Master's thesis

Did They Stay or Did They Go?

A follow-up study of youth migration intentions and behaviors in the Northern Westfjords of Iceland

Erin Diane Kelly

Advisor: Þóroddur Bjarnason, Ph.D.

University of Akureyri
Faculty of Business and Science
University Centre of the Westfjords
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Supervisory Committee

Advisor:
Þóroddur Bjarnason, Ph.D.

External Reader:
Timothy Heleniak, Ph.D.

Program Director:
Verónica Méndez Aragón, Ph.D.

Erin Diane Kelly
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Declaration

I hereby confirm that I am the sole author of this thesis and it is a product of my own academic research.

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Erin Diane Kelly

Abstract

In this paper, migration intentions among adolescents are explored in the setting of remote fishing villages in the Westfjords of Iceland, and how perceptions of job opportunities and gender roles in their home communities influence these intentions. This research is a follow-up study to Bjarnason and Thorlindsson (2006) who surveyed teenagers on their migration and career aspirations, by following up with the same cohort who are now in their early 30s through semi-structured interviews on their decision-making process to stay, leave or move out of and eventually return to their home communities. Using the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen 1991), these processes are analyzed to determine how their perceptions and intentions influenced migration behaviors over time. It is found that each decision-making process, although unique to the individual, generally comes from a place of agency and free will for each to decide their migration behaviors on their own volition and without any external force. Those who stayed were content to do so, those who left did so in search of a different lifestyle, and some who left ended up returning at a later period of time. However, some anecdotal evidence shows that gender disparities that exist working in local fisheries, one of the region's primary industries, can possibly be a factor in female out-migration levels. Youth migration in this region of the country has been prevalent over the years as local adolescents in these fishing communities migrate to more urban areas in pursuit of higher education or better job opportunities, but this trend has recently been in decline (Garðarsdóttir, Bjarnason, Jónsson, & Shuttleworth, 2020). In conclusion, the limitations of this research call for a broader and more quantitative analysis to further determine these patterns, and also an examination of how the presence of international immigrants in these communities has an impact on these migration behaviors.

Útdráttur

Í þessari ritgerð er tilhneiging ungs fólks í sjávarbyggðum Vestfjarða til búferlaflutninga skoðuð og hvernig kynbundnar staðalímyndir og framtíðaratvinnumöguleikar hafa áhrif á þær ákvarðanir. Um er að ræða eftirfylgnisrannsókn af rannsókn Bjarnasonar og Þórlindssonar (2006) þar sem starfs- og búsetuáform ungs fólks voru könnuð út frá sömu forsendum með því að fylgja eftir sama árgangi fólks, nú komnu á fertugsaldur og taka við það hálf-formleg viðtöl um ástæður að baki ákvarðanatöku þeirra varðandi áframhaldandi búsetu, brottflutning eða endurkomu í uppeldisbyggðir. Með því að nota kenningu um skipulagða hegðun (Ajzen 1991) eru þessi ferli greind til að varpa ljósi á hvernig upplifanir og fyrirætlanir þeirra náðu að móta hegðunarmynstur varðandi búferlaflutninga yfir ákveðið tímabil. Rannsóknin leiddi í ljós að loss ákvörðunarferlin, þó mismunandi væru á milli aðila einkenndust af frjálsum vilja einstaklingsins til að ákvarða sína eigin búsetu án áhrifa af utanaðkomandi þrýstingi. Þeir einstaklingar sem kusu að búa áfram á heimaslóðum voru sáttir með líf sitt þar og þeir sem fluttu á brott gerðu það yfirleitt í leit að annars konar lífstíl. Sumir sneru aftur eftir mislanga dvöl annarsstaðar. Hinsvegar sýna sumar einstaklingssögur fram á það að í fiskvinnslu, einum megin atvinnugeira Vestfjarða ríkir ákveðinn

kynjamismunur sem kann að hafa áhrif á ákvarðanatöku kvenkyns ungmenna varðandi hvort flutt sé á brott eða haldið kyrru fyrir á svæðinu. Fólksflutningur ungmenna á Vestfjörðum hefur verið ríkjandi atferli í gegnum tíðina þar sem ungmenni frá fiskiþorpum Vestfjarða flytja í þéttbýli til að stunda nám og í leit að víðtækari og betri atvinnumöguleikum. Samkvæmt nýlegum rannsóknum hefur samt komið í ljós að þessi tilhneiging hefur undanfarið verið í lægð (Garðarsdóttir, Bjarnason, Jónsson, & Shuttleworth, 2020). Niðurstaða þessarar ritgerðar leiðir í ljós að vegna þess hve takmörkuð hún er kallar það á víðtækari og frekar megindlegri greiningu til að varpa skýrara ljósi á þessa fólksflutningshegðun. Að auki kallar það á nánari rannsókn á þau áhrif sem innflytjendahópar hafa haft á þessar byggðir og fólksflutningshegðun heimamanna.

This work is dedicated to the community of the Westfjords that I have found a home in myself.

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Áfram með smjörið!

1 Introduction

Population decrease in the Westfjords of Iceland, particularly in smaller coastal fishing villages, has been a prevalent issue among the community in recent years. These villages are becoming depopulated as the younger population moves out of their homes, most commonly to move to the capital region in pursuit of further education and more job opportunities (Bjarnason 2014). Studies show that perceptions of job opportunities elsewhere are a major indicator of migration intentions among youth in Iceland, while factors such as being raised in the community and having an interest working in the local primary industry are strong predictors of intentions to stay (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006). Considering that one of the country's primary economic sectors is the fishing industry, it is difficult to be raised in one of these many rural fishing communities along the coast and not have any sort of experience working in fisheries- whether one may just have tried it out for one day only to quit immediately or made it a career being out on a boat for weeks or months at a time. In areas such as the Westfjords in particular, fishing and fishery-related activities are crucial for continuity of employment and habitation (Skaptadóttir, 1996). The individual experiences adolescents have working in the fishing industry can have an influence on their decision to stay or leave their home communities. More broadly, the individual perceptions that adolescents have about working in particular industries can as well heavily influence their decision to migrate.

1.1 Research Question, Aims, and Hypothesis

This study particularly explores perceptions of working in the fishing industry from those who were raised in the northern Westfjords region, how these perceptions vary by gender, and also how these perceptions impact the individual's decision-making process to leave or stay in their home community. Semi-structured interviews with individuals from this region discuss why each of them chose to stay, move away, or move away and eventually return, and describe varying social and economic influencers that each individual is faced with in their decision-making processes.

Although Iceland is globally recognized as the most gender-equal country in the world (World Economic Forum 2020), many discriminations and outdated gender roles are still prevalent in the country's biggest export industry (Skaptadóttir, 1996; Yingst & Skaptadóttir, 2018). Regardless, the activities around fish and fishing are a large part of many communities around the country. In certain areas of Iceland, such as the Westfjords region where this study takes place, the social and economic culture around fish and fish-related activities are crucial for employment and habitation (Skaptadóttir, 1996). Most all residents of Icelandic fishing towns have some sort of connection to fish, even if it is a family history that is no longer continued. Rural folk were raised surrounded by fish.

Although Ísafjarðarbær is by far the largest municipality in the Westfjords region, with a population of around 3,645 (Hagstofa Íslands 2020), its youth demographic has been steadily decreasing over time. This study is a follow-up project to Bjarnason (2006) that explores the migration behaviors of young people growing up in the Westfjords in 2003. It is not necessarily a lack of jobs that causes young and ambitious people to move away, but rather the types of job opportunities available (Bjarnason 2014). This study is a follow-up project that explores the migration behaviors of young people growing up in the Westfjords in 2003. These youth were surveyed on their intentions of migrating in the future as well as their perceptions of related factors including levels of interest in various jobs, levels of respect for working in certain industries, and level of pride attached to their local community, among others. Social identities in youth also play a crucial role in an individual's perceptions and intentions to migrate, as many are facing the difficulties in deciding to stay and adapt their parent's rural identities or leave their community in search of a different life in an urban context (Hendry & Kloep, 2004).

