact that he has been unable to gain citizenship in Italy despite having lived here for 20 years has also contributed to him having a negative opinion of the country. For Orlando and Ricardo citizenship is linked to a new identity and one that is felt to be deserved either because of being born in the country and the host country having a significant influence through education or in Orlando's case as a recognition of the contribution made to the society through being a 'good citizen', paying taxes, working and of being a resident<sup>6</sup>. For many of the respondents what is being negotiated here is an identity achieved through permanency and if citizenship is not possible permanent residence is viewed as being an important part of securing an identity:

*I have lived for four years in Finland and I still have only a temporary residence permit. It is for four years. I have no idea whether I will get a permanent residence permit or not. [FI\_FG1]*

This lack of knowing what will be granted means that the world has to be negotiated in a different and much more sceptical way:

*AK: You mentioned something about ...income limits in getting your residence permit renewed. How much do you have to earn?*

*P: The thing is that this requirement, it's not official. There is no official requirement of that. They just look at it and see, okay this month you are okay in Finland, so he is not going to rob anyone (laughs). [...]*

*AK: So you have to show to the officials that you can make it on your own?*

*P: Yeah. Every year I make my bookkeeper to prepare some documents showing the annual turnover of the company. And they see if it works or doesn't work.*

*AK: Sounds like, is it stressful*

*P: Well, it's annoying. It's really annoying. So every time like I said it's five months [periods]. So after the 31st of June I can't travel because I have some kind of shitty paper that doesn't allow me to cross the border. Well, I can cross the border but they wouldn't allow me to [come back].*

*P: So yeah, it's kind of stressful in terms of... that I can't travel and then I got to submit all the papers and then they like well, we don't really know if it's this amount of money that is okay. So I should persuade them that now I'm doing well. That's it's gonna be good. [FI\_16]*

For this young migrant there is a constant series of negotiations over demonstrating that there is enough income, without fully knowing what income is considered to be viable. The second

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<sup>6</sup> Orlando's reference to residency is to the official decision of the state to allow him to remain his residency is permanent.

issue is that the lack of permanency makes travelling outside of Finland problematic. The lack of permanency places constraints on day-to-day activities and makes it necessary to negotiate certain encounters in order to maintain even a temporary status. The lack of permanency also highlights the negotiation between different forms of employment:

*And when you have a job you basically don't have to explain anything. You just submit your contract and that's... and it's done. So basically I could do the same. For example finding job as a janitor like cleaning the floors or do this stuff. A lot of people are doing that. So they usually tell me that okay, find some job you don't like. Just have a residence permit. But... I really do my best not to do that. Because when you start to do this kind of job then you lose your skills you lose your time and then after a year you understand that basically you are not good for anything better. [FI\_16]*

Again we see the negotiation between permanency and work and not wanting to take a menial task in order to simply gain a permit to remain, the need to sustain identity is an underlying theme. The fear of taking a menial job is that after a time you become unable to achieve anything better and this is linked to a personal sense of self. The sense of belonging that comes from permanency is evident in the following case:

*I know of people who went to the US, have worked there for 15 years and still do not have a legal document. Here on the other hand, I have a residency permit, I am someone to be accounted for. ...Here I have my social security number, I am recognized. If I do something illegal the law will persecute me, rightly so, because I am not an illegal immigrant. [IT\_11b]*

This respondent has a very clear sense of who he is and what his responsibilities are and the critical element is the fact that he has a legal right to remain and his identity is confirmed through a number of characteristics, the key one being a social security number.

Sometimes the process of applying for residence permit or citizenship can itself be perceived as very degrading, burdensome and inconsistent as Lionel age 23 from Rwanda describes:

*So there is a thing, it is in the process to get the French nationality. So it is that when I was a minor, I had the Rwandan nationality and at age 18 I had, I think at first, to renew my residence permit and then take the steps to have the French nationality. And this, is maybe interesting, it's that I saw a strong devolution. Really, the steps to get a residence permit, in Paris but also probably in France, it was catastrophic, we were treated like dogs. I had to get up at five in the morning, take the first bus to the Prefecture, wait in an endless line, and in the end we couldn't been seen because at 5 am, there were 30 people in front of us. I have a very bad memory of it. (...)*

*well, the steps to get a residence permit, I really did not find it to be very good.* [FR\_19]

A Czech respondent experienced the process of applying for residency as similarly hideous as his French counterpart. Ihor from Ukraine has been in the Czech Republic for 16 years and he is required to apply for extension of his residence permit every six months. Although he is hopeful that in the near future he fulfils all the criteria to be given finally full residency, he is still worried that a change in the political climate towards migration will put him in a vulnerable position again:

*You can never tell it is a guarantee. Somebody in the government goes mad, he says we have too many foreigners, they pass a new law that their number will have to be reduced and let's say a million foreigners must go ... who knows!* [CZ\_8a]

The fragile nature of identity obtained through permanency is articulated in the following case:

*The worst experience I had was, when I lost my wallet. Everything was inside my wallet: my driver's license and my identity card. So I was completely illegal. Thank God, somebody found it and handed it over to the lost and found office. These two or three weeks without the wallet were hell!* [DE\_2]

The loss of the wallet is equated with the loss of identity and the lack of being able to prove legality is defined as a living hell. The need for documents to prove identity, the need to be accounted for and to enable a sense of belonging are all encompassed in the desire for permanency. The desire for permanency is negotiated with the authorities and is also important in being perceived as being a good citizen. The fragility of this status is referred to with the fear that it can be as easily lost as losing a wallet. This need for permanency underpins how at each turn the young male migrant is required to negotiate each further step with sometimes experiencing a lack of progress which leads to a sense of being undermined and undervalued.

## **Negotiating with Authority**

A particular space that is fraught with potential threats is the intersection between the young migrant male and those in authority. The narratives present a complex picture whereby the

authorities may serve as both protectors and supporters for some, whilst being a source of tension, frustration, cynicism and mistrust for others. Tense encounters were linked in the narratives to stigmatization: the double-bind of the discriminatory migrant construction alongside public perceptions of ‘deviant youth’.

When Luis reported the loss of his wallet he was told by a police officer to go to the foreigners’ registration office where they would help him (see case DE\_2 above). But instead of giving him help, the officials took his Ecuadorian passport and sent him from one office to another office. When his wallet was returned Luis went back to the foreigners’ registration office with his Spanish identity card in order to retrieve his passport. Finally, he wanted to complain about how he was treated and asked the following question:

*At the police office they told me that you would help me. But until now, nobody helped, neither here or in the other foreigners’ registration office. What I should I have done, if I would not have found my wallet? And they said, ‘... we would have deported you to Ecuador.’ Then I said this is unbelievable! ... This was my worst experience because I was in the situation in which I did not know what to do. [DE\_2]*

Encounters such as these with authorities demonstrate the power differential that is an element of each interaction with the threat of deportation being deployed easily as a means of control. The lack of identity documents is exploited to demonstrate the power of the state. This was not the only encounter where the respondent felt concerned about their interaction with the police. Robin age 25 from Ghana reported that he had a problem with the Irish police Gardaí one time. He was driving in winter having taken his daughter to school and was returning home. He was wearing a hoodie and had the hood up over his head, he had forgotten the hood was over his head. When he got to his house he got out from his car and two police officers approached him on bicycles in plain clothes. One of them showed him his badge, and asked for his ID. When he asked what was wrong they said you were driving with your hood up. The officers looked at his car registration number and told him that they were looking for this car. When he questioned this claim the officers said it was a car with similar registration. The officers took his details, he asked if he was in trouble they said no. Three months later, one of the officers came to his house again, without a uniform. He said he told him to take his insurance to the Garda station. He did not want a confrontation so he went to the Garda station, and showed his insurance. He did not like the way the officer had come in ordinary dress. The respondent felt particularly ‘hassled’ by the series of encounters [IE\_2].



In this event the respondent is negotiating with the officers, carefully countering their claims and asking for further information. The officers are never specific about their suspicions or reasons for stopping the young migrant and the return visit to the home address can be interpreted as intimidation and an exercise of power to un-nerve the young man. Young male migrants are at all times having to reproduce their legitimacy to carry out legal day-to-day activities. In this narrative a young man has the same type of power interplay with the police.

John aged 25 from Malawi reported that he attended a party at his friend's house in Tallaght, a district of Dublin. A group of Irish young men damaged his friend's car that was parked outside the front of the house. They tried to chase the group away from the house and called the Gardaí. What is surprising even Garda officers were making racist remarks towards the respondent and his friends knowing that they are the persons who were attacked, saying: "*go back to your country*" [IE\_16]. Gardaí officers arrested mainly members (8-9) of the respondent's group and only 2-3 Irish young men who attacked them. Another example of a similar encounter when a Luyanda age 20 from South Africa was questioned and asked for his ID, at the time he was sitting in the park with his friend [IE\_14]. He was specifically asked to show his GNIB card (Gardaí National Immigration Bureau) even though there is no requirement to carry it. The perception for this respondent is that in some cases being a migrant can even lead to worse treatment.

On another occasion he was in the park and he was accused with his Irish friends of selling "*weed*". The officers threatened him that he could be called to the station and "*booked*" (cautioned). The officers told the two Irish friends to leave and then began to interrogate the young migrant men more aggressively and threatened them with sanctions saying "*You can go to jail for that*" [IE\_14]. The officers searched them and took their names and asked for ID. He initially said that he had no ID. He commented that the GNIB card is not a form of identification as it is not mandatory to carry it. The officers requested his wallet and it contained his GNIB card, the officers accused him of lying. The respondent suggested to the officers that it is written on the card that it is not an official form of ID they accused him of being disrespectful and "*smart*".

*I was shocked: really, for nothing, they stopped us! But the really shocking thing was that they let the Irish guys go. [IE\_14]*

These encounters with the police demonstrate the gender specific challenges young men experience in relation to those in authority. The interplay of the 'deviant youth' and the

stigma of illegal young migrant men suggests that they are at a higher risk of being investigated for possible criminal activities and being ‘randomly’ stopped and searched by the police. These young men are considered by immigration officers worthy of scrutiny in relation to the legality of their immigration status. The young men often respond to that by keeping low profile in order to avoid the attention of the police and being stigmatised and possibly criminalised. Attempts to keep themselves out of trouble and hence safe in the new country also resonates in some cases the expectations of their parents, which the YMM often try to please.

This interplay demonstrates a sense of suspicion that young migrant men generate among state agencies often for no reason other than their appearance as migrants. These official perceptions, often reinforced through political discourse and media representation, results in young migrant men questioning the approach of state agencies and how much trust they should invest in officials who perceive them as problematic and criminal.

This lack of trust, especially in the police, is more pronounced in second-generation young migrant men in the sample. One way for first generation young men to address the problem is by more cautious behaviour and the avoidance of trouble and interaction with authority. This can be viewed as a protective measure against being criminalized in the new country. However, there is gendered aspect of this in that the young men need to be able to ‘look after themselves’ as men. For many they experience the loss of close family support and social networks, which were supportive and caring, in their home country. The support and caring came from close family relationships, many of which were highly gendered.

In these encounters the young men are continually negotiating their status with the police and it is their right to be in the country that is commonly brought under scrutiny. These power relationship dynamics are indicative of an everyday racism but also the necessity to reproduce personal legitimacy that on many occasions is considered not to exist by the very fact of being a migrant. An example from the UK illustrates this point:

*It was really sad to see how they just treated me with little respect and dignity and that they did not believe what I was saying. And that was the hardest thing, if no one believes you. [UK\_10]*

The power differential is such in this case that the respondent was not believed in relation to his age with the police insisting that he was older than he was claiming, they were wrong.

There are many examples of different forms of negotiations to secure access and ensure liberty.

*I was refused entry to a discotheque in Lübeck. The disco management said 'We don't let foreigners in. If you've got black hair, you aren't coming in'. I said: 'I want to come in', they said: 'no'. I called the police. They said: ,Yes, that's right. You can go somewhere else. [DE\_13]*

This is a double-handed negotiation with the police and the disco management, this respondent repeatedly returned to the disco and after sometime he was admitted. A further theme in the interactions is that the young men are often told to 'go somewhere' else which can be equated with a suggestion that they 'return to where they came from'.

## **Secure and Safe**

*In my home country everybody is afraid of the future. Good life is about not having to worry about one's future....In my home country nobody knows what will happen tomorrow. ...Well-being is not about money, it is about safety and security. [FI\_FG1]*

This respondent neatly sums up the importance of feeling safe and gaining security as being the key ingredients of well-being. There is evidence that for many of the young migrant men interviewed the concept of being able to sleep safely at night was the indicator of a safe environment. For other respondents it is the lack of strife, the lack of a civil war. This sense of safety is usually connected to past experience:

*There are huge differences. Of course, you shouldn't compare, but I have a lot of experience. I come from a country in the grips of a civil war. I have seen death. I have seen hunger, I have seen suffering. I have travelled through four countries without a passport; have been to prison, I know what hunger is. I can say what freedom means. But here, they don't know how good they have it here ... That's the major difference [DE\_18]*

The concept of safety is very clearly defined for some of the respondents. Safety is in many cases presented in physical terms, the lack of threat from something or someone and so for the following respondent there was no reason to feel unsafe:

*We are not fighting a war or anything so it's safe enough. [IE\_34]*

And for a Finnish respondent the idea of safety was defined by the fact that “...you can sleep at night”. [FI\_FG2]. The following respondent makes a distinction between safety and security and links the need to feel both safe and secure to a sense of well-being.

*In my home country everybody is afraid of the future. Good life is about not having to worry about one's future. [...] In my home country nobody knows what will happen tomorrow. [...] Well-being is not about money, it is about safety and security. [FI\_FG1]*

There are still negotiations to be made in order to ensure security. Some of these negotiations are also about being able to maintain status as a young male, as this respondent sets out:

*I think to call the police is not a good idea in our neighbourhood. You would have more problems with the police as if you would manage these things without them. Hence, if someone assaults someone else and then this person gets beaten up therefore, it is not that bad. Afterwards the case is closed. Nothing you can do about it. If someone calls the police instead – I don't want to talk about mobbing, but if someone calls the police – this means – if you live here –: ‘Ah, he called the police, he can't defend himself, he is weak. He is afraid.’ This wouldn't be clever. [DE\_FG3]*

## **Experiences of Racism**

An undercurrent of the experiences reported here is one of racism. However, many of these experiences are constructed not as racist interactions but as negative perceptions. When, as in the case of this respondent, there is a connection between the individual and authority, that is when they are not perceived as being a migrant, they report positive responses from those in authority:

*Hundreds of people walk along me and the Police Officers always pick me. This has not only happened at the airport but it also happened to me in Turkey; I was only passing by and they pick me, although I had nothing to do with that group. (...) At the airport in Turkey, one police officer came to my left and one to my right, they said ‘can you come with us please’. I said ‘why, what's the reason? What do you want from me?’ They said ‘who are you?’ I said ‘excuse me can you tell me what you want?’ They checked my ID and they asked me a few questions and when he looked at my place of birth he found out that we are countrymen and then he became friendly and helped me to get to the right gate. [UK\_7]*

The sense of a shared identity is important, shared roots and heritage. However, once again we can witness that each of these encounters is negotiated at each point of contact. Each

encounter has to be treated as a new interaction where proof of identity, heritage and belonging will have to be negotiated once more. The same respondent provides an insight into this negotiated world:

*I was at the airport on my way back from a trip from Turkey the immigration officer asked me a few questions I did not understand. I asked her to repeat please and she said 'why is your English so poor?' I replied that I have been in the country only for 3 years and that it takes time to learn the language. She then said that she has to check my immigration status. And then I was put in another room and after 20 minutes I was allowed to go. That's my problem actually, whenever I come back from Turkey or from a holiday they stop me and tell me open your suitcase, we need to check your passport, we need to check your immigration, bla bla bla. Of course I am a clean person, they can check whatever they want and at the end of the day they come back and say sorry, it's all right. [UK\_7]*

There were other examples of where respondents considered that there were forms of racial profiling taking place. A respondent from the French interviews notices that in his neighbourhood, people don't like the police without really knowing why. Yet he says that growing up, he understood why. He talks about some police excesses and gives two examples. He remembers being taken into custody when leaving the mosque during Ramadan and being accused of trying to steal a car that was parked on the sidewalk. Another time they underwent a "rough" body search after leaving the bank [FR\_15].

In Ireland respondents in the focus group discussed the attitudes of the Police towards migrants:

*[The Gardai] tend to assume that all members of migrant and minority communities are trouble makers. Gardai were perceived to engage in frequent racial profiling in public spaces and at public events, such as shopping centres, where security guards were also described as being frequently aggressive and rude towards minorities. [IE\_FG2]*

And some respondents see it as embedded forms of behaviour that are a reflection of government policy approaches:

*Italians get angry and the people in control exploit the situation. A lot of people think that foreigners are stupid but it's not like that. If the government had a better system, one in which we could cooperate it would be much better. A system like this will not exist until we stop being prejudiced. [IT\_12b]*

There were some positive comments, where respondents considered that they had been dealt

with fairly and justly and recognition that police officers do, on occasions, have a difficult job to do.

Negotiating these encounters becomes a key concern for young male migrants necessitated by a desire to attain or maintain a permanent status in the host country. Many of the men reported undertaking behaviour that was designed to limit and control interactions with authority figures, which formed part of their negotiations to avoid trouble and stay safe. Strategies of minimizing attention and not giving cause for additional police attention were evident. Young male migrants are at all times having to defend their legitimacy to carry out legal day-to-day activities.

*If we were just quiet and having [a] good time, there wouldn't be so much attention on us [from the police]. [IE\_21]*

*I am trying to stay away from trouble makers. (...) A few times people tried to start a fight with me and once a guy threw a bottle at me, but I still did not do anything. Because I know, if I had a fight with them, I would be in trouble as well. The worst thing, I think, if you have a fight in the UK then you go to court. I have seen it happening to friends, even if you have not started it. [UK\_7].*

*Amirouche age 24 from Algeria is conscious about his appearance and believes that in dealing with authorities being well dressed and polite has an enormous influence on the way migrant men are being perceived by officers and public servants: 'I think the way you're dressed must play a role, because I have quite a distinctive appearance and it depends where you're hanging out and how you're dressed and how distinctive you are, and I've got friends who've experienced that.' [FR\_8]*

## **Conclusion**

This transnational analysis indicates that for many young migrant men one of the main issues is the need to continually re-negotiate their status within the 'host' society. For many of the respondents encounters were always considered to be problematic, a potential source of insecurity, conflict and violence. For them it was important to negotiate their way out of these potentially negative transactions with harmful consequences in terms of their own physical safety or in terms of their status. This fragility of permanency that results in a sense of insecurity has a significant impact on a sense of well-being. It is difficult to have positive feelings of well-being if every fresh encounter with the host society is one that is potentially troublesome. This can only create levels of insecurity and a heightened sense of vulnerability and risk.

## **Chapter VIII: Experiencing Racism and Discrimination: Young Immigrants and Second Generations Facing Prejudices, Unfairness and Exclusionary Behaviours in Europe**

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*'You have always to be ready to face discrimination'* [Muhamed, 20, FI\_5]

Although most of European countries are now experiencing a high level of ethnic diversity stemming from more than fifty years of immigration in Western Europe and the existence of old national minorities in Central and Eastern Europe, the incorporation of migrants and their descendants, and more generally of ethnic minorities, is still facing major challenges. Low educational attainments, high unemployment, residential segregation in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are curtailing prospects of social mobility of immigrants and second generations (Alba and Foner, 2015; Heath and Cheung, 2007). The main explanations for the subordinate position of ethnic minorities as expressed in political speeches and by the media highlight their lack of resources and capitals –social, cultural, and political. More rarely, the issue of unfair treatment and discrimination is pointed out as the source of these disadvantages. The failure of integration –or assimilation as it should be more properly called– can indeed be attributed in part to the enduring prejudices and discriminations against ethnic minorities.

Indeed, ethnic, racial and religious discriminations are widespread phenomena in contemporary Europe (Zick et al., 2008). Migrants, second and third generations of immigrants or long established ethnic minorities in multi-ethnic states are experiencing unfair treatment in different areas of social life, and this is especially true for the young men with a minority background who often tend to embody the “dangerous other”. Because discrimination and acts of racism are legally prohibited in EU countries (like in a large number of countries around the world) and arouse generally social disapproval when they are expressed overtly, they tend to be more subtle and more difficult to identify. For this reason, accounts of discrimination prove hard to report when awareness of ethnically biased selections is lacking. The young migrants and second generation we have interviewed in this

project provide a nuanced picture of their experiences of discrimination and racism in different areas of social life. If they often identify some negative encounters in public spaces where their ethnic background exposes them to racial slurs or merely mild cultural othering, they are often less conscious of unfair treatment encountered in the labour or housing markets. In some cases, the references to blunt racism are submerging the interviews; in others, the situations of discrimination have to be debunked in their narratives.

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate how youth ethnic minorities are portraying their experiences of discrimination, how they cope with them and the consequences they have, if ever, on their life and identity. It begins by giving an overview of what we know about discrimination in Europe, then browses the different instances of discrimination in the narratives of our interviewees.

### **Discrimination in Europe: A Short Overview**

The growing concern about discrimination in European countries stems not only from the national conversations about these processes, but also from the impetus given by the European Commission in 2000 with the enactment of two European directives on equality<sup>7</sup>. As it names underscore it, the “Race Equality Directive” is targeting ethnic and racial discrimination and thus introduces awareness about racism that may have been lacking in a large number of European countries.

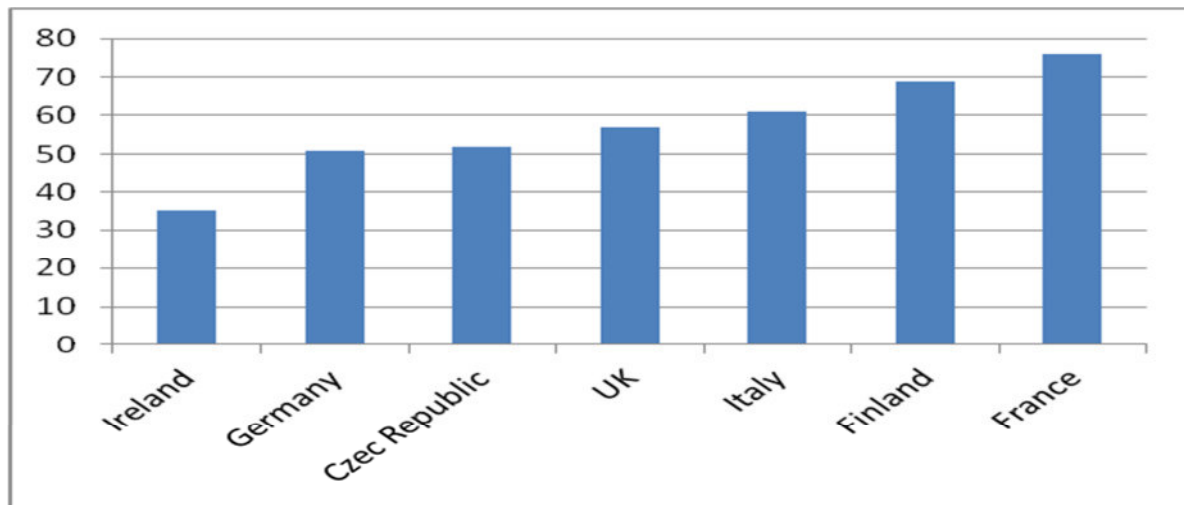
The last Eurobarometer on discrimination published in 2012 shows that awareness of discrimination is higher in Finland and France than in Ireland or Germany, with very significant gaps (Figure 3). Even though these rates are collected for the general population, one might expect that the ethnic minorities will declare more group discrimination than the mainstream population, and similar gaps can be anticipated across countries. Indeed, the way discrimination is framed in the national debate influences the sensitivity to it and offers the conceptual toolkit to think about one’s experience.

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<sup>7</sup> Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.



**Figure 3: Proportion of respondents who believe that ethnic discrimination is widespread in the country**

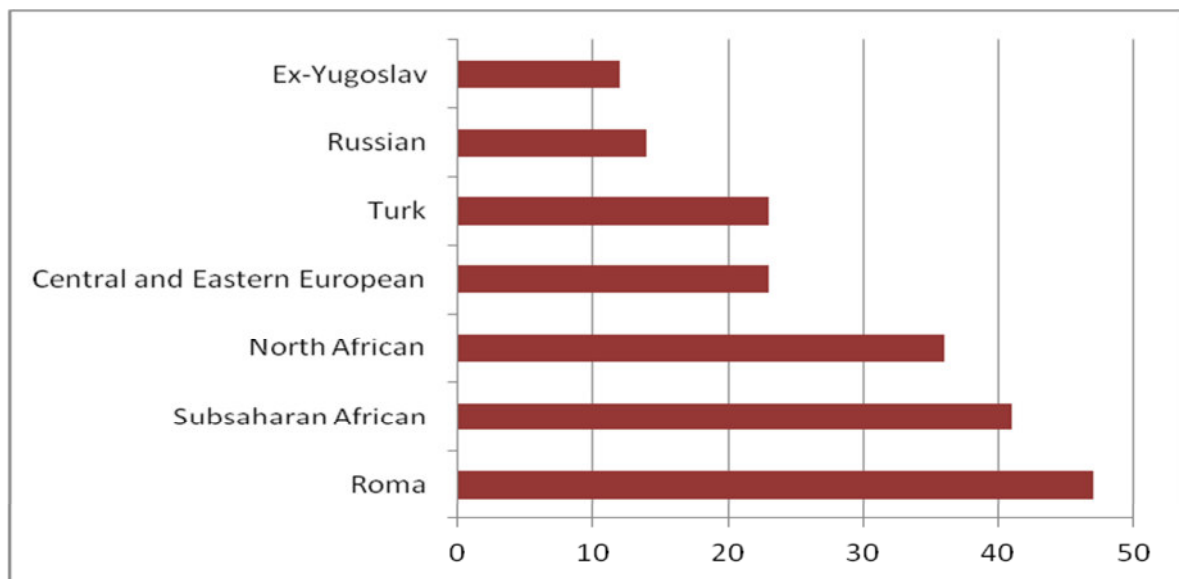


Source: Eurobarometer 393, 2012

We might anticipate that the awareness and sensibility to the existence of discrimination is somehow correlated to the magnitude of it, but this relation is by no way straight forward. Indeed, reported discrimination might be higher in countries where active antidiscrimination policies are raising awareness, and lower in countries where discrimination remains ignored by the policy makers and the public opinion. As a consequence, the measurement of discrimination can be affected by other parameters than the reality of it (Blank et al., 2004). As imperfect as they can be, assessments of discrimination based on self-report provide a good idea of the magnitude of the experience and can be used for analyses (see Krieger and al., 2010, for an account of this in Health research; Safi and Simon, 2014). The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) of the EU commission has undertaken a comparative survey of discrimination in the EU 27 countries in 2008 –the EU-Midis survey<sup>8</sup>– which provides detailed information of the level of discrimination reported by selected minority groups in the countries participating to the MiMen project.

<sup>8</sup> <http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2011/eu-midis-european-union-minorities-and-discrimination-survey>

**Figure 4: Experiences of discrimination by minority groups in the EU 27**



Source: FRA, EU-Midis Survey, 2009.

Figure 4 shows the prevalence of discrimination in the last 12 months before the survey in at least one out of nine areas, such as access to employment, at the workplace, in housing, at school, in health, access to public or private services among the 7 minority groups surveyed in the EU 27. Roma, Sub-Saharan Africans and North Africans report the higher level of discrimination, while Central and Eastern Europeans and Turks declare a less severe experience and Russians and Ex-Yugoslavs have a low exposure. However these findings are country-sensitive and the question is whether the same minority will experience more discrimination in one country compare to another (Table 4). Among the North Africans surveyed in the EU-midis, 52% of those living in Italy consider that they have been discriminated against, for 25% of the North Africans in France. A similar gap can be observed for Sub-Saharan Africans in Ireland (54%) and in France (26%). In the same country, different groups may face quite contrasted level of discrimination, as in Finland where Russians declare almost half of the experiences of the Somalis. Sub-Saharan Africans in Ireland are as well twice more exposed than Central and Eastern European.

These findings should serve as a background to a deeper look at the narratives of these experiences of discrimination, as reported by the young migrants and second generations that we have interviewed throughout the project.

**Table 4: Self-reported discrimination in the last 12 months by minority group and country**

Country	Minority	% of Discrimination
Italy	North African	52
	Albanian	37
	Romanian	29
Germany	Turk	30
	Ex-Yugoslav	21
Finland	Somali	47
	Russian	27
France	Sub-Saharan African	26
	North African	25
Ireland	Sub-Saharan African	54
	Central and Eastern European	26
Czech Republic	Roma	64
UK	Central and Eastern European	11

Source: FRA, EU-Midis Survey, 2009.