In addition, I explore the gender dynamics in the decision-making process surrounding migration behaviors, and experiences working in the local fishing industry. The job of fishing out on a trawler or boat is almost exclusively worked by men, while women tend to work on shore at fish processing facilities preparing and packaging fish products. Even these on shore sectors of the fishing industry are gendered as well, as women tend to work jobs that require sitting in one place all day doing repetitive kind of work while men who work at processing facilities are operating machinery and doing more physically-demanding labor, like heavy lifting, that is generally associated with masculinity. Gendered perception of job availability in rural areas has an influence on an individual's decision-making process to stay

or leave their home community (Júlíusdóttir, Skaptadóttir, & Karlsdóttir, 2013). Different expectations and demographic indicators between genders can result in differing migration intentions of men and women (De Jong, 2000). This study in particular focuses on the differing perceptions of job availability in the local fishing industry between men and women as it is a historically dominant social and economic role in the communities of Ísafjarðarbær.

Bjarnason and Thorlindsson (2006) explore social mobility and migration decisions among youth in coastal Icelandic fishing and farming communities. These rural regions dominate the coastline of Iceland with the exception of the capital region of Reykjavík and surrounding suburbs. It was found that perceptions of occupational opportunities are a dominant predictor of migration intentions, and predictors of intentions to stay include being raised in the community, parental support and control, and interest in working in the primary industry. In other words, many of those who stay in these communities make this decision because they intend to work in fisheries or on a farm and those who decide to migrate do so because they perceive there to be better occupational opportunities for themselves elsewhere, more likely than not in Reykjavík where they can go to university and pursue a higher education.

While some regions of Iceland have held demographic stability, it has been found that high depopulation rates are mostly found in farming communities and the smaller and more remote fishing villages such as the Westfjords where job opportunities are limited, as well as highly gendered (Bjarnason 2012). As this trend continues in these rural areas, policy makers and managerial leaders in communities are faced with growing concern (Seyfrit, Bjarnason & Olafsson, 2010). With an increase in rural youth depopulation, local infrastructure can quickly diminish which likely can further perpetuate the vicious circle of youth out-migration and social deterioration (Bjarnason 2014). Without a stable population of youth settling and continuing to live and work in these small coastal regions, the local economy will have to either suffer or hire from the outside.

In Bjarnason's 2014 follow-up report of the 2006 study, it was found that despite the percentage of youth who intended to live elsewhere did not precisely match the percentage of future population decline overall, when more than one-third of all 15-16-year olds surveyed in 1992 intended to migrate, the number of 35-36-year olds declined 20 years later (Bjarnason 2014). In other words, this cohort's behaviors generally matched their intentions, and the decisions to migrate were voluntary. (Seyfrit, Bjarnason, & Olafsson, 2010) also

confirm that regardless of employment opportunities in the Westfjords, rural youth in Iceland increasingly want to move to more urban areas or abroad, and that gender differences over time shifted into more of a focus from "female flight" to "youth flight." This indicates that the gender disparities that had previously surrounded migration rates in the area has evened out over time, however the issue is now emerging to focus on the youth population, rather than female.

1.2 Research Significance

Migration studies answer the question of where people are going and why. Exploring youth migration intentions in particular gives us a glance at future population trends, and this kind of knowledge is important in a number of decision-making processes among communities. For this study in particular, the fishing villages in the Northwest region of the Westfjords have a more structured picture of what their community's youth population has looked like over the last generations, and where we can possibly see it leading to.

Carrying out this study in the northern Westfjords is important because it remains consistent with a sample of the cohort surveyed in Bjarnason & Thorlindsson's research. Focusing on this region in particular is important because although the Westfjords as a whole are one of the more rural areas of the country, Ísafjarðarbær and surrounding municipalities are by far the most urbanized area with more than half the Westfjords population living there. Here, the fishing industry is a dominant economic sector. Studies have also shown that youth migration in the Westfjords in particular has been increasing over time (Seyfrit, Bjarnason, & Olafsson, 2010). A better understanding of the indicators of youth migration trends, including perceptions of jobs in local fishing industries, can assist in improving management practices in all levels of the fisheries from the boats to the shore. Currently, there are a number of institutions that exist in this region that have, in turn, served to attract younger people to live in the area- even if just temporarily. Of course, the decision-making process should always remain up to the individual, but the choice to stay and live in one's home community should come along with more options in terms of job and career paths. This identifies as a challenge to Westfjords communities where young people are no longer interested in working in fish.

Adolescent migration weighs heavily on the fate of rural fishing villages in Iceland. If fewer and fewer young people live there over time, eventually the demographic structure of these communities' collapses. With the absence of young adults (between the ages of 18 and 30) comes with it the absence of new families being born and a general lack of growth within the community. Shifting a focus towards the youth population and providing better reasons to stay can revitalize the social and economic activities in these small fishing towns.

2 Background

Migration theory is the study of human movement and behavioral mobility; it is used to analyze which group or individual has moved from one geographic location to another and what factors influence this process along the way. Many social science disciplines including geography, psychology, political economy, sociology, anthropology and demography have offered conceptual contributions to the theory over time (Piguet 2018). Migration studies can be analyzed through from many different focal points, such as including gender, age, and geographic location, and the theory is most often divided into two categories: voluntary and forced migration. The former describes human migration behavior that comes from a group or individual's agency and free will to move, often based on social, economic or political influences, while the latter represents groups or individuals who are driven to flee their current location, often due to extreme political conflict (i.e., war) or environmental disasters (i.e., a hurricane) (Piguet 2018). Although research on forced migration has shown to be much more complex that what can be summed in a sentence, this study will focus solely on voluntary migration and the processes and behaviors involved with it.

Voluntary migration processes occur across the globe in all kinds of communities and is a fairly common human experience in one's lifetime. However, each individual experience with migration is completely unique to the individual undergoing the process, and different factors can influence one's behavior at different levels (Kley 2011). In addition, Carling 2014 argues that one's preconceived aspirations and intentions to migrate also play a key role in the migration process. One's relative perception of poverty as it relates to

aspirations of a better life elsewhere are often a significant reason why a person chooses to migrate (Carling 2014). Additionally, as previously mentioned, an individual's age, gender and geographic location all primarily influence one's migration experience.

The age or generational cohort of an individual is commonly focused on in migration studies. The notions and behaviors of a young person going through the migration process can vary completely than that of a senior citizen going through the same process. For instance, many young people aspiring to migrate may want to do so because they want to pursue a career path that is more attainable in another geographic location, or they want to explore parts of the world that they have yet to have the opportunity to see before. While, on the other hand, older people may consider migrating elsewhere because they are nearing retirement and want to relocate to an area or specific community that is suitable for those needs. Seyfrit, Bjarnason & Olafsson (2010) found that regardless of employment opportunity, rural youth in Iceland increasingly aspire to move to more urban areas, and that over time gender differences in migration disappeared over time as "female flight" to "youth flight," shifting the research focus from gender to age.

Migration studies are often examined through the "life-cycle" theoretical framework, in which different age groups and their varying migration behaviors are compared. Chen and Rosenthal (2008) found that younger people tend to move towards places with more favorable business environments, while on the other hand, people around retirement age tend to migrate to areas with higher valued consumer amenities. These shifts in demographics over time could pose a threat to the small fishing towns in this study. Cities attractive to businesses thrive not only because firms want to do business there, but households also want to live there, and these factors tend to reinforce each other (Chen & Rosenthal, 2008).

Cuba and Hummon (1993) studied life-cycle migration perceptions among migrants to Cape Cod, MA and found that migration at different stages of the life cycle produces different patterns of place affiliation. They discuss how complex the analysis of place identity and affiliation along the life cycle is, but in general found that younger migrants' reasonings for moving to be more centered around family and friend affiliations, while older migrants tend to construct their internal senses of home based on the environment and the dwelling itself (Cuba and Hummon 1993). In other words, young people are more oriented towards moving to a place that builds their social networks and can eventually expand their

family and friends circles, while older generations are more focused on previous personal connections to places they would potentially move to, and the economic value of the properties there as well.

A study on life cycle migration in France divided age demographics into three groups: young, middle aged, and retired; and analyzed how each moved around urban, suburban and rural regions of the country (Détang-Dessendre, C., Goffette-Nagot, F., & Piguet, V., 2008). It was found that the younger demographic, especially the educated youth, move towards cities and places with a larger labor market, middle aged people tend to shift towards the suburbs as their families grow larger, and people at the retirement age are the least likely of all to move to a non-urban area, especially if having spent their life in a city environment. The findings of this study are unsurprising, but also continue to reinforce the migration theory that young people migrate to pursue new social networks and environments, while older people either migrate less or migrate for reasons unrelated to labor pursuits.

With this "youth flight" trend, youth populations in rural or non-urban communities begin to disappear over time. In places such as Iceland, where this study takes place, this phenomenon can pose a threat to rural or less-populated regions that lose younger people to the urban capital of Reykjavík that is comprised of a third of the country's population. Bjarnason & Thorlindsson (2006) surveyed Icelandic youth across the country between 14 and 16 years old in 2003 and found that 79% living in rural communities believed their best chances of a well-paying job were outside of their home community, and 69% expected to migrate from their home community. Both of these statistics have increased since their initial research in 1992, and more recent demographic trends suggest this has increased since 2003 (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson 2006; Statistics Iceland 2020). In fact, this type of trend is seen throughout the Nordic region in recent years. As shown in the map below, internal migration movements are primarily directed towards urbanized areas and away from rural regions. This is largely credited to age selectivity of migration, with young people leaving in large numbers, accelerating the ageing of the population structure in regions with high out-migration (Nordregio 2020).

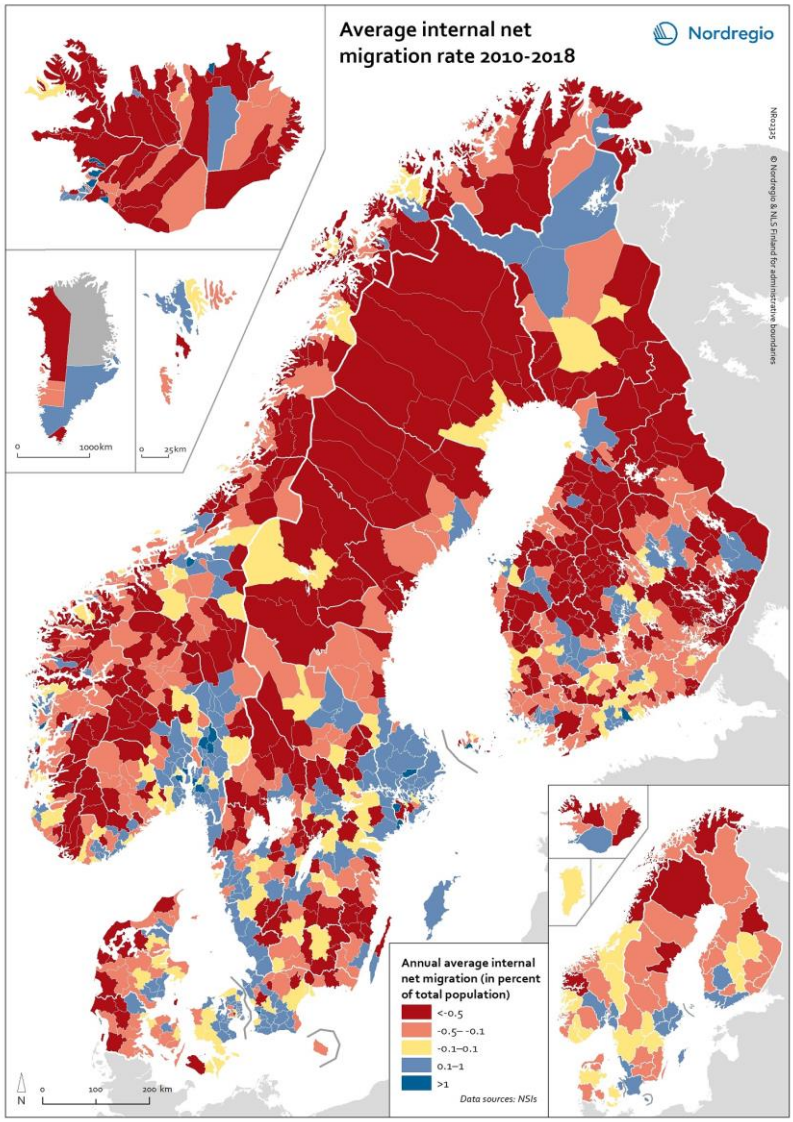


Figure 1. Average internal net migration rate 2010-2018. (Nordregio 2020).

As shown in the map above, migration behaviors across the Scandinavian North tend to be stronger towards more urban areas. This means that more residents of a given country are shown to migrate to their respective capital/urbanized parts than to any other. The Northern Westfjords, as seen above, are no exception to that trend, as it is one of the least internally migrated places to in the country.

However, a recent study has shown that this trend is beginning to change. Garðarsdóttir, Bjarnason, Jónsson, and Shuttleworth (2020) found that despite continued high migration rates as a whole, there has been a slight downward trend in moves. They cite that this can be due to a number of factors; including larger regional centers in provinces (for example,

Ísafjörður in the Westfjords), changes in priorities leading to a more content population, and ageing populations in these regions resulting in less migration behavior over time (Garðarsdóttir, Bjarnason, Jónsson, & Shuttleworth, 2020).

2.1 Migration Decision-Making

The decision-making process of whether or not to migrate is complex and unique to each individual (Bakewell 2010). Many kinds of factors weigh differently depending on the individuals' characteristics such as age, geographic location, and gender identity. It is also an ever-changing process to each individual, where changing perceptions and opportunities throughout one's life heavily influences migration behaviors.

"One of the most frequently applied frameworks for explaining the migration process is de Jong's (2000) model on migration decision-making. Building on the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which postulates that intentions are the primary factor influencing behavior, de Jong's model differentiates between migration intention and migration behavior, and asserts that migration intention is the best predictor for migration behavior. Intention is defined as a person's motivation and perceived likelihood to perform a specific behavior (Ajzen, 1991) whereas behavior involves concrete actions." -Hoppe & Fujishiro (2015)

Bjarnason & Thorlindsson (2006) studied how rural Icelandic adolescents perceive their intentions to migrate or not. It was found that the majority of adolescents in Icelandic fishing and farming communities expect to live somewhere else in the future, and that their perceptions of occupational opportunities are by far the strongest predictor of migration intentions, fully accounting for gender differences (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006). The follow-up research in 2014 also discussed how attachment to place and strong community ties are associated with adolescents wanting to stay in rural communities, and those who intend to leave often express a desire to return to their home communities in the future (Bjarnason, 2014). Their study explored the migration intentions among rural adolescents in Icelandic fishing and farming communities, and found that while perceptions of occupational opportunities are the strongest predictor of migration intentions, being raised

in the community and having an interest in working in the primary industry (in this case, fish), are significant predictors of intentions not to migrate.