### **From a Sense of Otherness and Exclusion to Accounts of Experiences of Explicit (and Violent) Racism**

Discrimination takes different forms and expressions, from the subtle and invisible selection in hiring or housing to the direct and violent insult in social interactions. The development of formal equality in democracies and the proscription of racist public speeches or behaviours, called hate speeches or racial harassment, have paved the way to more hidden and understated forms of racism and discrimination. Such context explains why one of the most widespread experiences of young migrants and second generation is the reference to their otherness or “foreignness”. Such othering can take various forms and entails also different consequences for the identity and self-esteem of our interviewees. For example, questions about the place of origin –the “where do you come from?” syndrome– might occur too frequently to be perceived mainly as signs of benign curiosity. The repetitions of these concrete expressions of othering create a sense of distinctiveness for young migrants and manifest somehow the lack of acceptance of cultural diversity from the majority group in the European societies. Othering might also be a coded version of racism and foster hostility and create a sense of exclusion which builds boundaries in social life. Cultural dissonance increases the likelihood to feel excluded from certain areas of social life. For example the fact

that most Muslims do not drink alcohol excludes them from typical youth ritual in parties or even at work with colleagues.

Being seen as different is perceived as inherently impossible to avoid by most of the respondents who have an accent or linguistic limitations, or phenotype or skin colour which single them out, but those who consider themselves to be assimilated suffer from the ascribed identity that they receive. They feel that this cultural ascription is an expression of the prejudices of the majority population and a lack of openness of the national identity. Looking different condemns you to be tolerated, but not to be accepted as “one of us” (Foner and Simon, 2015). Muhammed, 20 years of age living in Finland, says:

*You notice, even if you are on their side (Finnish people), you are an outsider. You are always reminded that you can never get rid of it [a status as a foreigner]. Because of that it [life] is a bit difficult. (...) For instance, there are people who have been born there or lived here for 20 years and they are still foreigners. (...) People don't accept that we are Finnish.*  
[FI\_5]

Beyond public spaces, experience of being bullied at school, because of linguistic issues, cultural dissonance or basic racism, is frequent. The realm of children and teenagers is even crueller than the one of adults, and instances of more or less racist jokes and profiling pop up in the narratives. But even though most of the respondents tend to consider that such behaviours are frequent among kids, they did not really care about these. However, it seems that there is a thin line between being exposed to cultural or racial stereotypes in a benign way, as a reflection of the perception of ethnic diversity in schools among pupils, and being singled out as different and facing racist slurs. Our interviewees show some hesitation on the interpretation to give to the “jokes” and patronizing comments that they receive as “foreigners”, but they built their social identity in this context. For example, Goetken, an Afghan young migrant in Germany, did not appreciate that he was called “a Taliban” by his classmates. As Dardan, an Albanian from Kosovo living in the Czech Republic puts it:

*There were some hints to the fact that I am a foreigner. And that the children haven't accepted me. And that I cannot speak Czech, etc. And of course there were also some reprimands from class teacher and some problems.* [CZ\_9]

Sometimes, the feeling of foreignness is accentuated when the respondent can compare between two situations of migration, as did Rohan, a young Kurdish man who has been interviewed in the UK and spent part of his childhood in Germany:

*In Germany you get funny looks because they see you as a foreigner but here you don't get this type of looks. In Germany although I was little I still experienced lots of racism, for example in my school I was once called "Kanake" [is a derogatory word used mostly for Turks] and when I reported it to the teacher she did not do anything about it, but here they take it more seriously. [UK\_1].*

Even if ethnicization is a common frame for our interviewees in their childhood and later on, they tend to react differently to these processes depending on their immigration status. When they have migrated recently, they consider the references to their cultural dissonance as a simple reflection of their foreignness, which they acknowledge to have. When they migrated at an early age, or are born in the country, the repeated expressions of othering are perceived negatively as threatening their belonging to their society and they are more reactive against this unwelcomed labelling.

In the context of the "subtle" and "covert" racism predominant in Northern and Western Europe, it was expected that the direct and explicit forms of racism and discrimination would be relatively exceptional. It is not what a large number of interviewees report. Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africans in France, Finland, Italy or Ireland tell stories of racial slurs, being called the "N word", as one of the interviewee from Nigeria living in Ireland told. Being told "Go back to your country you Nigga" is a common experience reported in Ireland and also in Finland. Overt racist slurs seem to be less frequent in large cities and in some countries, like France where public expression of racism is more under control. Minimizing the experience of racism, Josph, a 26 years old migrant from Angola living in Czech Republic answered to a question about racist remarks:

*Just some boys talked sometimes bullshit, such as: Nigger what are you doing here, return back to Africa. It was enough for them that I was nigger for them. I am ready for that, nobody makes me to be here and if I want to be here I must swallow something. [CZ\_5]*

Another Angolan young man, 24 years of age and living in Finland, claims to encounter explicit racism in public spaces and other situation of everyday life. Again, he is insisting on the need not to bother too much about these experiences:

*"In the streets and during work you are called nigger or something like that. You cannot take it seriously. You just get frustrated if you do." [FI\_04].*

Asians also encounter sometimes this kind of harassment, even if they mostly benefit from positive stereotypes. A second generation Chinese in Paris recalls that once he was in a bar and a woman shouted at him: “*You the Chinese, you’re everywhere, you’re invading us*“. Similar experiences of being perceived as different even when being born and having the citizenship of the country have been told by Chinese or Vietnamese in Czech Republic. Turks in Germany report similar experiences and they describe situations of social isolation because of ethno-cultural segregation in social interaction. This narrative from Zalin, who is a Turkish second generation youth from Germany illustrates this type of segregation in a football club:

*I feel welcome there at Intertürkspor. I mean we have Polands, we have Russians, and we have Germans in the team, no problem. Most of all we have Turks, you feel welcome here. I have played in many other clubs before Intertürk. I played at Eidertal Molfsee and I felt uncomfortable. We were two foreigners in the team. Immediately I realised that we were isolated. Every workout I’ve only spoken with him. I think it has something to do with the fact that I’m Muslim and I’m not celebrating parties and so on. On weekends the Germans always go out and I have never celebrated parties with them. They had their experiences from clubbing and at the training they have just discussed their experiences: Yes, it was cool, because in the club it was cool and so on. I wanted to stay away from this (parties) and then I talked to my Turkish brother there. I never felt good in the team. [DE\_7]*

The sense of social isolation has been reported in a focus group in Finland too, where “the interviewees mentioned the reserved nature of Finnish people. They claimed that Finnish people are difficult to socialize with (*‘Finnish people do not talk with us’*) and complained that their social networks are too small which means that they have to just ‘sit home alone’.” (FI\_FG).

More serious than insults or verbal abuses in the street and public spaces, cases of harassment by neighbours have also been reported by some of the respondents. Ali, a Somali migrant to Finland tells that he and his mother had to move from their neighbourhood because of this kind of harassment:

*[A woman] called the police and told them that we are noisy. And when the police come they see that we are just a normal family [...]. Eventually, my mom said that she doesn’t want to live there anymore. [FI\_1]*

In Ireland, Michael’s parents faced racist attacks, like broken windows at home and robbed car. However, these cases are not the most common feature in countries where a control of public speeches and behaviours has gradually reduced overt racism. Islamophobia is more

commonly voiced without clear sanctions and our Muslim respondents testify of the atmosphere of open hostility against Islam. Last but not least, the rise of populist parties with explicit anti-immigrant discourses, like the National Front in France or the true Finn party in Finland, is mentioned by the respondents as contributing to the expression of racism.

### **Contexts Matter: Living in Small Cities vs Cosmopolitan Cities**

The urban context where our respondents grew up shapes their sense of difference and their experience of othering. Large cosmopolitan cities offer more opportunities to be accepted and somehow invisible than small cities where few other minority young men are living. Diverse neighbourhoods provide a friendlier environment where minority young male feel safer. The multicultural dimension of most of European big cities has completely changed the experience of minorities who happen to be, in a lot of cities, majorities. The concept of “super-diversity” popularized by Steven Vertovec (2007) challenges the usual exoticism conveyed by minority groups when they tend to be the norm in the neighbourhood where they live. In this kind of context, minority youth *pass* as the natives of the place and thus are not challenged in their legitimacy to live here, or their identity. The warmth of the immigrant neighbourhood and its role as a transition to access to the wider society has been theorized by urban sociologists since the early Chicago school (circa the 1920s). So it will be no surprise to find that our respondents contrast sharply their experience in small cities to the one in big cosmopolitan metropolises. This is what Idir, a young migrant from Somali living in Germany, is accounting for:

*When I came to Eutin, there were probably only two of us blacks in the entire town (...). There are still times, at school, in class, other places, or when I go into a building, when people stare at me because I look different. And when you look different, then you don't feel, I don't want to exaggerate, you don't feel at home, when people are always looking at you (...). I wouldn't stand out in Hamburg, because it's a big city. [DE\_18]*

The same conclusions are drawn by Orlando, a Peruvian migrant to Italy:

*Tivoli is not like Rome where you see everything. You can see the difference between Tivoli and Rome very clearly, it seems to be 30 years back in time. [IT\_8]*

However, big cities are not always the most protective places against discrimination and racism. They are also highly divided and ethnic minorities tend to be segregated in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with less institutional resources, lower quality schools, poor housing and few jobs. According to the literature, living in these neighbourhoods with a high concentration of immigrants produces opposite outcomes on integration prospects. Some respondents would regret the lack of social or ethnic diversity in such neighbourhoods when meeting members of the mainstream society helps to understand the national culture, to learn the language and to build networks. More than this lack of opportunities to mix into the mainstream society, immigrant neighbourhoods are perceived as a disadvantage in themselves because of the reputation they convey. Djamel, a 19 years old Algerian immigrant to France consider that his ethnicity is not the reason why he is discriminated against, but the place where he lives:

*Being disadvantaged compared to other origins? No, but compared to people who come from other locations, yes. When you come from a neighbourhood with a bad reputation, well, you are more prone to these abuses. (...) Actually, we all want to leave, because for us it would mean climbing the social ladder. And that's why we all want to leave. I'm not saying that our neighbourhood is Baltimore and it's not a ghetto, for sure. I'm not saying that we are living in a slum: we are lucky to be here. But this is not a place where I could spend all my life, especially with everything that my parents lived for us to be in a good standing. I don't want to disappoint my parents. I don't want to go through the same story. That's why we really want to leave to go to a quiet place, in a quiet city in a better setting. That would be best for our children, if we have, and it would be better for us. Because spending one's youth in a city like Vitry, that's fine, but it is tiring in the long run. [FR\_15]*

### **Internalizing Unequal Statuses and Downplaying Discrimination**

Compared to second generations who have higher expectations of being treated fairly in their society and report more experiences of discrimination, young migrants tend to anticipate different treatments or subordinate positions and consider these to be somehow justified by their own limitations. A large number of migrants felt that they should not be critical against the receiving country. Even though they might perceive or experience negative contacts with majority population, they tend to consider that these inequalities and stereotyping are part of the immigrant experience. They balance the potentially negative experiences with the improvement of their situation by comparison with the country they come from, especially



for refugees, and they refrain from criticizing their destination country. This kind of framing is reinforced by the psychological need to protect oneself against the defilement of the self, as Fleming, Lamont and Wilburn mentioned for the African-Americans (2012). Being asked if he had encountered racist remarks, Joseph, an Angolan migrant to Czech Republic replied:

*Luckily not! Just some boys talked sometimes bullshit such as: Nigger what are you doing here, return back to Africa. It was enough for them that I was nigger for them. I am ready for that, nobody makes me to be here and if I want to be here I must swallow something. This is a free country so let us people say whatever they want. It is their opinion; important is that they do not touch me. (...) I do understand it not as racism but as a lack of information, because these people know, excuse my expressions, a total shit about it that is why I do not care, not at all. [CZ\_5]*

Emmanuel, a 26 years old migrant from Ghana to London, points out that racist slurs are the problem of those who throw them, rather than him who is the target:

*But I only remember once when I was running to catch my bus, a white man was saying 'nigger run, nigger run', but I ignored it. That is his problem, if he wants to call me a nigger that is his problem, I don't have any problems with that. I know its racism, but I did not see it as anything, I just ignored it. [UK\_09]*

Ignoring or downplaying the instances of discrimination and racism is a very common strategy of protection and resilience. To think positive is a mantra that allows going on, even when concrete clues of discrimination are perceived and cannot be avoided. Talking about discrimination is not straightforward for most of the respondents who tend to deny that they experienced discriminations when asked directly, and then might tell stories of unequal treatment later without labelling these as discrimination. In most cases, the revelation of discrimination comes from an explicit situation attached to verbal abuse. When unfair treatments occur without specific negative comments, they remain invisible to the victims who then would need to compare their trajectories to the one followed by members of the majority population to be able to sort out what comes from the lack of chance and what can be defined as discrimination. Camara, a second generation Senegalese living in France and working as a skilled technician knows that he might have been discriminated against although he can't describe a concrete situation. While accounting for the elusiveness of discrimination, he claims at the same time that he refuses to think about it:

*For example, in my service, I am the only 'chocolate', so to speak. So, is it the reason why I was hired to meet a certain quota? I don't know; but I*

*don't think so. However, yes, it surely must have happened in my life to be disadvantaged because of my origin. (...) But these are things I do not even pay attention to. True, it's more fun than anything else. These things do not affect me at all. [...] I can't even tell an anecdote, because it does not come to my mind right now. It must have happened because of my colour. This has inevitably happened. At school to begin with, but that was the mind-set of the kids. We joked and poked much about our origins, so either a Chinese or an Arab or an African, we made fun of the others, we did not bother. (...) So now, it does not affect me. [FR\_13]*

Wilfried, a Beninese second generation man aged 19 living in France refrains also from thinking about discrimination. He goes on to say:

*Actually I should not think like that, I should not believe that it's just because I'm a foreigner that... I don't think so. I want to think positive, or else... without knowing the opinion of the others. I don't think it's harder for me to find an apartment because I'm a foreigner. May be the others care about this, but I don't. [FR\_07]*

His accentuation of its will shows how the denial functions as an act of resistance: "I should not think like that". Is Wilfried trying to protect himself from his fear of being discriminated –and thus discredited– or is he anticipating the scepticism of his interlocutors? As it has been observed in the case of gender discrimination (Crosby, 1984), the denial of discrimination is bounded to different motivations, like cognitive biases, avoidance of victimization and a general doubt about the fact that discrimination may have occurred in a specific situation (even though it is believed that it can occur more generally). This applies clearly in a large number of the interviews where questions about discrimination received dismissive answers.