An earlier study by Gordon F. De Jong also found that expectations to migrate, along with family norms about migration, are also major predictors of migration behaviors (De Jong, 2000). Intentions and expectations to migrate are therefore significant factors to consider when predicting future migration behaviors and trends. Unsurprisingly, those who intend to migrate often do in communities like these. When an individual adolescent is raised in a supportive family and surrounded by a community that is as close-knit and encouraging as the towns in this study, it is easy for one to have the freedom to go off and explore beyond their home towns knowing they have the support of this network.

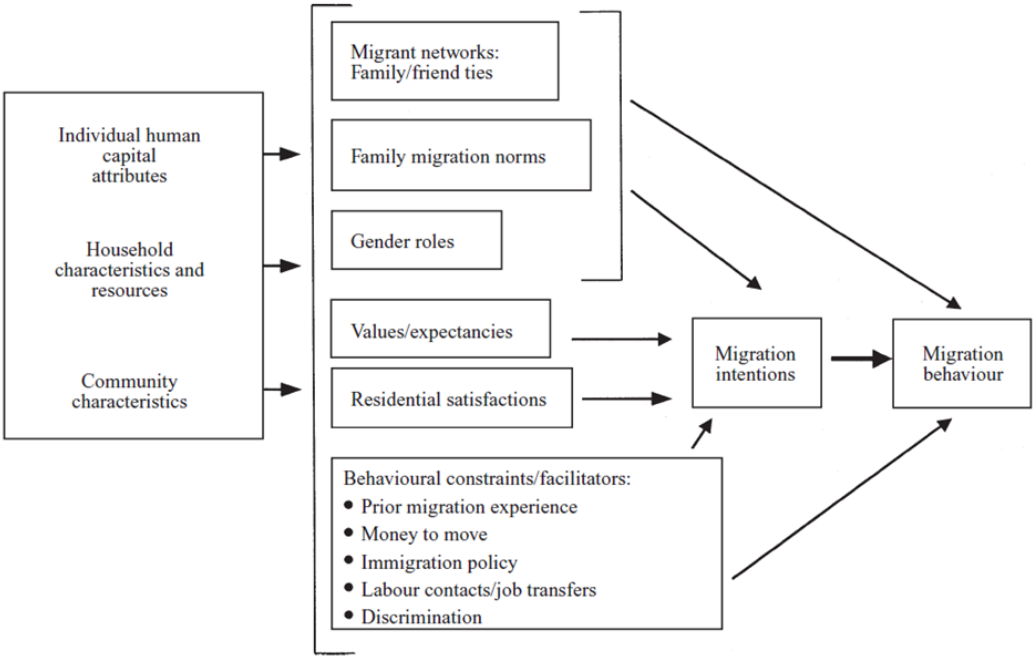


Figure 2. General migration decision-making model. (De Jong, 2000).

As depicted in Figure 2, family migration norms, gender roles, and labor-related behavioral facilitators are among factors that influence migration intentions and, in turn, migration behaviors (De Jong, 2000). These elements also created a part of the framework for interview questions and topics for the subjects of this study. When reflecting on one's previous decision-making process on whether or not to migrate, these factors are often patterns found in the discourse.

Close ties to one's family and friends heavily influence how these migration decisions are made, and it makes sense when those raised here have such strong family and friend networks in these Westfjords communities. That being said, the small population of Iceland allows for strong social networks across the country, especially in the capital region. It is common to have accessibility to a place to stay or connections to a job in the city even if someone does not necessarily live there.

Gender roles in rural communities play a large role in migration intentions and expectations, as well as migration behaviors. Women do not seem to have as much interest as men in working in the fishing industry, but there is justification to this perception. The highly gendered labor force in the fishing industry in these areas has made the job less attractive to women over time, especially when so many other opportunities are accessible elsewhere. Men's work in fisheries is met with higher regard than women's and perceived to be more difficult or require more skill to carry out (Yingst & Skaptadóttir, 2018). Therefore, women feel less welcome in the industry and are discouraged from pursuing work in it, so the option to migrate elsewhere to find work in a more inviting industry becomes a priority.

Perceptions of labor opportunities in these communities also is a key factor to migration intentions and behaviors. The lack of industry diversity in these remote areas presents an issue when it comes to recruiting local youth. It is hard to compete with the abundance new and exciting opportunities in the city when all one's home town can offer in a lifestyle is familiarity.

As youth migration has been steadily increasing in the Westfjords, these small coastal communities are in danger of further population decline. A significant amount of youth out-migration can eventually lead to an eroding economic basis of the social, economic and cultural infrastructures and will perpetuate even further population decline (Gabriel, 2002). In a follow up study, Bjarnason used the proportion of adolescents intending to live elsewhere as a measure of migration potential in the community as a whole, to predict population growth or decline in Icelandic communities over a 20-year period (Bjarnason, 2014). Although it was concluded that predicting future migration rates should not solely rely on measuring intentions, it was also found that Icelandic communities on average only experience population decline over a 20-year period if more than half of the adolescents in the initial survey intended to migrate (Bjarnason, 2014). The vulnerability of these coastal

populations significantly relies on the migration behaviors of its youth. Those who intend to migrate to more urban areas should be free to do so, but it should not solely come from the fact that there was not enough opportunity to pursue in their home community.

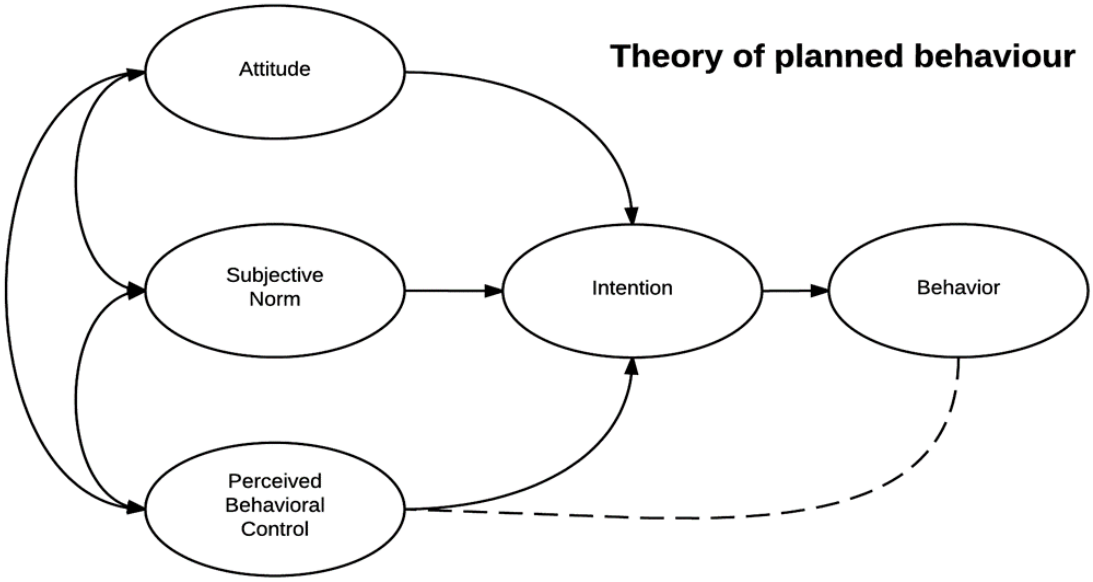


Figure 3. The theory of planned behavior. (Ajzen, 1991)

The figure above, from Ajzen (1991), depicts a basic flow chart of planned behavior. The behavior outcome is determined by the intentions that come from one's attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control; or a combination of the three. In context, this study is exploring the behavioral outcomes of the intentions that were previously researched by Bjarnason (2006).