One specific type of rationalization of discrimination is when racism and stigmatization are justified by the behaviour of some of the members of the group. In these cases, minority members acknowledge the negative stereotypes about their group, but distance themselves from the negative examples. Here the assumption is that racism and prejudices stem from a generalization to the whole ethnic group of the behaviours of the least integrated who then tend to represent the whole community. Accounting for the existence of these behaviours allows the respondents to justify some kind of prejudices and to reinforce their personal proximity with the majority population by endorsing the same kind of prejudices. Zalin, a 20-year-old second generation Turk living in Germany says:

*Many Turks do so much damage here, you can say many are anti-social and behave as if they are gangsters. Of course you realize that. If you see*

*that, than you have to count with prejudices. But no one until now has told me: You are a Turk, you are a bad person. [DE\_7].*

The same observations can be made by Ukrainians in the Czech Republic or young Arabs in France. The idea that because of the unequal position conferred by the immigrant or second generation status, one should over-perform the compliance with social norms and the local culture is shared by many respondents. It requires a specific effort to remain invisible and overcome the obstacles. As Anthony, a second generation mixed Beninese and French Caribbean youth living in France stated, “*I always thought I had to perform better than the others*”. He goes on to explain how this requirement was imposed on him:

*I always knew it. My parents taught me about Nelson Mandela, segregation, apartheid in South Africa, Martin Luther King’ speech "I have a dream". And I told myself: Martin Luther King who fought against segregation, he wanted everyone to be equal, and in view of how it was before, even though we do not say it openly, I said to myself that there were always people who thought like before, who have been educated by their parents to think like that ... And I said, "Well, I must prove myself." Frankly, it hurts me to see young people doing damage, or violent things because I think “you are from diverse backgrounds and here you confirm what some people who have prejudices think. Instead of showing the opposite, of showing that you’re not freaks, that you are civilized, "normal people" instead of being violent”. And that is really what I really wanted to distinguish myself from the idea, that you are black, and so you’re acting badly. [FR\_2]*

## **Islam as a Stigmatized Identity**

All young migrants are not equally exposed to discrimination: Ukrainians in Czech Republic are less at risk than Vietnamese, and Somalis in Finland tell more stories of racism than Russians. That discrimination follows lines of colour and ethnicity is not a surprise. In addition to these boundaries among young migrants, religion plays also a very significant role that was not as prevalent in the 1970s as it is today. The hostility against Islam has reached new peaks in most European countries in the last decade, transforming Muslims in undesirable citizens (Bowen et al., 2014). The young migrants with a Muslim background mention all how this climate creates a pressure on them. They have to define themselves in relation to stereotypes about Muslims that circulate in their host societies. Burak, a second generation Turk living in Germany, report that even if Islam seems to be accepted in

Germany, the anti-Muslim mobilizations fostered by Pegida contribute to disseminate negative stereotypes against Muslims:

*There are these statements of politicians: The Islam is part of Germany. But they don't do more. Then they say ok, here are so many Muslims and they are also a part of the German society, but they don't do more. I mean we have seen the excesses of the ISIS. Now the Nazis are on the streets because the media incite the people against these Salafists. Radicals without any idea or knowledge. I think that's just a pity that one, two million Muslims are stereotyped. [DE\_10]*

In France, our respondents who were defining themselves as Muslims made references to the aftermath of the Charlie events (terror attacks on January 2015) and pointed out that they had a hard time in this context. More generally the geopolitical context in the Middle-East is perceived as fostering generalizations and negative stereotypes that affect Muslims in different European countries.

Being racially profiled by the police or in other circumstances is a common experience in France more than in other countries. The narratives portrayed tense interactions with police forces, where derogatory behaviours create a sense of insecurity for minority youth males. As Djamel (migrant from Algeria, 19, France) puts it bluntly:

*To be honest, when you grow up in this neighbourhood, you're reluctant towards the police. You don't feel easy with them. You don't like them, and you don't even know why. When you get older you understand why you don't like them. When you see how they behave, how they drift.*

He goes on by recounting one of these violent encounters with the police:

*Once during the Ramadan –I was 15 years old– we've been stopped within 100 meters of the mosque. We walked along a car with its door open and we've been stopped because we've been accused to try to steal the car. It was not true but we've been brutally halted and frisked. And this was only because they need action. [FR\_15]*

## **Conclusion**

Beyond the experience of racism and discrimination, young migrants and second generation youth tend to favour their positive interactions with the majority population. They are confident that in a near future they will be accepted, although they also wonder if it will only

be toleration and forbearance, instead of acceptance. When they still have to master the language and the different codes in their society, they hope that they will become “invisible” through acquisition of the mainstream cultural traits. Those who came as young children or are born in the country are more critical about their assimilation: they sometimes feel as second-class citizens, facing othering when they thought they were natives like the others. The experience of dissonance in identities between their self-identification and the way they are perceived can be heard in their narratives of discriminations. In a nutshell, blatant racism has receded in most of European countries, but islamophobia expresses itself more than ever and subtle forms of discrimination and differentiation delineate minority youth from the mainstream population. How our multicultural societies incorporate cultural, racial and religious diversity is one of their main challenges. Youth minority males are at this uncomfortable position to experiment the still unstable arrangements of societies which have not found yet their cohesiveness in diversity.

## Chapter IX: Is it Really Worth it? Migration Outcomes According to the Young Migrant Men

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*What I will take away from this experience is the opportunity I've been given: to work and change my life around (...) When I go back this will always be my second home. This country will always bring back good memories to me. It may not have been what I was expecting but I have not suffered here and I won't say: it was a mistake". [IT\_11B]*

### Introduction

*Life-satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as-a-whole, meaning how much the person likes the life he/she leads (Veenhoven 1995).*

The well-being of Young Migrant Men (YMM) is multi-faceted and multi-dimensional and it results from a combination of objective and subjective factors. As a growing number of studies suggest, the gains from migration should not be strictly evaluated from the utilitarian approach, but subjective well-being indicators should be taken into consideration. The purpose of this trans-national analysis is to test how life satisfaction during the migration experience determines the preference to stay, return or out-migrate by controlling not only for economic but also for social and subjective well-being determinants. The expectations of the migrant and the migrant's family in respect to the migration experience play a key role in determining to what extent the YMM's achievements are truly experienced as such. Whether the outcomes of migration are perceived by the YMM as "success" or "failure" is crucial to the YMM's well-being and can determine the quality of their present life as well as their future plans. The emotional distance between initial expectations and perceived achievements tells of the YMM satisfaction of their own life - and of the migration outcomes too – and is hence strictly related to the YMM happiness.

The narratives of the YMM reveal that the majority of the young men share the ambition to be part of the host country. Such ambition is "translated" into practice day by day and it also conveys the YMM's need for freedom – mostly through a job, either to guarantee an economic income to build up a family; or to provide financial help to their family in the

country of origin. Thus the core questions for these YMM are: Is migration really worth it? Do my achievements reflect my expectations? Can my projects or dreams be better realized through migration?

The distance between what we expect from life and what added life really is can be large or small; everything depends on our expectations. Well-being is essentially connected to how we evaluate our current life compared with our (subjective) “ideal” life. Life satisfaction is an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one’s life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive. It is one of three major indicators of well-being: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect (Diener, 1984). Although satisfaction with current life circumstances is often assessed in research studies, we can also include the following under life satisfaction: desire to change one’s life; satisfaction with past; satisfaction with future; and significant other’s views of one’s life." (Beutell, 2006). So one is satisfied when there is little or no discrepancy between the present and what is thought to be an ideal or desired situation. On the other hand, dissatisfaction is a result of a substantial discrepancy between present conditions and the ideal standard. Dissatisfaction can also be a result of comparing oneself with others.

In the case of the YMM interviewed, we have analysed their perceptions about their educational/professional achievements; their neighbourhood, friendship and family ties; their leisure time; their happiness; and their outlook of the future. When we asked them about their dreams and expectations, the major responses were: earn money; study and advance professionally in the host country; study and advance professionally so as to return to the home country; support the development of home-country; become famous; or simply, create a family, regardless where.

### **Transition to Adulthood: Positive and Negative Outlook**

The young men interviewed have migrated either as young children or at an older age. For most of the YMM who migrated as teenagers the migration experience comes to coincide with the transition to adulthood and such transition is perceived by them as an achievement in itself – entailing a growth in autonomy, self-confidence and “strength”. Some YMM link their new status as young migrant adults to an optimistic outlook on their current life and are

aware they can rely on their own coping skills to overcome hardships. Friends, language, education, work, money and safety are among the main achievements they report.

*To be able to do things by myself. That I would not be dependent on anyone. [FI\_12b]*

*It just gives me a good feeling (...) I learn how to deal with the problems myself. And that's what you need in life. [DE\_12]*

*Here I have been able to be free. I have lived an independent life. This is what matters, I think. I have my own responsibilities and all that kind of things (...) People have to find out their strengths and decide what to do. [FI\_15]*

These young men view themselves as strong individuals that are not discouraged by hardships and are aware that this helps them to achieve what they pursue. They regard their present life with optimism and some openly speak of happiness:

*I try to do the best in anything I do, that helps me. Things I have accomplished, just helps me to look forward. [UK\_8]*

*I am not someone who stands around and waits for things to happen, I take my life into my own hands. [IT\_8b]*

*I am a strong person (...) If something bad happens to me I try to learn from it as much as I can and improve my situation, when something good happens I try to reflect, how did I achieve this. [UK\_9]*

For many YMM and particularly in the case of 1st generations, the transition to adulthood is further supported and driven by a strong desire to achieve a lifestyle which they view as very distant from the one they were used to in their home country:

*While living in Finland, I have seen how people of my age live. I have dreamed that I want to have that kind of life as well. I have promised to myself that I will do everything I can to achieve that level. I don't have to surpass it but I will do my best to reach him (...) If you see a person that you think have a good life. You will want that too. Motivation is... (laughs)... It is quite a difficult question. [FI\_8]*

However the correlation migration/adulthood can also be experienced as a source of frustration, as it entails the burden of having to make decisions, a decrease in family's support, an overall change in social relations, loneliness or even isolation: these are the negative elements. Once in the destination country, YMM have to negotiate their own ideas and projects with the "offer" of the host country, often in a context of high uncertainty and



unpredictability. This frequently leads to a state of insecurity mixed with frustration, particularly when there is a failure to adapt to the context of the host country:

*I wonder what I'm doing here, why I'm doing it, that I could be at home together with all. Why did I come here? That should I return, it would be five unnecessarily lost years for me. When I'm already here, I must see that and do something. [CZ\_14a]*

*Now I must simply think more. I am responsible for all by myself. I must do everything myself. I am an adult already and nobody will do anything for me. [CZ\_14b]*

*You can understand how life is. Loneliness (...) I always like to be with people and with friends. I don't want to be lonely. [FI\_12a]*

All people, migrant or not, in the course of their life transform their identity without even realizing it. When a crucial event such as migration occurs, the changes are more evident. Often, such changes allow the emergence of a wiser personality. On the other hand, the identity remains only one, certainly more rich, but able to manage two cultures. This is where the ordeal starts: the migrant just arrived, not having reference points in the host society, and he perceives with greater sensitivity any rejection or misunderstanding. Over half of them begin a process of adaptation to the new culture, while at the meantime their identity is being modified.

*Life here is so stressful compared to living in Africa. I lived all my life in a more relaxed place; here things are done in more fast paste. Because back home I wake up then I plan my day. But here, before I go to bed, I need to plan my day. And here time is very important, I see living here as very stressful. Everybody is so busy to get money to pay the bills. It does not leave much time. Although people do work in Africa their mind is not work, work, work, because it's easier to afford a house and living costs are low, but here you have to work in order to survive. So life here is a bit stressful. [UK\_9]*

The notion of transcendence is related to dedication and commitment to something or somebody else but oneself. It is also strongly related to finding meaning in one's life and acting in accordance with this meaning. However, this meaning is necessarily related to transcending the personal (without losing oneself) for the sake of something larger than oneself (it can be children, meaningful work, the wider community, or a spiritual pathway). Transcendence thus leads to some external utility of one's life, through objective life results or virtuous living. In these cases the role of the family of origin can be key factor and this holds true both for 1<sup>st</sup> and for 2<sup>nd</sup> generation YMM.

*I have learned a lot, consider myself as a man. I can foresee a lot of things, I can make plans, long-term planning is one of the main things I have learned. I wanted to see the world, make friends, I have to achieved this, I'm happy. What has helped me is the way my parents raised me, the way they did helped me. [UK\_2]*

## **Family Expectations**

Family expectations can play a major role in qualifying the migration outcomes of the YMM as well as their overall satisfaction. This holds particularly true for those YMM who have migrated as young adults and for whom migration is more likely to have been experienced as part of a family strategy. In these cases, and especially if the YMM is the eldest child or an only child, family expectations may be high on the young man as he is expected to sustain his family economically.

Even in the case the family does not put any explicit pressure on the young man, the YMM may feel in debt to them. He may want to fulfil his family's ambitions as a way to express gratefulness for offering him a better life:

*Yes I think I'm mature enough. I think that my dad and mum took me here and... They have made this sacrifice to come here, and it was for us... And I would like to repay them as I can... Mum had a good job there, and dad had a good job as well... And coming here, and starting all over again... it's hard. I understand. And I want to thank them like that. [IT\_8]*

Many YMM achieve a medium to high level of education both at University and/or in professional schools, and this is perceived as a response to their parents' expectations as well. It is often the family that motivates them to study in order to get better and more profitable jobs. The YMM who have the opportunity to study after high school and are economically supported by their families (mostly 2G) report they feel the duty to return money to their families once they complete their studies. They are aware of being lucky to have the opportunity to study and that this has been allowed by their parents.

*My dad told me that if I want come back, I can help him in his own business [...] I have not done anything wrong here, I'm very proud of what I have already done. [UK\_2]*

*Then mum told me that I must earn this much money. I found a regular job and earned quite nice money. [CZ\_FG3]*

*I see it as a privilege to support my parents or my brothers and sisters. They had such a hard time to bring me up and support my education, so I don't see it as a burden but a privilege to give them something back.*  
[UK\_9]

These YMM are also aware that education increases the possibility of negotiating their dreams with reality; retain their own identity; gain stability from the economic perspective; and build a family. These seem to be the main objectives for YMM, as for the majority of European young male adults, but what characterises most YMM is that they feel they have some forms of duty towards their families even though they are not explicitly asked for anything:

*You feel a moral obligation to pay your family back and support them financially; this becomes a pressure if you don't earn that much yourself. If you earn good money and have some left to share it with them then you don't feel bad about it. But my dad works there and has pension so he gets on without my financial support. They are not dependent on my support and they do not expect me to support them, it is just my own internal moral obligation to give them something back.* [UK\_11]

It seems appropriate to observe that complex negotiations take place within families, in which the various parties are trying to shape the family structures in the most favourable sense to their goals and interests. The same reference to traditional values responds to forms of reinvention of tradition, where the past is reconceptualised to make sense of current experience and respond to contemporary dilemmas and problems.

## **Comparing with Friends**

When evaluating their achievements, many young men do so by comparing with friends at home. Such comparison may represent a source of frustration but it is also used to draw a positive picture of the personal experience:

*They say to me: you have been in Italy for 5 years, what you have learnt?  
Nothing!* [IT\_11a]

*I have had many interesting experiences here, I have been to many places, I experienced much, much more than my friends at home.* [CZ\_3]

One YMM Peruvian in Italy in making a report about his stay in Italy realized he has fallen behind or at least did not go far enough with his ideas because of the global economic crisis, unlike his friends in Peru:

*The situation when I went away was so well there, and here was fine. In the last 4-5 years the economy has gone up unexpectedly there. And things are bad here. And I see why my friends spend a lot of money. The same that I spend, but life there is cheaper ... How is it possible? We put everything aside and do not spend, do not we have fun. I cannot go to the restaurant, they go to the restaurant, have the car ... And I say, but how they do it? I staying here: I cannot have a car, I cannot even dream of a house ... And they are also buying the house. What is happening? They work in many foreign companies. [IT\_3]*

Given the concepts of social comparisons, individuals compare themselves also with others, especially those considered similar to them, and this might have a moderating effect on the assessment of their life domains. Migrants will tend to have as reference groups co-nationals, other groups of migrants and natives, depending upon the years spent abroad:

*My lifestyle has changed compared to life at home, I'm not social anymore. In Pakistan it's all social, mixed together, can be too much but here you are alone, can't share much with them sometimes. In the UK life it's all career driven and materialistic. You can't rely on people here, you don't even have time for yourself. [UK\_2]*

## **Experience of Failure**

Once in the destination country, YMM have to negotiate their own ideas and projects with the “offer” of the host country, often in a context of uncertainty and unpredictability. Frequently this leads to a state of insecurity mixed with frustration; especially when there is a failure to adapt to the context of the host country. Learning the new language can be an insurmountable obstacle and it often represents one of the first steps leading to frustration, as poor language skills make the individual more vulnerable and susceptible to suffer from discrimination. This is a problem that affects more closely 1<sup>st</sup> generation YMM and it contributes to increase the gap between expectations and reality. Although language skills is not properly one of the YMM's expectations or dreams upon migration, it may convey a wider sense of frustration and dissatisfaction covering other major issues and widening the gap between “what was expected” and “what has been truly found”. In general, failure to adapt to the schemes of

society – from study and work to social relationships, neighbours etc. - may cause sadness and depression in the ordinary life of the YMM:

*When I get home I just feel bored. I feel like I need something else in life. Every day is just the same. It's just depressing. I don't think it happens to everyone. [UK\_1]*

What was certainly unexpected to most of the YMM interviewed is that they find themselves having to navigate between multiple, often conflicting values, and they have to cope with such diversity of view that is also how “others” see them. They strive to find new ways that enable them to link up and integrate avoiding fragmentation and exclusion but are extremely vulnerable and are subject to discrimination and what added life really is can be large or small discrimination – an experience which they might never have had before. Upon arrival, the migrant must deal with a sudden and unexpected change of condition that has to do with many aspects. The abandonment of the country of origin brings the need to give all the wealth of knowledge and skills related to the relationship with the original context, to replace it, as fast as possible, with something new, perhaps a functional integration. Therefore, this might be a necessary step for them to make, which at the same time is not easy to accomplish, as they might not receive adequate support. In this sense, the immigrants are marginalised individuals as they come from a geographically, culturally, socio-politically and linguistically different country. Often they are from a low socio-economic background, which is in itself an obstacle to inclusion and participation. In addition to that they suffer from weak social networks, at least at the beginning of their migration, which exacerbates their disadvantages.

*Sometimes, got homesick, missed my family, but only for short periods like an hour. I treat also myself to something when I work a lot like get good food, I enjoy food or buy cloths and electronics, just reward myself. [UK\_2]*

He tries to socialize with people who are motivated and keen to give him advice. He is stressed that success in Finland ‘don’t come easy’. Thus, ‘*you should go yourself and submit your CV to many companies*’. He thinks that some of his (migrant) friends are depressed because of their difficult situation. He recognizes three different reasons behind this. Firstly, some of his friends have moved to Finland at a late age. Therefore, their capability to learn the new system is restricted. Secondly, he believes that lack of skills in either Finnish or English restricts people’s ability to act independently in Finnish society: ‘*they need help in everything they do if they don’t know the language*’. Thirdly, he thinks that people differ in their capabilities in searching social support from other people.

For a young migrant man who moves to another country, the social changes required are generally higher. This is often true for social adaptation, friendship and family. But of course it is also crucial for linguistic knowledge. While you may acquire, relatively quickly, a core competence of a new language, enough to give the impression of “knowing”; the acquisition of a deeper mastery, required for many tasks specifically school and / or work and takes longer. The protagonists don’t always seem to fully realise the time and effort involved. The young man himself can become impatient and lost their desire to study.

## **Future Prospects and Outlook**

Some YMM look for a chance in another country, to escape from an oppressive politics and/or social condition; others, reach friends or relatives already emigrated, others want to acquire new skills and then return to their country of origin and make it available to their community. Others want to save money and set up a business back home with friends. The latter is the case of a Somali migrant man in Finland and a Mexican one in England:

*I would like to learn nursing in vocational school and then go study nursing in the university of applied sciences. After that plus two years I would like to be a doctor. Then I wish to return to Somalia as a doctor. If not possible, then in Kenya or Ethiopia. [...] And then after seven years, I will speak Finnish fluently. I would like to take Finnish culture with me to Africa. [FI\_4]*

*I want to go back in two years. I wouldn't like to stay here for a longer time. I want to save money and go back, start a business and hopefully it will be a successful business and maybe find a job where I can use my English such as tourist guide. [UK\_7]*

To many YMM, saving money provides a source of satisfaction. It is linked in fact to the possibility to build or maintain their own identity, send them to their family lives far away, get into the social fabric of the host society; be able to negotiate their rights, to learn new skills. For the young migrant male all this has a crucial relevance: being aware that the efforts were worthwhile. In fact, despite a positive thought, uncertainty always appears to be a concrete fear when they are asked about their future:

*I would like to be wealthy and financially stable, house, wife, children. But you never know what is gonna happen. You might die tomorrow. I never thought that we will move to the UK. My dad just told me that we are going to move to Turkey and they said we are going to the UK! Then we ended up*

*staying here, so I actually don't know. You can plan your life, you can have a plan but you will never know what actually happens. [UK\_12]*

The assessment of life quality, employment and the job-related situation play a far-reaching role for life satisfaction. Regarding the financial situation there are various aspects to consider: a first overview shows that the economic level of YMM is lower middle. Waiters, babysitting, car wash, baker are the types of work they can do, often related to the fact that they have difficulty in speaking the language of their host country. The interviews reveal the desire and the need to earn more. Much of the money earned is used for the house rent, basic needs. Others, the younger are financed by their families to study. Although many of them do not have a high income a small part of their salary is sent to the family:

*[P]eople are strongly restricted. Some people there work 12 hour shifts and are not able to pay rent for his room. In here, even without a job you can get your own room, kitchen and blanket. [FI\_18]*

Inter-temporal assessment of life satisfaction is another aspect which conditions its analysis since at a given moment in time individuals mix present, past and future expectations with the overall life satisfaction. The YMM report different levels of life satisfaction after compared to before migration.

*If I looked at my starting point (Guinea), I would be in a pretty good position (...) I'm in a good position here too. I have a regular job, an apartment... I don't have any debts. All I have is my own (...) I can pay for all I need. [FI\_7b]*

*Having a job in the right field, having a financial stability, having a family, having the right education, I have achieved all these, yet I am still not quite there yet. But I'm not worried because I am on the right track. [UK\_13]*

## **Conclusion**

The present transnational analysis highlights the emotional gap between what a young male migrant, or male with a migrant background, expected from his life as a result of migration, and what he has achieved concretely. Migration entails a breach in an individual's life and it adds a 'Before-and-after' dimension to the migrant's ordinary life. The extent to which the achievements of the *After* meet the expectations of the *Before* is what marks the level of satisfaction – and even happiness – of the migrant. An overall evaluation of life satisfaction always entails the individual's view on how reality met expectations, but *after* migration the

‘Was it really worth it?’ question becomes a compass orienteering the everyday life of the migrant in the reception country.

The YMM interviewed report different migration stories and different levels of *After*-satisfaction, nevertheless for the majority of them the achievement of autonomy as well as freedom is perceived as a great achievement in itself and it conveys a strong positive significance.

Interview data clearly indicate that for most YMM migration was well worth it. Despite all material and emotional hardships, the YMM satisfaction of their current life is generally high, they feel emotional links to the reception country and have an optimistic outlook into the future. For most of them, the transition to adulthood comes to coincide with migration and they regard autonomy as its main outcome. They feel strong and are fully aware of their capabilities; they look back at what they have achieved with satisfaction and they are moved by a strong desire to realize their dreams and succeed in life: get a job, or succeed in education, create a family, being able to support their parents, being able to decide their own destiny. In many cases the interviews also revealed a strong desire to get involved in European society and be an active part of it. These YMM may be supported, emotionally and sometimes even economically, by their families and feel at ease in the reception country. Safety is also among the main achievements they report: living in a safe country/place contributes to make them happy.

However, as mentioned above, migration outcomes and the perception of one’s achievement through migration may vary significantly from one young man to the other. Some YMM, a minority, do not display a positive outlook at all; they suffer from loneliness and isolation and feel that the costs they are bearing with migration are far too high for them while they can’t see any benefits yet.

Beyond their family background and personal history, two main factors can be reckoned as deeply influencing the YMM perception of migration outcomes. Firstly, the age of the YMM at the time of arrival in Europe: young men who migrated at a very young age – 15 or before – are more likely to evaluate the migration outcomes as positively. The second factor is related to gender, which was the very focus of MiMen project: the interview results indicate, in fact, that in many cases these young men face additional responsibility through the migration experience due to the fact that they are males. They feel that their families have



expectations from their migration experience (e.g., remittances or an educational or professional career) and they do not see they have achieved much so far. Even the autonomy that migration has brought along – something which other YMM perceive as one of the greatest achievements - is experienced by these YMM as an additional burden leading to loneliness and isolation. They look back at their home country with a sense of frustration and they compare their life situation with that of friends at home while they have difficulties to make friends in the reception country.

In conclusion, the transnational analysis focused on the YMM perception of their expectations and achievements through migration indicates that the majority of the young migrant males experience migration as an opportunity for personal growth and they feel satisfied by the outcomes they have achieved. In a limited number of cases, though, migration may be experienced by the YMM as a burden that leads to isolation.

## Chapter X: The Young Migrant Men's Well-Being Index

*If we speak of well-being, you can say thank god I'm healthy. I have enough money to live, that is relative. I have my duties which satisfy me. I have a family that supports me. I have good friends with whom I can share something, discuss things and whom I can trust. I have a religion, I have a purpose in life and I know what I am working for. [Cafer, 24, DE\_09]*

The following well-being index summaries some main results of the previous chapters with specific relation to the young migrant men's well-being and existing well-being concepts, as outlined in the methodology chapter. The transnational analyses of the empirical material are the central sources for designing this index, although they were complemented with the results of the literature and policy review dealing with young migrant men (YMM). Based on the sample of 282 young migrant men, the well-being index describes domains which are relevant for their subjective well-being and outlines which factors in these domains can be supportive or detrimental to their well-being. Specific attention was put on the gender-specific challenges and the expectations imposed on the YMM.

### **Well-Being Domains**

The following domains describe the life-worlds of young men which are relevant for their well-being as deduced from the empirical results. They mostly correspond to the division of topics in the previous chapters, although some themes were aligned under different headings. Precisely, the chapter "The Self" was fused into the domains "Housing" and "Social Networks". All of the following domains are more or less relevant for all young men, however their individual weighting differs. The domains overlap with existing well-being surveys (Eurostat 2015, Eurofound 2013, Gallup 2015) and are complemented with aspects specific to the gendered and ethnicised experience of the young men. For each domain we also suggest subjective indicators for well-being – some of them captured by Eurostat – and point to implications for policy. The perspective taken is transnational and the lists are by no means exhaustive.

## Emotional Ties and Bonds

*It is difficult when you are alone. There is nobody who tells you what to do, what is good, what is bad. And now, my family is not able to help me. I moved here to live alone. [Omar, 22, FI\_03]*

*There are no real problems, as long as you have someone you can go for help or work out your problem with. [Tawab, 18, DE\_15]*

Trusting and supportive attachments are themes strongly emphasised in the literature on well-being and happiness. Many scholars have claimed that relatedness is a basic human need and a resilience factor across the lifespan of people. Strong attachments are essential in promoting subjective well-being and feelings of loneliness have the opposite effects. The Gallup Well-Being Index describes this as having “supportive relationships and love in life” (Gallup 2015), while the Eurostat quality of life index conceptualizes this as “having someone to rely on in case of need and to discuss personal matters” (Eurostat 2015, see also ONS 2015). Alongside material deprivation and health, supportive personal relations correlate most strongly with overall life-satisfaction (Eurostat 2015).

Young migrant men are in a particularly vulnerable position, because migration often means losing physical proximity to their loved ones, their core family and close friends. The Eurostat data illustrates this by showing that non-EU nationals are more than twice as likely to have ‘no one to rely on’ than nationals (14.8% comp. to 6.3%, Eurostat 2015<sup>9</sup>). The MiMen study explored the connections between strong attachments of young migrant men and their (eudemonic) well-being. Emotional bonds provide feelings of continuity and belonging (emotional aspect) and offer (material) support and advice in all aspects of their lives (bonding aspect). In the data young migrant men describe a diverse range of emotional bonds as they talk about their families, relatives, friends, partners and many other attachments with love and respect. Many try to maintain the closeness to their loved ones abroad via skype and other communication technologies. Most importantly, relations to loved ones need to be supportive and free of essential conflicts to function as emotional bonds. Quality-of-life research indicates that face-to-face contact to loved ones has a far greater positive impact on life-satisfaction than telecommunications contact (Eurofound 2013: 63).

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<sup>9</sup> Vulnerability is increased by the facts that there is a general drop in satisfaction rates with personal relations between the age groups 16-24 and 25-24, and men in single households tend to have lower satisfaction rates with their personal relations than other groups, including women in single households. Eurostat 2015.