Ajzen and Fishbein 2005 explains how a variety of factors overall influences behavior. This study in particular analyzes almost all of the above background factors -with the exception of religion, race, ethnicity, and intervention- when conducting interviews with subjects. Exploring these factors in each individual reveals the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions that justifies their intentions, and thus leads to each individual migration behavior. Intentions are conceptualized as the person's estimate of the likelihood or perceived (subjective) probability of performing a given behavior, where the higher this subjective probability is the more likely it is that the behavior will be performed (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Indicators, or predictors, of attitude strength include accessibility in memory, the confidence with which they are held, personal relevance or importance of the behavior to the individual, and the attitude's polarity or extremity (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

In this particular study, those who had intentions to migrate from their home community followed through with that behavior, just as much as those who had intentions not to migrate did. As Bjarnason 2014 and prior research have found, migration intentions are a strong indicator of migration behavior, particularly among youth in Icelandic fishing villages. Throughout the interviews held in this study, varying levels of readiness to act were discussed by subjects, specifically including intentions to engage in migration behavior. Indicators of attitude strength were also mentioned, as most interviewees were readily able to recall specific anecdotal memories that prompted or influenced their decision to migrate or not.

Migration studies are generally built on the theory of planned behavior. Hoppe & Fujishiro (2015) studied potential migrants' expectations and attitudes towards migration, and categorize the behavior process into three phases: pre-decisional, pre-actional, and actional. Pre-decisional refers to when one is forming intentions to migrate; then pre-actional describes the planning and exploring behaviors that come from intending to migrate, and the actional phase describes the concrete actions that result in migration. The study found that career aspirations prompted migration intentions and behaviors, particularly among the younger cohort, across all three phases (Hoppe & Fujishiro, 2015).

Lu (1999) argues that social psychological theories of human behavior, especially the theories of reasoned action and planned behavior, provide a useful framework for explaining inconsistencies in migration intentions and behaviors. The research found that movers and stayers differ significantly in their sociodemographic characteristics, and the extent to which individuals act consistently with their intentions also differs along with these attributes (Lu 1999). Primary social attributes such as age and gender are especially significant factors.

2.2 Gendered Behaviors in Migration

An individual's gender identity can play a significant role in their migration behaviors as well, especially depending on where they live. A number of studies have found that life in rural regions tend to be more inviting for boys than for girls (Glendinning et al. 2008, Dahlström 1996). One can interpret from this that migration aspirations for girls tends to be higher than boys, and can disproportionally influence gender ratios, especially in rural populations. Dahlström (1996) also argues that the socially constructed space of the rural is male-dominated in economic and leisure activities, and as women move from these spaces to more urban areas to seek higher education, the demography of the area increases in number of men and old people. Rafnsdóttir (2004) agrees that occupational opportunities in rural regions are limited as well as highly gendered. This leads to a higher eagerness among girls to migrate from their home communities, skewing the gender balance of these communities at the age where relationships and families are established and young people begin as active community members (Seyfrit 2010).

Growing up, children raised in rural communities have the benefit of being in safe, close-knit communities with lower crime rates and a strong social environment, but as they age to adolescents, they are faced with a number of challenges such as limited options for education and job opportunities, high rates of youth unemployment and limited public transport (Hendry & Kloep, 2004). These factors all heavily influence the process when it comes to an individual's migration decision-making.

2.3 Female Migration

Migration studies analyzes patterns within different demographics, and gendered migration in particular focuses on how different genders behave differently when it comes to movement and migrating. Feminist geographic migration literature has asked the questions of how relations of gender and difference are constructed, maintained and reworked through spatial mobility (Silvey 2004). In the context of Iceland, foreigners and native citizens alike participate in migratory behaviors that vary between regions.

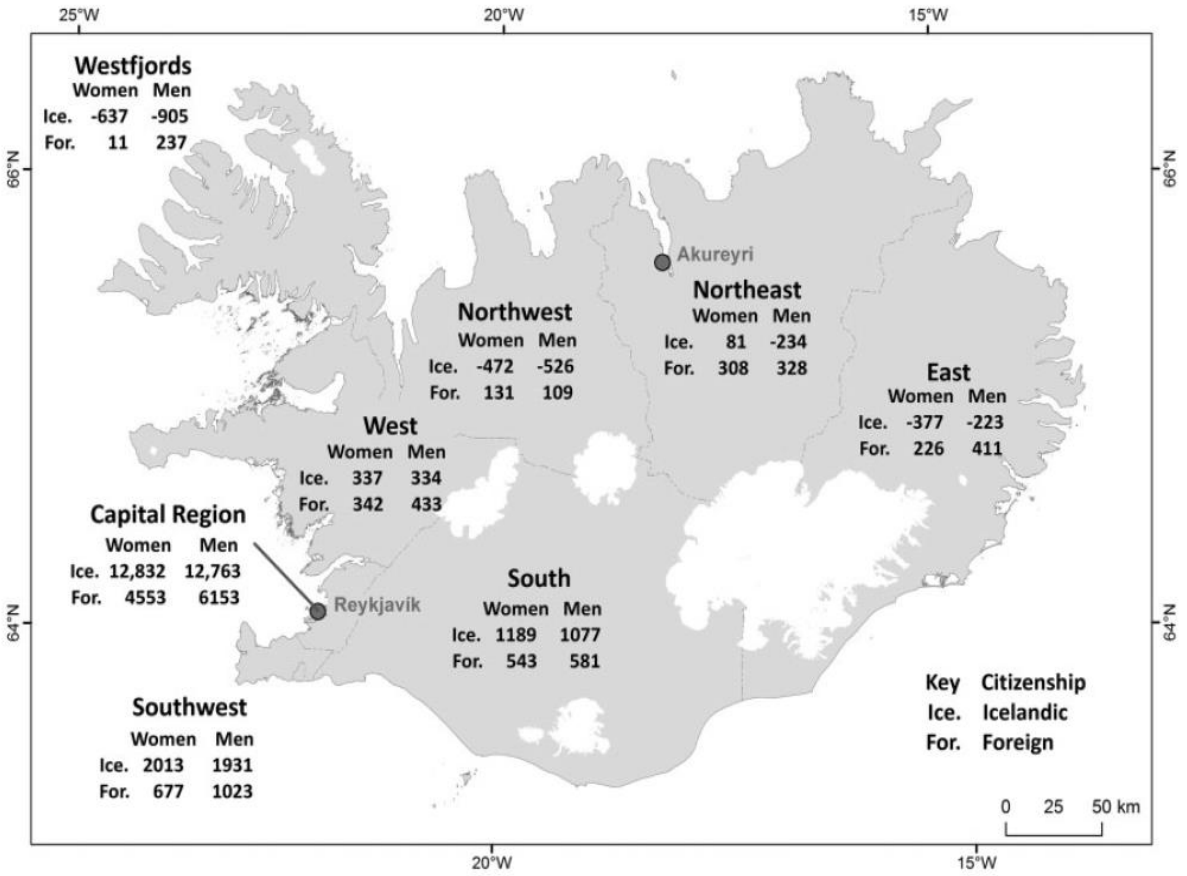


Figure 4. Population changes in Icelandic regions between 1998 and 2010, by gender and citizenship (Ice. = Icelandic, For. = Foreign). (Júlíusdóttir, Skaptadóttir, & Karlsdóttir, 2013).

Figure 4 maps the regional differences in population development. From 1998 to 2010, the Westfjords lost 637 Icelandic women and 905 men, and gained 11 foreign women and 237 foreign men. The capital region, on the other hand, gained 12,832 Icelandic women, 12,763 Icelandic men, 4,553 foreign women and 6153 foreign men. Unsurprisingly, the migratory activity in the capital is much higher than in the rest of the country, as it has been shown before how much the urban population has grown over time. What is interesting to note in the above figure is that the Westfjords had the highest outmigration of native Icelandic citizens in all of the country, with a very small number of foreigners moving in to replace them. Furthermore, much more foreign men have moved into the Westfjords than foreign women in the 12-year study.