Young men are in a position of transition between youth and adulthood. In developmental perspective this means an extension of their emotional bonds from their core family of origin to self-chosen relations, friendships and partnership. Many YMM position themselves in a 'generational continuum' between past and future generations. It is important for them to be able to fulfil their (masculine) roles as a part of this continuum. They respect their parents or other older relatives for all the sacrifices they have done to enable a better life for their offspring. Their task is to take the next step in a new society by establishing positions in the labour market, social networks and be able to provide a ready-made platform for the next generation. Being successful in these tasks is essential for their feelings of self-worth. Emotional bonds in the form of generational continuums provide a life-course perspective for many young migrant males – an idea about one's roots and potentials and eventually a vision of the future paths.

It is difficult to distinguish the men's own expectations from the ones of their parents and other family members. In the accounts of young men parental expectations are manifested in the form of support and attachment rather than as coercion and pressure. As males they are faced with specific expectations: to take the role of provider and climb up the social ladder in receiving societies. For a minority of young men, however, their escape from familial control is an important well-being factor, for example if their own identity or life-choices contradict their parents' expectations (e.g. a homosexual respondent who broke contact with traditional parents). It is important to remember that emotional bonds exist in a variety of social relations, with friends, partners, genetic, voluntary or foster parents, siblings, and children. Men lacking these attachments were few in numbers, but are in vulnerable positions. They suffer from mental problems and lack of trust in other people, have a fragile identity and expect little from the future.

### **Policy Implications**

Firstly, policies need to acknowledge men not only as public actors (e.g. in employment) but also as caring actors in private spheres. Lack of emotional bonds is deeply detrimental to their well-being. Policies need to recognise the intertwining of public and private issues.

- Do policies take into account emotional bonds of young male migrants? How are transnational relations affected by national policies?
- What are the implications of national family reunion policies for young migrant men?

- To what extent are emotional bonds taken into account in practices of social/youth work?
- To what extent are extra-familial relations for young migrants supported?
- Are there officially supported and financed open rooms and spaces where young migrants can come together, exchange amongst themselves and where they have free access to the internet and relating communication tools?

### **Subjective Indicators**

- Having someone to rely on in case of need (Eurostat and Gallup indicator).
- Perception of the YMM to fulfil their parents expectations.
- Level of satisfaction with family contact.
- Level of satisfaction with close peer relations.

### **Access to Education and Employment**

*I came here to build a future. In Afghanistan, there was not this possibility to go to school, build a future ... I want to stay on the path, so my parents can be proud of me later. [Nasir, 18, DE\_1]*

Employment and education play important roles in a person's life and are also crucial in terms of a person's success in society. They substantially influence young migrant men's well-being for various reasons.

*Work has obvious economic benefits, but having a job also helps individuals stay connected with society, build self-esteem, and develop skills and competencies" (OECD Better-Life Index, OECD 2015b)*

On the other hand unemployment strongly correlates with lower life satisfaction and overall decrease in well-being (Eurofound 2013). Satisfactory employment is a source of societal recognition, feelings of 'usefulness', increases self-confidence and provides opportunities for personal growth. It is an essential part of young migrant men's well-being to achieve financial independence, being able to support themselves and often their families as well (often living in the home country). Employment is an important part of their masculine identity and position of 'breadwinner' of the family. Where they see themselves as part of a generational continuum, employment is important to fulfil their (masculine) role in the family, to provide security to other family members now and in the future perspective. For

many interviewed young men, having stable employment is the essential prerequisite before starting their own family.

Though education and employment are clearly linked, they also have different and interdependent well-being impacts. The most obvious link between the two domains is that higher education increases the individual's chances on the job market to attain more diverse, better paid and more prestigious jobs. Additionally educational institutions support the young men's contact to their peers, help them to build their social networks and develop friendships with other youth. For some interviewees the advantages and opportunities offered by migration were a feature often commented upon, and family expectations to succeed were evident. Therefore, there was a perception that it was necessary to be successful and to achieve. This could have a positive effect on well-being when there were achievements to celebrate, it could have a negative effect and induce a sense of having failed if expectations were not lived up to, those expectations being of either parents or the individual. Many young men reflected upon their parents' impact on their educational ambitions. Their support was commonly cited and prolonged conflicts on career ambitions were rarely reported in the sample.

Young men's well-being in the education sector is disrupted by discrimination. The target group is affected by structural discrimination and individual discrimination (Zick et. al 2008). The men in the sample report discrimination both by teachers and other students. This affects particularly young men who lack linguistic skills, culturally or ethnically differ from the majority. Among pupils there was hesitation how to interpret 'jokes' of cultural stereotyping and how to feel about its effects.

### **Policy Implications**

Lack of access to suitable education and employment opportunities result in frustration, boredom, feelings of uselessness and isolation. Lack of support in education, training and apprenticeship, lack of or unsuitable advice and lack of access to training opportunities suitable for the individual are also detrimental to well-being. The following programs, structures and measures could support the participation in the Education and Employment sectors

- Access to training and education institutions, (fee) funding opportunities, support for higher education.

- Free and customised advice services.
- (Free) services for the recognition of foreign degrees and diplomas (sometimes called ‘nostrification services’).
- Specialised and general free language courses.
- Anti-discrimination measures in education institutions, awareness-raising in schools, education and training institutions and the private sector.

### **Subjective Indicators**

- Satisfaction with current education situation.
- Satisfaction with personal education opportunities.
- Satisfaction with current employment situation.
- Satisfaction with orientation/counselling services on education/employment opportunities.
- Satisfaction with availability of (specialised) language courses
- Satisfaction with sanctioning of discrimination in one’s education / employment context

### **Social Networks, Recreation and Community Belonging**

*In school you learn the grammar, but you need to have places in which to have informal discussions. [Tamas, 23, FI\_FG2]*

Eurostat (2015) notes that engaging in recreational activities, following one’s interests and engaging with like-minded people contributes to an individual’s overall life-satisfaction. MiMen research confirms this finding in that sport was a significant past-time of many of the respondents which increased a sense of belonging and engagement with their community. Recreational activities are also important bonding factors with others. The research in MiMen suggests that YMM’s individual well-being was linked to communal aspects – their own well-being is both aided by their friends and peers and influenced the well-being of their friends and peers. For migrants as newcomers, building social networks creates a particular challenge in that social interactions are surrounded by informality and uncertainty. Recreational, cultural and sport activities offer a more structured platform for social interaction that reduces this uncertainty.

Participation in recreational, cultural and sports activities is expected to contribute to an individual's well-being (Eurofound 2013). Induction and orientation programmes can play an important role for assisting young migrants upon their arrival. However, also mainstream services need to be accessible and open to young migrant men as they are key platform for engaging with general recreational activities and even more importantly, for social interaction with the general population. Although both bonding (to one's own cultural group) and bridging (to other cultural groups) connections are important for well-being, it is bridging connections that young migrant men often find hard to create. Connections to other people are easier established via shared interests and communal activities. According to the research, participating in social, leisure and cultural activities and establishing these connections maybe hampered by lack of time, information and financial resources, limited language capacity, and that certain religious young men have a desire for recreational activities which do not involve the consumption of alcohol.

Active outreach by sport and youth organisations – both in the public and private sector – is required to groups that are underrepresented among service users and who may face difficulties in accessing activities. Sport organisations proved to be great facilitators of positive interaction among young migrant and autochthone youth. However, some young migrants reported racial harassment at sporting facilities. The feelings that resulted from the sense of isolation, harassment and segregation resulted in some YMM attending sports clubs that are visited only by young people of their ethnicity.

Spirituality and religion for some contribute significantly to their eudemonic well-being (Eurostat 2015). The MiMen findings support this. Most believers state that their faith gives them 'strength' and 'security' and helps them 'tackle difficult situations'. Several religious young men in the sample report to find 'inner peace' and stress relief in their faith. For some religion provides a 'guide book' which helps them to master their life. Religion can be a link to their (parents') origin. Attending religious services can generate a sense of 'home' and 'belonging'. Moreover, the research suggested that religious organisations facilitated building social bridges between young males from different ethnic backgrounds and autochthones. This is contrasted with the negative stereotyping of Muslims in all European countries, which are often perpetuated by the media. All young men of Muslim faith are aware of reservations against their religion. Many have directly or indirectly experienced rejection or feel their



religious identity stigmatized. They need to justify, position or define themselves in relation to those stereotypes.

### **Policy Implications**

- Recreational, cultural and sports services to youth need to be open, outreaching and sensitive to (direct and indirect) discrimination. Anti-discrimination training is a necessity as is the need to evaluate the existing barriers of access for unrepresented groups. There is a need to review existing programs in terms of their intercultural openness and appeal and how they can facilitate interaction between different cultural/ethnic groups).
- Recreational services should be accessible (in geographic and financial terms) and information available in relevant languages; links with integration services is desirable
- Integration services should include leisure and youth activities and be linked to/provide information about other general recreational services.
- The link of religious and ethnic organisations to organisations of the ‘host society’ should be supported (financially and structurally, e.g. to municipal authorities). Initiatives which enable young people’s links to both heritage and new culture should be assisted.
- YMM should be assisted to take voluntary and leadership roles in their recreational activities (e.g. in sports organisations).

### **Subjective Indicators**

- Satisfaction with time use for leisure, friend and community activities (Eurostat).
- Satisfaction with leisure facilities and opportunities.
- Satisfaction with ability to participate in social and community activities.

### **Housing and Neighbourhood**

*The process of getting to know people here is quite slow. I can walk in the city centre and say hello to an unknown African man. I see him and immediately we are friends. But here in Finland you have to see people couple of times in restaurants or wherever. Then it starts to open up.*  
[Muhammed, 20, FI\_5]

The European Quality of Life Survey understands housing conditions as part of the general standard of living, which has a high relevance for general quality of life (Eurofound 2013: 49). In terms of impact of individual housing conditions on well-being, insecure housing and fear of losing the accommodation have the highest negative impact on well-being (more than e.g. lack of space) (ibid: 56). As the housing situation was for many YMM difficult or even delicate most of these were looking – more or less in vain in their own perception - for an improvement of their actual situation. Due to little space and high rents they evaluated their own housing situation as not satisfying. Some expected and others reported discrimination in the selection procedures for public and privately rented flats.

Some interviewees report an increase in well-being due to good relations to the neighbours, providing help and orientation in everyday life matters especially when the core family is missing. Conversely bad relations – sometimes also linked to racial discrimination or negative stereotyping as ‘trouble-makers’ – is detrimental to well-being. In everyday interactions, young migrant men are confronted with various ascriptions and stereotypes based on their (perceived) ethnic identity, accent/language, youth and gender. Being perceived as a ‘trouble-maker’ and a potentially dangerous/criminal person is one of the most common prejudices they are confronted with. Many report unfair treatment due to this, e.g. being denied access in bars/nightclubs or suspicious treatment in shops, restaurants and public space. Well-being in many neighbourhoods is influenced negatively by experiences of discrimination.

Feelings of belonging and being accepted in the neighbourhood are important for general well-being. Many young respondents voice these positive aspects about diverse neighbourhoods. Such neighbourhoods provide a friendlier environment where minority young males feel safer. For many the diversity of a larger city provides a more favoured environment. However immigrant minorities are often segregated in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, a problem which is recognized by the young men. Some respondents moreover report discrimination in the job market due to their neighbourhood’s bad reputation.

Fear of crime and feelings of lack of safety thwart well-being in a neighbourhood. Feelings of ‘safe walking after dark’ are commonly measured as well-being indicators (e.g. Eurostat 2015, ONS). Young migrant men are in a double jeopardy position, being both potential victims of violence – often perpetrated by other young males – and being stigmatized as

potential aggressors. Men have a higher likelihood than women to become victims of violence perpetrated by strangers or nearly strangers (Cornelißen 2005). The empirical material shows that many YMM wish to live in a neighbourhood which they would classify as safe.

### **Policy Implications**

- Public spaces and places should be established, accessible and well-known, where discrimination is perceived as an intolerable act that is sanctioned.
- Informal, free and low-threshold meeting places and public spaces are important, where young people can meet. These should be sustainably financed.
- Assignment procedures for public housing need to take into account the needs of young migrant men and be sensitive to direct or indirect discrimination.
- Studies and random testing need to be advanced to capture the extent of discrimination on the private housing market. Subsequent anti-discrimination measures should be taken to counteract it.

### **Subjective Indicators**

- Satisfaction with own housing situation (Eurostat).
- Satisfaction with relations with neighbours.
- Having been victim of (racial) harassment in the neighbourhood.
- Feelings of safety when out walking alone at day/at night ('safe walking at night': Eurostat).
- Having friends in walking distance of home.
- Satisfaction with opportunities to meet friends in the neighbourhood (outside of home).

### **Feeling Safe and Trust in Police and Authorities**

*In my home country everybody is afraid of the future. ... Nobody knows what will happen tomorrow. ... Well-Being is not about money, it is about safety and security. [Serhat, 26, FI\_FG3]*

*I think to call the police is not a good idea in our neighbourhood. You would have more problems with the police as if you would manage these things without them. [Levent, 16, DE\_FG3]*

The quality of life index measures the level of trust in the police, in the legal system and in the political system (Eurostat 2015). A well-being index relevant for young migrant men also needs to take into account the interaction with the various state authorities. This is a key issue for young immigrants as they encounter many problems on different levels. When they have a fragile legal status they are vulnerable to anti-migration discourses and subject to tougher immigration laws. Feelings of safety and security for young migrant men also relate to feeling safe from the police and other authorities that have power over them, particularly if they do not hold full citizenship rights.

The hostile environment towards immigrants and particularly young men is also reflected in incidents of discriminatory behaviour by police officers. The narratives present a complex picture whereby the authorities may serve as both protectors and supporters for some whilst being a source of tension, frustration, cynicism and mistrust for others. These were linked to the narratives of stigmatization, namely the double-bind of the discriminatory migrant construction alongside public perceptions of 'deviant youth'. Some YMM have experienced mistrust and suspicion by the police and conversely mistrust becomes mutual. Lack of trust in the police is prevalent among second generation youth in the sample. Yet for first generation they were more cautious in their behaviour and actively sought to avoid trouble. This serves, not only, as a protective measure against being criminalized in the new country, but also to be able to look after themselves as men amid the lack of close family support and social networks which they had enjoyed in their country of origin. Their attempts to ensure a stable and secure lifestyle for themselves in the new country is also related to their experiences of political and economic insecurities back home.

Even though for many young migrant men there were challenges as set out above there were positive expressions of the migration experience. For many of the young migrant men, their new host country provided a tangible sense of security. They were enabled to 'sleep at night' removing from them the threats they had previously experienced. There was a sense amongst many that securing a feeling of safety was one of the most positive aspects of living in the 'host country'.

## Policy Implications

- Intercultural competencies need to be considered as prerequisite to employment in police/public authorities (especially for positions which involve personal contact).
- Inclusion of intercultural trainings and anti-discrimination awareness in (further) training agendas for police/public authorities.
- Diversity of the workforce in police/public authorities.

## Subjective Indicators

- Trust in police, legal and political system (Eurostat).
- Feelings of safety in encounters with the police.
- Feelings of safety in encounters with other government bodies.
- Feelings of security with regard to one's legal status.
- Experience of discrimination due to race, ethnicity or migrant status by authorities.
- Extend and perceptions of freedom of movement i.e. legal status and how this impacts on their perceptions of freedom of movement.
- Perception of legal barriers for family reunification.

## Discrimination

*I was told – ‘you are the first black guy I have met. I did not know black people are nice’ [Austin, 21, IE\_FG3]*

*When I see how things are portrayed on TV even I get scared! It's exactly because of these pictures that people discriminate against us. [Tawab, 18, DE\_15]*

Experiences of discrimination and negative stereotyping feature repeatedly in the domains discussed above, nevertheless its relevance to the target group led us to devote a specific section of this index to the issue. Ethnic, racial and religious discriminations are widespread phenomena in contemporary Europe (Zick et al. 2008). This is especially true for the young men with a minority background who often tend to embody the ‘dangerous other’. Existing well-being surveys do not yet include measures on the experience of discrimination, although studies show that being subject to prolonged discrimination is strongly detrimental to well-

being as it increases stress, depression and is related to different health issues. It also helps to strengthen reactive identities among those discriminated against, promotes ethnic closures and hostility between groups.

As defined in the 'Racial Equality Directive' (Council Directive 2000/43/EC), direct discrimination occurs when "one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on grounds of racial or ethnic origin" and indirect discrimination occurs when "an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary". Discrimination takes different forms and expressions from the subtle and invisible selection in hiring or housing to the direct and violent insult in social interactions. A number of interviewees of Caribbean and sub-Saharan African origin tell stories of overt racial slurs. Instances of open islamophobia are increasingly common. Additionally, subtle forms of subordination and differentiation delineate minority youth from the mainstream population.

One of the most widespread experiences of young migrants, including those of the second generation, is the reference to their 'otherness' or 'foreignness' (a process called 'othering'). Interviewees tend to react differently to the experience of ethnicization and 'othering', depending on their immigration status. For those who migrated at an early age or are born in the country, repeated expressions of othering are perceived negatively as threatening their belonging to their society. They are very reactive against this unwelcomed labelling, although they also show certain fatalism in anticipating that they will never be considered as members of the mainstream population.

Recent young migrants consider references to their cultural dissonance as a simple reflection of their foreignness. Being seen as different is perceived as inherently impossible to avoid by most of the respondents who have an accent or linguistic limitations, and thus young immigrants tend to consider that different treatments or subordinate positions are somehow temporarily justified. Even though they might perceive negative contacts with majority population, they tend to consider that these inequalities and stereotyping are part of the immigrant experience. As a consequence, they often deny having been subject to discrimination, but recount experiences which clearly classify as discrimination. Another coping strategy is to understand discrimination as 'inevitable' and claim not to care about it.

Despite this many young migrants are confident about their acceptance in society in the future. They hope to master the cultural codes and language and become an assimilated part of their country. Those who came as young children or are born in the country are more critical about their assimilation. They sometimes feel as sub-standard citizens, facing othering while they thought they were natives like the others. The experiences of identity dissonance are echoing the narratives of discriminations.

Many young men are aware of the negative perception of immigrants particularly from Arabic countries and Muslim origin in the public discourse. Media and political speeches are seen as a source of negative stereotyping of young migrant men. The young men themselves are influenced by these images, often negatively and sometimes in doubt where to position themselves and their peers. Some reject media stereotyping strongly, in particular with respect to Muslims, and speak of ‘brainwashing’ by the media.

### **Policy Implications**

Policies need to raise awareness and enhance communication about the many facets of discrimination on the one side, and on the other side enforce existing rights to equality and protection against discrimination. This implies for example:

- Undertake and publicize field experiment tests on discrimination in various domains showing its impact on everyday life (e.g. private housing, hiring practices).
- Acknowledge the role and responsibility of mass media in perpetrating negative stereotypes and subsequently aim at a more balanced reporting (e.g. increased diversity in public media human resources, specific training for journalists, involvement of national media authorities, any radio, press and TV ombudsmen and press unions to foster reflexivity).
- Organize campaigns with a large scope at national and local level, to increase awareness of stereotyping, othering and routine discrimination (e.g. (mass) media campaigns, public poster campaigns, training-of-trainers modules for both public and private sectors).
- Assess the effectiveness of existing anti-discriminatory legislation (e.g. specialized NGOs’ legal capacity in assisting victims or directly suing discriminating institutions, class actions in cases of discrimination, barriers to filing complaints, divergence in case outcomes, monitoring discrimination, diversity managements and charters of good practices, positive action) and the efficiency of the resources and tools at the disposal of national equality bodies.
- Support coping resources for the victims of discrimination (e.g. local ombudsmen/equality bodies’ local network, specialized NGOs, school and educative staff), by funding or project cooperation.

## **Subjective Indicators**

- Perception of the existence of discrimination by addressing questions on the representations of the majority population and the minority groups on the relevance and the magnitude of the different type of discriminations.
- Experience of discrimination through self-reported indicator, broken-down by motives of discrimination and the specific cause of ethnic and racial discrimination, (colour, accent, nationality, name, religion, address etc.). Questions on the contexts where discrimination has occurred can be added.
- Perception of the ‘climate’ regarding discrimination via existing tolerance indicator/inter-group cohesion indicator/social values indicators or via lexicographic media survey (objective indicator).
- Impact of the experience of discrimination on well-being through self-assessment in a list of different consequences (lack of confidence, depression, rage, filing a complaint, talking with family or friends, etc.) and itemizing the capacity to derive support (from an association, a workers’ union, the police, an ombudsman, the local/migrant community etc.).

## **Evaluating the Migration Experience**

The distance between (initial) expectations and (perceived) achievements of young migrant men is strictly related to their satisfaction with their current life and with their overall migration experience. In turn, such satisfaction is strictly dependant on the expectations they brought with them (1st generation) or they grew up with (2nd generation). Whether they perceive the outcomes of their migration as ‘success’ or ‘failure’ is crucial to the young men’s well-being and can determine the quality of their present life and future outlook.

Well-being is essentially a dynamic process that gives people a sense of how their life is going, through the interaction between the objective conditions they experience, the activities they carry out and their psychological resources (Dodge et al. 2012). The expectations-achievements gap needs to be measured with subjective indicators. While overall life satisfaction is increasingly being regarded as “a push factor towards migration even stronger than GDP per capita” (Blanchflower and Shadforth 2009), it is possible to identify several issues that can determine satisfaction in relation to the migration experience: earning money, getting a good job and acquiring professional skills are common expectations that young men have in respect to their migration. However there are also costs – both monetary and non-



monetary – and particularly the latter can be unexpectedly high and severely affect the outcomes of migration. Migration costs and outcomes as subjective factors may vary greatly between individuals, so it becomes very difficult to identify objective measures for their assessment and evaluation in a policy perspective. Our research findings however show that issues such as safety, money, education and increased autonomy are common expectations for the young male adults interviewed. In general, the young migrant men's expectations are marked by a twofold transition: transition to some 'better place' to live by migrating, and transition to adulthood. In this respect, adequate policies that recognize the importance of subjective well-being of YMM should include transition or change as an intrinsic part of their well-being in different areas. Existing surveys on well-being use a variety of subjective indicators, many of them mentioned in this index, which are also pertinent to YMM. However the migration experience adds the 'before-and-after' dimension which is peculiar to migration. The 'was it really worth it?' key-question is common many YMM interviewed. The extent to which the achievements of the *After* meet the expectations of the *Before* is what the below indicators intend to detect.

### **Policy Implications**

- Do national migration policies entail the assessment of the YMM satisfaction of their outcomes and overall present life (possibly in various areas, e.g., safety; income; work; education; professional skills; sports and leisure; etc.)?
- Do national policies foresee the measuring of the 'transition' dimension in the life of YMM? Is transition/change (of country, nationality, status, employment, etc.) considered positively by national policies?
- Are there any measures addressing young migrant males specifically?
- To what extent do national policies specifically address the needs of young migrant males without a family?
- To what extent is professional training considered a priority for male migrants?

### **Subjective Indicators**

The central question is how the individual evaluates their migration experience.

- Satisfaction with own working/studying life.
- Perception of social mobility.
- Perception of freedom & safety: to be masters of one's own destiny; to be able to start a family; to be able to fulfil one's own needs.

- Present achievements vs past expectations: individual expectations; family expectations; social expectations (i.e. comparison with peers in country of origin).
- Perception of being in debt to one's parents/family vs perception to being fully capable to fulfil parents'/family expectations.
- Perception of YMM to fulfil their own expectations in the host countries.
- Perception of future expectations.

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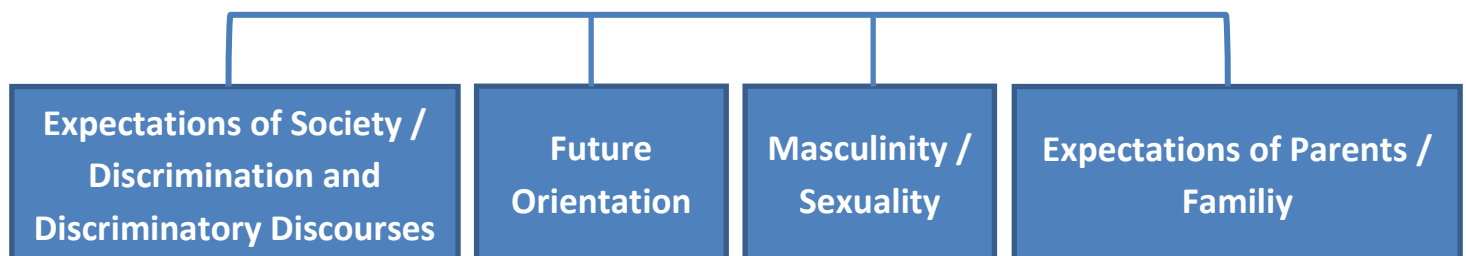
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## Annex I: MiMen Interview Guideline

- ✚ **Target group:** 16 – 27 year-old male third-country nationals (YMM) who either immigrated themselves or whose parents (both) immigrated; thus 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation but with the focus on the 1<sup>st</sup> generation (double-nationality-holding is acceptable, but should not be the majority). They should have stayed for at least one year in the country, be fluent in the language of the partners' country and preferably come from the main immigrant communities in the country.
- ✚ **Numbers of interviewees:** 40 YMM and a second interview with 10 of these interviewees. This numbers includes the pre-tests and focus groups.
- ✚ **Scientific Interest:** What is important for the young males in their lives respectively living spheres? Which challenges they are faced with in the different life-spheres? How they (can) deal with it? What are the elements of Wellbeing of YMM? Which impacts have their gender and age on their well-being? Which role plays their (own / familial) migration experience for their well-being?
- ✚ **Focus:** Please, take in mind that particular focus of the project is on the gender specific challenges and the expectations imposed on YMM by their families on the one hand and their respective receiving societies on the other hand. The topics “expectations of society, experiences with discrimination/discriminatory discourses” and “expectations of the family” should be cross-cutting all living spheres during the whole interview.



## INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVE INTERVIEWS

**Methodology:** The interview should address the past, present and future and use the following “Narrative-Generating Questions”. Please try to evoke a narration – you do not need to use all questions, just get them to tell their story. **The probing questions and topics should be used as reminders and should only be asked if appropriate in the specific interview context. So, it would be good if all topics are covered or touched but the main task of the interviewer is to find out what is relevant to the interviewees!** It’s good to use their language and terms (when necessary, ask the interviewee for their definitions of the terms and concepts they use). In general, it is better to ask about certain experiences, memories or examples in order to evoke a narration, than to ask general questions or “why” questions. For instance, it is better to ask about a memory of a day where somebody felt lucky in the past / in their childhood, instead of asking generally if the childhood was lucky or not or *why* it was (not) lucky.

### 1. Tell me about your life in ... (this country/city)? (*Present-related*)

➤ *Listen for cues about*

- feelings of **belonging / identity / emotional bonds**
- feelings/experiences of **safety / security**
- fears/negative feelings and positive feelings/**well-being**
- feelings/experiences of being **disadvantaged/discriminated**

*in different living spheres...:*

<b>family</b>	<b>friends / peers</b>	<b>leisure, hobbies, sports, media use</b>
<b>partner/girlfriend</b>	<b>marriage</b>	<b>neighbourhood, community</b>
<b>school /university</b>	<b>job/work</b>	<b>public space / authorities / police</b>
<b>religion</b>	<b>physical/mental health</b>	<b>political and civic participation</b>

- **Problems!** *Probe for ...* What are problems in the different fields – how do you deal with problems? - Can you remember a time when it was difficult/easy in XY – can you describe? What helps you? What gives you strength (give an example...)?
- **Home!** *Probe for ...* When do you feel at home? (example)

- **Perceptions!** *Probe for ...* How do others see you? (family/ work/ school/ peers/ strangers/ authorities/ police/ other) Give examples of situations?  
How do you see yourself - is their picture true? How does it differ? How does this make you feel?
- **Discrimination!** *Probe for ...* ‘Have you/ your friends/family experienced bad things here? Give examples? What do you think of it?’
- **Masculinity!** *Probe for...* What about the girls/women in school/work/family – do they have the same experiences (that you talked about)? **Do feel differently treated than girls / boys not “marked” as migrants (in school, public space, family, etc.)?**

**2. In your current life, what is good, what makes you happy? What do you dislike in your current life? (Present related)**

*If necessary:* Tell me about your *leisure time*...

- What do you do / enjoy doing (with your friends)? When you are alone or with your friends? What do you dislike?

*If necessary:* Tell me about **school/work**... .. (*see topics / living spheres*)

*If necessary:* Tell me about your **family situation**...

- Who do you feel close to/is important/belongs to your family?
- Tell me about your mother / father... brothers/sisters
- What do your mother / father / brother / sister think of you?
- What do your parents / your family expect of you?

*If necessary:* Who are the people closest to you? With whom do you speak about problems?