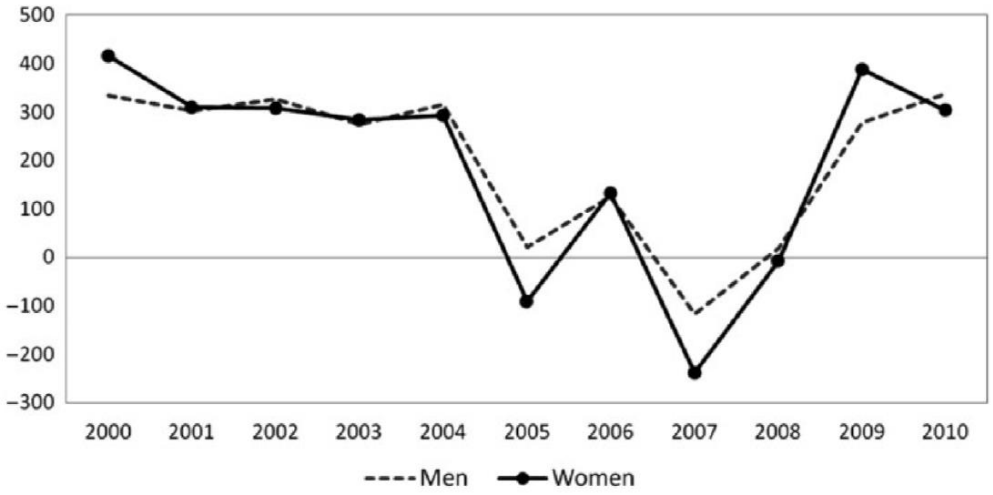


Figure 5. Internal net migration between the capital region and other regions by gender, 2000-2010. (Júlíusdóttir, Skaptadóttir, & Karlsdóttir, 2013).

Figure 5 illustrates internal net migration trends between the capital region and elsewhere for a ten-year period from 2000 to 2010. The graph clearly indicates that women migrated more than men. However, it is interesting to note that although both men and women follow a distinct pattern over time, women as a whole tend to act in higher numbers than men, whether it is regarding in or out-migration.

2.4 Gendered Opportunities in Icelandic Fisheries

Iceland has been the frontrunner of the Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum for 12 consecutive years (World Economic Forum, 2017). Although the country is lauded globally for gender equality, there remains to be a highly segregated labor market, which in turn heavily impacts employment-related migration levels between genders (Júlíusdóttir, Skaptadóttir, & Karlsdóttir, 2013). In the fishing industry, the country's top commodity, men almost exclusively work on boats out at sea, while a mix of men and women work ashore at processing facilities. At these facilities, men work with operating heavy machinery and more physically-demanding labor while women have more monotonous and low-skilled tasks, and are more often sat in one place during the whole work shift as a part of the production and packaging belt (Skaptadóttir & Rafnsdóttir, 2000). It is, however,

worth noting for this study that many women working in these jobs are foreigners and not Icelandic women (Yingst & Skaptadóttir, 2018).

Yingst and Skaptadóttir (2018) surveyed immigrant women from Poland, Thailand and the Philippines, who represent the majority of women working in fish processing.

"[A] woman from the Philippines thought that the division of labor by gender was not bad 'because the men can do the heavy stuff' and the women can do the 'easy stuff.' Although it was primarily Filipino women who thought that gendered labor was okay due to the difficulty of work, they thought that it was only because women could not do the 'men's work,' and not the other way around. The phrase 'anyone could do it' was frequently used by women from all three countries in describing their work in the fish factories. By saying this, women were noting that men could do their jobs but that women could not do the jobs that men do." -Yingst & Skaptadóttir (2018)

Although in a global sense, women's contribution to fisheries has been widely understudied, gendered perspectives in recent decades have become increasingly apparent (Willson, 2013). Now it is recognized scholarly as substantial work at many sectors of the industry, particularly fish processing, seaweed harvesting and net-mending among others, but the significance of a woman in the fisheries as a social role in these rural coastal communities; as fishermen's wives and household managers among others (Willson, 2013).

Skaptadóttir & Rafnsdóttir (2000) studied gender disparities in Icelandic fish processing facilities and how gender constructions are carried out in the workplace. They found that not only the men's work is more highly regarded than women's work, but also that when the men perform work defined as feminine, they talk about it as a humiliating experience and it is more common to find women doing jobs defined as men's jobs than the opposite (Skaptadóttir & Rafnsdóttir, 2000). Preconceived perceptions of social constructs surrounding genders, especially in the setting of small, remote Icelandic villages that can tend to hold more traditional values.

Furthermore, the study found a number of anecdotal evidences suggesting instances of gender disparity:

"A woman who had tried to teach male youths how to do the job said in an interview, 'They were able to do the job but they did it too slowly'. A floor manager, on the other hand, said, 'The boys work fast enough, but they do such a bad job of it' … A woman who sometimes did men's work replied, when asked if there were men who would do women's work, 'Just ridiculous, to do a woman's job, they would find it ridiculous'. Another woman in her thirties who worked in the freezing plant of her village when she was younger said about men doing women's work in processing: 'When I was there [at the freezing plant] then it was 'homo' if a man was cutting cleaning or packing the fish'. Thus, it is seen as threatening to masculinity to do such jobs." - Skaptadóttir & Rafnsdóttir (2000)

The results of this study illustrate a work environment that evidently contradicts the dignification of being the world leader in gender equality, which also speaks to the standards of this recognition as a global whole. Toxic masculinity is embedded in the roots of even places one may not expect. These types of behaviors are not only problematic in and of themselves, but have the potential to lead to more serious incidents such as sexual harassment in the workplace, which will be briefly explored in the interviews of this thesis.

2.5 ITQ System

With the introduction of the Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) system, Iceland saw a significant drop in total number of quota holders, from 535 in 1984 to 391 in 1994 (a 27% reduction) that directly corresponds with an increasing level of inequality among shareholders and concentration of shares in the top largest holders (Olson, 2011). The country's human-maritime relationship was altered through the privatization of shares and marketization processes in fishery systems (Carothers & Chambers, 2012). Many smaller fisheries had no other choice but to sell their shares to larger fisheries as they could no longer compete. Many also felt they had been unfairly penalized by the present fishing policy and

moved away to larger towns, particularly the southwest corner of the capital area (Skaptadóttir, 1996).

In the beginning of the 1970s, when the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) was extended from 50 to 200 nautical miles, it was argued that the North Atlantic Cod are the center of Iceland's export market and the future of the nation's economy relied on the ITQ system for successful marine resource management (Eythorsson, 2000). The nation could not risk cod falling victim to the tragedy of the commons. But by the 1990s the ITQ system led to a decrease in job availability, especially for smaller communities like those found in the Westfjords (Júlíusdóttir, Skaptadóttir, & Karlsdóttir, 2013). Perceived attitudes among the community towards fishing jobs became increasingly degrading, citing low skill levels and low wages (Karlsdóttir, 2008).

Due to this decrease in positive perceptions towards fishing jobs, the fishing fleet of this region aged with the years. The 'greying of the fleet' is a concept that occurs globally in coastal communities, where young generations slowly stop pursuing the fishery workforce, and the same fisher people continue to work through the years without any younger replacements or additions to the fishing fleet.

Donkersloot and Carothers 2016 explores the greying of the Alaskan fish fleet in 2014, where the same ITQ system was implemented among fishers as in Iceland years prior. The average age of a state fishing permit holder was fifty years old, up from forty years old in 1980 but at the same time, the number of Alaska residents under the age of 40 holding permits has fallen from 38% of the total permits held in 1980 to 17% in 2013 (Donkersloot & Carothers, 2016). In rural communities particularly, aging trends are especially outstanding. In the past forty years there has been an 84% decline of young people under the age of forty who hold salmon seine permits in the rural villages of the Kodiak archipelago (Donkersloot & Carothers, 2016).

2.6 Context of Fishing Villages in Iceland

This study, in particular, primarily addresses youth migration (Bjarnason 2014) (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson 2006) (Hendry & Kloep 2004), but also overlaps with gendered migration

(Júlíusdóttir, Skaptadóttir, & Karlsdóttir, 2013) (De Jong 2010), and voluntary migration (Bakewell 2010). In addition, the aspiration/ability model (Carling & Schewel, 2018) is applied to analyze youth perceptions on migration aspirations and behaviors in the Northern Westfjords of Iceland. This remote region is home to some of the country's richest fishing grounds, as well as an abundance of farmland, making the small communities found nestled along the coast to be culturally and economically centered around fish.

2.7 Background Summary

Ajzen's theory of planned behavior is widely prevalent in migration studies, as it theorizes that the more somebody intends to do something the higher the likelihood that the behavior or action is done (Ajzen 1991). In this study, the results of Bjarnason and Thorlindsson's 2006 research on youth migration intentions are followed up with exploring how these intentions were carried out in real time, and if their intentions to migrate did in fact match their future migration behaviors. Many socioeconomic factors contribute to migration behaviors; including age, gender, education and more (Lu, 1999). Young people, in particular, have been shown to migrate out of their home communities here to move to the capital region, most commonly in search of educational or job opportunities (Hoppe and Fujishiro, 2015).

In the context of the Westfjords, young people are raised in small fishing villages that compromise the coastline of the region. When the ITQ system was implemented in Icelandic fisheries in the 1990's, places like these saw a decline in population as jobs in fisheries decreased and paid less (Karlsdóttir, 2008). Despite the region's history of rich fishing grounds, policy changes in fisheries severely affected the overall socioeconomic makeup of these towns, and a new generation was raised to perceive the fisheries of their home communities to be a dead end in career aspirations. Young people, particularly young women, did not see any promising future working in the fisheries of their home communities (Júlíusdóttir, Skaptadóttir, & Karlsdóttir, 2013). These perceptions led to intentions to migrate to the capital, where better and more variety of opportunity exists (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006).

This research is a continuation of Bjarnason and Thorlindsson's previous studies on migration trends among Icelandic youth, focusing on the Northwest region of the Westfjords. While their study paints a picture of intentions to migrate among youth, this research explores the actual behaviors of this cohort and how it compares to their aforementioned intentions. It is a follow-up study that analyzes how Ajzen & Fishbein's 2005 model on reasoned action and planned behavior holds up in the context of youth migration in this region of Iceland. This study aims to answer the following questions: What does the decision-making process to migrate out of one's home region look like, and how does it vary between genders?

3 Methodology

The cohort that was surveyed in Bjarnason and Thorlindsson's original 2003 research were born in Ísafjarðarbær in 1987. This cohort of people, who are now in their early 30's, were identified for this study using snowball sampling methods. Once one person was identified as being born in Ísafjarðarbær and having been at or around the target age, they were contacted for an interview. Many interviewees voluntarily provided at least one name to suggest contacting after the interview was over. Due to the nature of this research, those who were identified as "stayed" or "left and returned" were easier to locate and used to recruit interviewees who "left" Ísafjarðarbær, simply because they were already in the place of the study location. and responses of the original 2003 ESPAD survey were used as a framework for questions to ask and concepts to address in the semi-structured interviews. Nine total interviews were held; five women and four men, three of those were identified as "left," two were identified as "stayed", and four were identified as "left and returned."

This research is primarily based around qualitative data collection from semi-structured interviews conducted with selected individuals who are from the cohort of participants who took the 2003 ESPAD survey. Additionally, qualitative methods of data analysis were implemented throughout the study.

3.1 Study Location

This study is primarily focused in the Northwest region of the Westfjords of Iceland that encompasses the following towns: Ísafjörður, Bolungarvík, Flateyri, Suðureyri, Hnífsdalur, and Súðavík. These particular towns were selected specifically because they represent the range of area that interview respondents said to have lived around growing up in this part of the Westfjords region. It is the most urbanized area of the region, being centered around but makes up about half the total population.

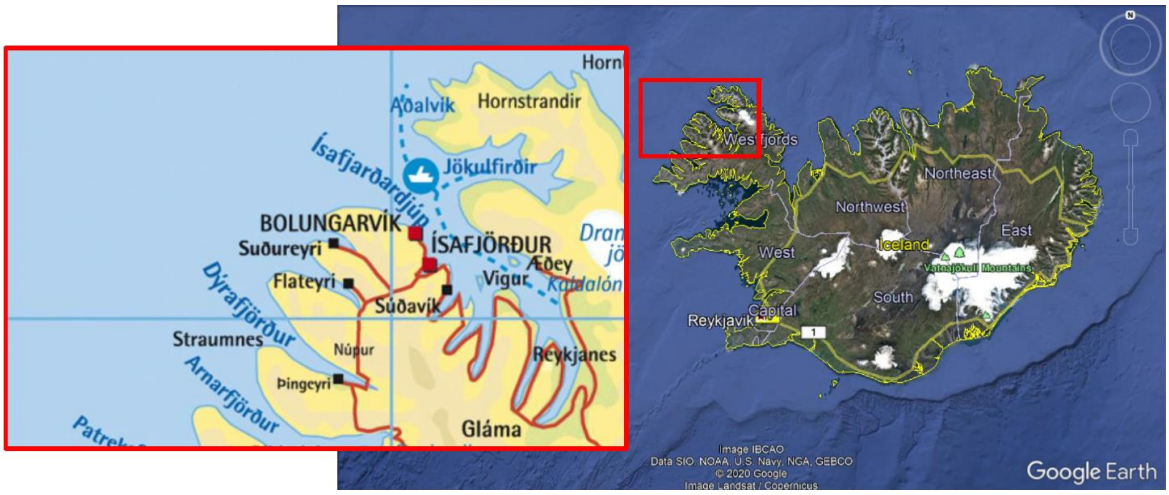


Figure 6. Location of study site. (Google Earth).

3.2 History of Fisheries in the Westfjords

"Ísafjörður and the neighbouring towns all share the same background; they were founded on and grew around fisheries. In the not-so-distant past, almost everybody's livelihood

depended on fish and the question wasn't whether or not you worked in fishing and processing, but whether you did so on land or at sea." (Port of Ísafjörður, 2013)

Fish and fish products have dominated the Icelandic economy since the North-Atlantic island nation was settled in 874 AD. The Westfjords peninsula is located close to the coast's richest waters for demersal species such as cod and redfish, and the region is thus a hotspot for fishers (Eythorsson, 2000). The northwest region of the Westfjords in particular is home to many historical fishing villages, where the industry's infrastructure has dominated both on land and sea (Port of Ísafjörður, 2013). In modern years, more industries have settled since the population has grown -although fishing still remains a primary aspect of the economy- and a broadening of occupational opportunities has opened up for youth in these rural coastal communities. Despite an expansion of industry in the region, almost all residents are somehow linked to fishing whether it be through one's work experience or family history.

The Northern Westfjords of Iceland is a large peninsula of the country that, due to the mountains that dominate most of the landscape, consists of pockets of small historical fishing settlements along the coast. Although the population has not grown excessively over time, the bounty that comes from fishing and farmlands that encompasses the land has remained. In this study, the nine interviewees who were raised in the Westfjords were all said to have grown up between Flateyri and Súðavík, making up for almost the whole Northern region of the Westfjords. Interviewees who were raised in this community either never left at all, or moved to Reykjavík and surrounding areas, or out of the country entirely.