**3. If you compare your present life with the past, is it better or not? What has changed? Do you think you have managed what you wanted to achieve?**

- *Probe for ...* What has helped you achieve it? Can you achieve it in the future? What can help you to achieve it/what do you need to achieve it?
- *Probe for ...* What does your family want you to achieve? Do you think your parents have managed to achieve what they wanted? [*Resilience*]

**4. How do you see your future? What do you wish for in your future? (future-related)**

- *Probe for ...* Do you think you will **achieve** this? What could help you to achieve it?
- *Listen for cues on expectations/perspectives in the fields of family, work, leisure, peers and probe for what relevance they have for well-being!*
- *Probe for ...* What are your **plans** for the next five years? How do you want to pursue your plans?  
(Example: “I would like to earn a lot of money / become a lawyer!”)

- *Probe for ...* What do you find important about this? Respectively: What would be different / better in your life, if you would achieve your goals?
- *Probe for ...* **Where** do see your future? Here or somewhere else?

## FOCUS GROUP

**Methodology:** The focus group discussion should address the well-being of YMM and the challenges they face (s. scientific interest). **Important is to stimulate a discussion among the participants.** Videos, short segments of newspaper articles, blob tree or other tools are welcome to use.

*Possible questions to stimulate a discussion:*

- 1) How is it going in school/family/...? Is it the same for girls / your sisters?
- 2) What do you like in your live? What do you like about people? What do you dislike?
- 3) What do you prefer to do in your leisure time?
- 4) Which experience have you made in your neighbourhood? Do you like your neighbourhood? What do you like/dislike about?
- 5) What are your favourite places? (Probe for... Would you take girls / your sisters there? Why? Why not?)
- 6) Have you experienced problems in the public space / with authorities / police officers?
- 7) Job/School: ... Do you get along well with your classmates/colleagues / teacher/boss etc.? What do you like at school/at work / about your teachers/colleagues?
- 8) Do you have role models? Can you tell about them?
- 9) What makes you strong? What empowers you?
- 10) What do you wish for your future? Do you think you will achieve this? What could help you to achieve it?

## Annex II: Interview Guideline for Peer Researcher

Target group: Male (16-27) from non-EU countries able to do the interview in English.

### Introduction

*Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. I will ask you some questions about your life in the UK and what challenges you faced in this country. I would like you to tell me as much as you can remember or think of. Everything you tell me will be treated confidentially and there is no right or wrong answer.*

### Brief Background

- **I want to start the interview with a few general questions. Tell me a little bit about yourself?** {Introduction to present life}

Probe:

*How old are you? Where you are from? How long have you been here? Do you have a family here? Are you married? Have you got any children? Do you live on your own?*

*Are you working or studying at the moment?*

### Life before Migration/Life Back Home

- **Tell me about your life back home, before you came to the UK?**

Probe:

*Were you studying? Were you working? Did you live with your parents? How was your life? Do you remember any good/ bad experiences.*

### Working in the UK

- **Tell me about your current job here in the UK or any jobs you have done here?**

Probe:

*What kind of jobs did you do/are you doing? How did you get the job/s? How long have you been working? How far do you travel from home to work? How are the working conditions? Has your employment situation improved since you came here? Are you doing more than one job?*

- **What do you like most about your job? What are your best memories?**
- **Can you give me an example of what upsets you most in your job?**

Probe:

*Any arguments with the managers, supervisors or colleagues, any feelings that you were mistreated or treated differently than your colleagues?*

- **Do you socialize with work colleagues?**

Probe: *Do you join them when they go out? Can you give an example? What are the reasons you do/don't socialize with work colleagues?*

## Unemployment in the UK

**Have you ever been unemployed in UK? Can you tell me a bit more about it and how it was/is for you being unemployed?**

Probe:

*How long have you been unemployed? What kind of jobs are you looking for? Do you know anybody working in that industry or sector?*

*How do you feel about being unemployed?*

## Studying in the UK

➤ **Tell me about your studies or the course you are doing?**

Probe:

*What are you studying? What do you like about school/course? How do you get on with teachers and your classmates? Do you socialize with fellow students or class mates from your college? Where do you go, what do you do together? How often to you meet up?*

*Have you done any English language course since you came here?*

## Financial Situation / Family expectations

➤ **How do you cope financially?**

Probe:

*Have you had or have any financial problems? What do/did you do to change it?*

*Do you struggle to live on your income?*

*Do you get any other support from friends or family? Do you support other family members? Do you send money back home? To whom do you send money and why? How regular do you send money back home?*

➤ **How do you feel about supporting/not being able to support your family back home?**

➤ **What other expectations does your family have of you?**

Probe :

*How do you feel about it? Does this put you under pressure, do you feel more valued?*

## Experience with the Authorities

➤ **What is your experience with the Authorities in the UK?**

Probe:

*Can you think of any encounters with immigration officers, benefit officers, courts, probation and the police in the UK and how did you feel about it?*

*Do you think they would have treated you the same if you were a woman or a girl or not a migrant?*

## Community Involvement

- **Tell me about any activities you do in this country, apart from working and studying.**

Probe:

*Do you have a regular place you go to meet other people i.e. café, community centre, place of worship (mosque/temple/church)? How did you get first involved? How do you feel going there? Have you met new friends at these places?*

- **Is there an organisation or charity you can go if you need help? Who are they and what kind of support do you get from them?**

Probe:

*Getting help in legal matters, benefit, finding work, school and education, health...*

- **Do you /have you done any kind of voluntary work/activities in the UK?**

Probe:

*Do you help out others, like friends or neighbours or any other people?*

*[If they have children] Do you help out at your children's school?*

*Have you ever been asked to join a group or help out in your local community?*

- **What kind of effect do you think has this (community involvement and/or voluntary work) had on your feelings of belonging and feeling part of the society in the UK?**

Probe:

*Do you think you would be more isolated, lonely?*

## Leisure Activities

- **What do you do in your free time?**
- **How important are these activities to you?**

Probe: *Do you do any sport, cultural, social activities? With whom do you spend your free time?*

## Your Health and Health Services

- **How is your health in general?**
- **Has your health changed since you came to the UK?**
- **What is your experience with the health system here, i.e. GP, hospital?**
- **Have you ever suffered from depression since coming to the UK? Have you ever suffered from depression back home?**
- **[if health problems] Does your health have an effect on how you feel about being here?**

## Living in Your Neighbourhood

- **How would you describe the neighbourhood you are living in?**

Probe:

*Do you go out in your local area? Would you like to live somewhere else and why? Are there many people from your community living there? Do you have friends living in the same neighbourhood?*

- **What are the positive sides about living in your neighbourhood?**
- **What are the things you don't like that much about your neighbourhood?**

Probe:

*Do you feel safe walking in your neighbourhood? Have you experienced discrimination in your neighbourhood?*

## Show them the Blob Tree

- **I would like to show you this tree. Can you look at the characters and tell me where you see yourself in this tree?**

*{Give them some time to reflect on it, do not interrupt or probe for a least 10 sec}*

- **Which one of these characters reflects how you feel on a typical day?**
- **How did you see yourself when you first arrived in the UK?**
- **How do you see yourself now?**

Probe:

*Looking on the tree, which character reflects the way you see yourself at the moment?*

## Achievements

- **If you compare your present life with the past, is it better or not? What has changed?**
- **Do you think you have managed what you wanted to achieve?**

Probe:

*What is it you wanted to achieve? What has helped you achieve it? Can you achieve it in the future? What can help you to achieve it/what do you need to achieve it?*

*What does your family want you to achieve? Do you think your parents have managed to achieve what they wanted?*

## Well-being and happiness

- **How happy do you feel with your life in general at the moment?**
- **Were there times in your life where you did not feel very happy and why was that?**



Probe:

*What makes you feel good? What are the kinds of things that upset you?*

### Feelings of Belonging/Discrimination/Identities

- **To what extent do you feel part of this society?**
- **Have there been situations where you felt that you are being treated differently because you are a young migrant man? (give examples)**
- **Why do you think were you treated differently?**

Probe:

*Language, skin colour, ethnicity, religion, ways of dressing, being male etc.*

- **Which identities are the most important ones to you at the moment?**

Probe:

*Being a young man, being a working man and providing for yourself and your family, being a migrant, your religion?*

- **Did you feel the same about yourself in your home country?**

Probe:

*When did this change? Did your experience of living here has shaped and changed your identity and how?*

- **How important is religion to you? Has it always been like that?**

Probe: *Has the importance of religion in your life changed after moving to the UK?*

### Perceptions

- **How do you think others see you?**

Probe: [Show Tree]

*How do you think your parents see you at the moment? Which of these characters do they think you are? What about your friends/partner/wife/children?*

*What about people who don't know you much, such as the police? How are people like you portrayed in the media? Does that upset you? Do you think it's a true or fair reflection of who you are?*

- **How do you think the police see you or think of you when they see you on the street?**

Probe: *Have you ever been stopped by a police officer or stopped and searched? How did you feel about it?*

### Coping Strategies

- **Thinking about the difficult times or situations you experienced, what do you think has helped you to cope with it?**

Probe:

*How do you deal with problems with your family, friends or at work? Can you think of an example and how you dealt with it?*

*What helps you? What gives you strength to overcome your difficulties?*

- *What makes you feel good about yourself and what makes you feel strong?*
- *Who are our role models?*

### Gender

*Do you think that women have a different experience than men?*

Probe: If you were a woman would you have different experiences?

### Your Future

- **How do you see your future? What do you wish for in your future?**

Probe:

*What are your **plans** for the next five years? **Where** do see your future? Here or somewhere else? How do you want to pursue your plans?*

*Do you think you will **achieve** this? Why/why not? What could help you to achieve it?*

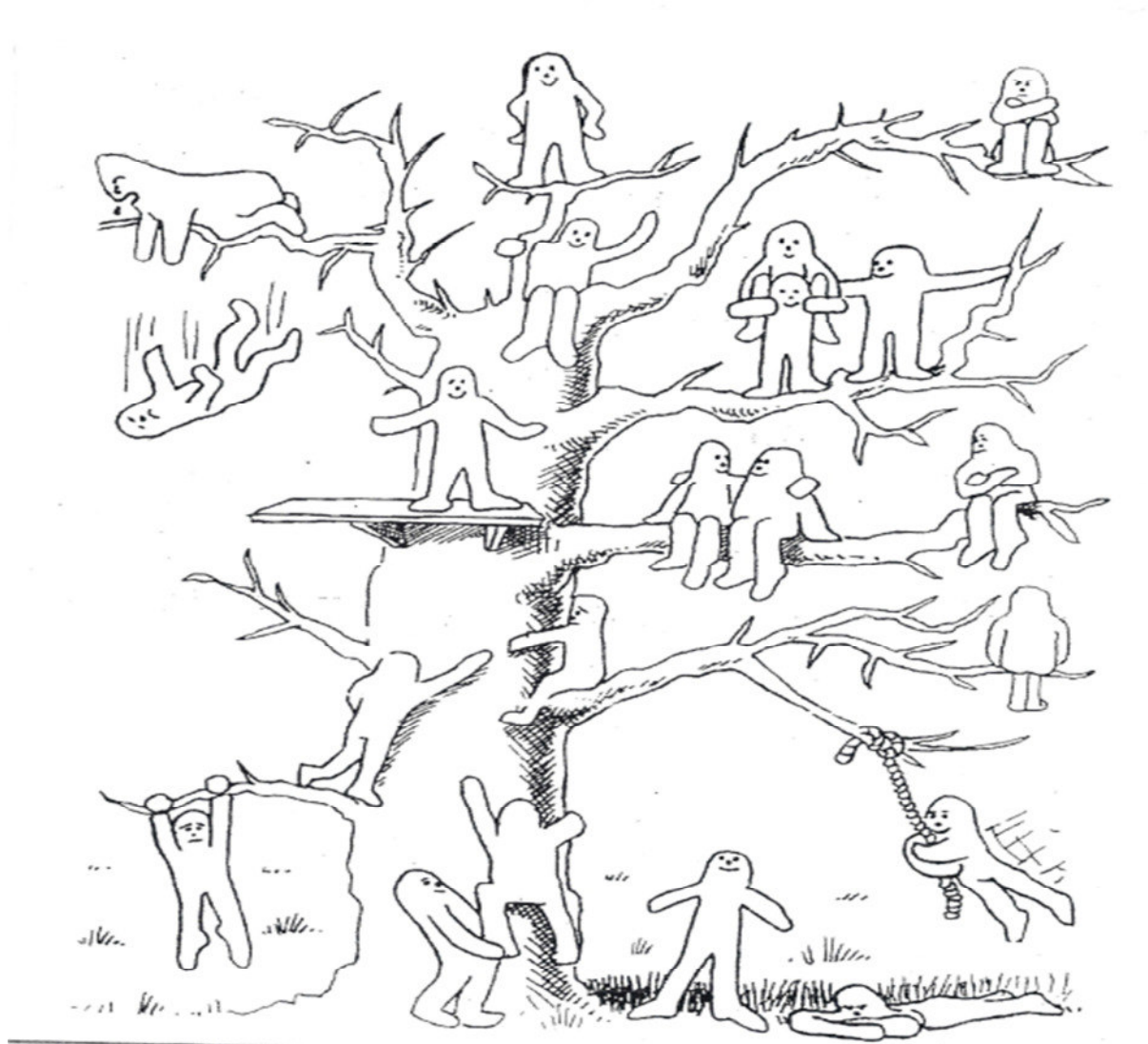
*Can you explain **why this is important** to/for you?*

### Final Clarifications!

- **You mentioned XXX, can you explain a bit more about it? How did you feel?**
- **Is there anything else that you would like to tell me, that we have not covered already?**

## Annex III: The Blob Tree

The Blob Tree has been introduced to the research group by Jo Deakin (University of Manchester).



This is a basic Blob Tree but there are plenty of variations you can find on the web. It's a social work technique designed to get people talking about themselves and has been particularly successful with younger respondents, and those who are finding it difficult to express their feelings. It gives them a focus to begin to construct their narrative and should help them situate themselves in relation to others. For this reason it's a useful tool for exploring identity, self-perception, views on perception of significant others etc.

I have used the Blob Tree in research with children up to the age of 16. I was initially dubious and thought it might feel a little staged or awkward, but, in fact, it's the opposite! It almost always elicits a great response and produces rich narrative data.

Start by getting the respondent to look at the characters and think about where they are positioned on the tree. It can help to have a situation, goal or event to relate it to eg something they've already mentioned that you want to explore further; or a more general idea like being successful, achieving happiness, feeling settled; or more specific situations like getting a job.

Questions to encourage discussion:

How are you feeling today?/ how did you feel when X happened?/ which of these represents what you feel on a typical day?

How do you see yourself? How did you see yourself when you arrived?

Where would you like to be on the tree?

How do you think others see you? (e.g. parents, police, friends, partner/children, media, people you encounter in everyday life)

Always follow up responses by asking the respondent to explain their answers.