The Northern settlements of the Westfjords is centered around the capital of Ísafjörður, where locals in all surrounding towns travel to for work, school, shopping, and all other socioeconomic behaviors. Whether someone lived directly in Ísafjörður or one of the smaller surrounding towns, Ísafjörður is the urban hub that is incorporated into most resident's daily lives. This study is primarily focused on the following towns: Ísafjörður, Bolungarvík, Flateyri, Suðureyri, Hnífsdalur, and Súðavík. These particular towns were selected specifically because they represent the range of area that interview respondents said to have lived around growing up in this part of the Westfjords region. It is the most urbanized area of the region, being centered around but makes up about half the total population.

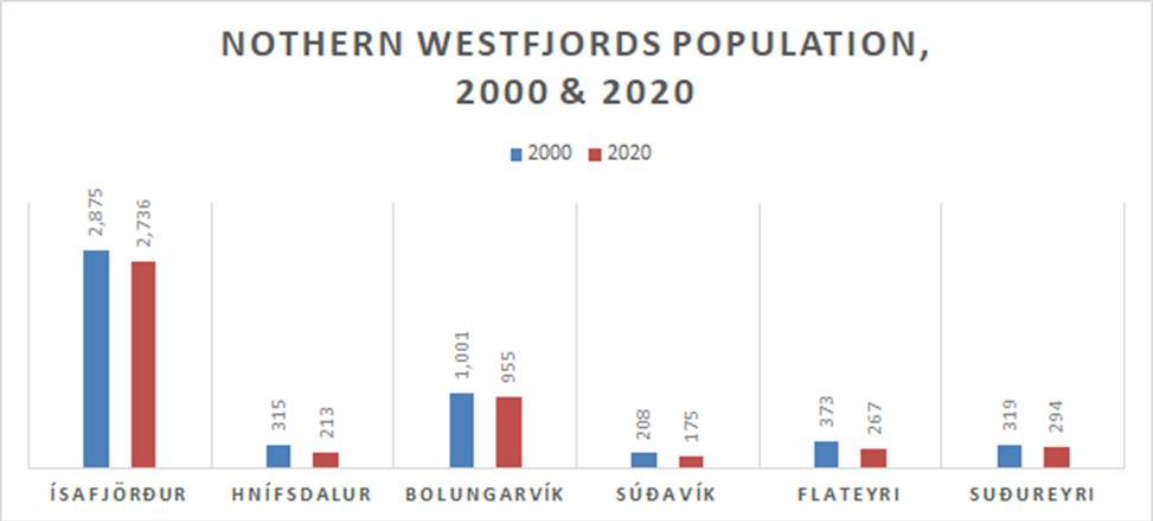


Figure 7. Northern Westfjords population comparing 2000 and 2020. (Statistics Iceland, 2020).

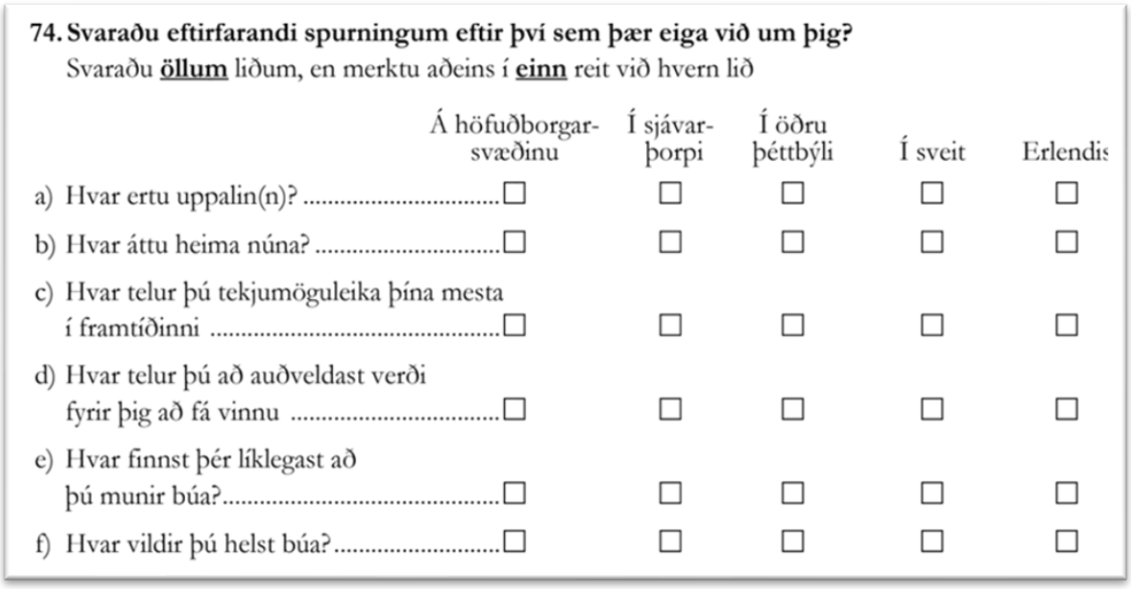
However, given the nature of this research, the capital Reykjavík and neighboring municipalities are considered as well to compare cohorts over time. Interview subjects were all born and raised in Ísafjarðarbær, but some now have migrated elsewhere in the country while some remain residents of the same municipality. All interviews were held in Ísafjörður, whether in person or digitally (phone call or video conference).

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 ESPAD 2003 Survey

Data from the ESPAD 2003 survey was evaluated to use as a reference platform to construct questions and topic guidelines for the semi-structured interviews. The ESPAD survey was originally designed for research investigating drug use and behavior among Scandinavian youth; however, there is a section of the survey that asks where the individual was raised, where they want to live in the future, what level of interest they hold in pursuing various jobs, what kind of industries their family worked in, and other migration related questions. The responses from these set of questions (#73- #84) were extracted through SPSS and categorized by gender and region, and interview questions were developed from there.

At the time of the survey, 4,121 adolescents born in 1987 were registered in 132 schools across Iceland, and all of these registered grade 10 students were targeted to participate in the survey (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson 2006). Although, the survey also asks to specify which year each individual was born (1986-1989, or other) and what grade they are in (8th, 9th or 10th) in order to compensate for those who perhaps started school earlier or later than usual. Those born in 1986-1989 were roughly 15-18 during the 2003 ESPAD survey, and 331 of total adolescents surveyed lived in this study area of the northern Westfjords at the time (Hagstofa Íslands). For this research, the focus was narrowed to just the Westfjords region to analyze ESPAD data from, but some data from the capital region was also used for comparative purposes.



74. Svaraðu eftirfarandi spurningum eftir því sem þær eiga við um þig?
Svaraðu **öllum** liðum, en merktu aðeins í **einn** reit við hvern lið

	Á höfuðborgar-svæðinu	Í sjávar-þorpi	Í öðru þéttbýli	Í sveit	Erlendis
a) Hvar ertu uppalin(n)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b) Hvar áttu heima núna?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c) Hvar telur þú tekjumöguleika þína mesta í framtíðinni	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d) Hvar telur þú að auðveldast verði fyrir þig að fá vinnu	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e) Hvar finnst þér líklegast að þú munir búa?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f) Hvar vildir þú helst búa?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Figure 8. Example 1 of 2003 ESPAD survey question, translated below. (ESPAD 2003)

Á höfuðborgarsvæðinu (in the capital area), Í sjávarþorpi (in a fishing village), Í öðru þéttbýli (in another urban area), Í sveit (in the countryside), or Erlendis (abroad)

Hvar ertu uppalin(n)? (Where were you raised?)

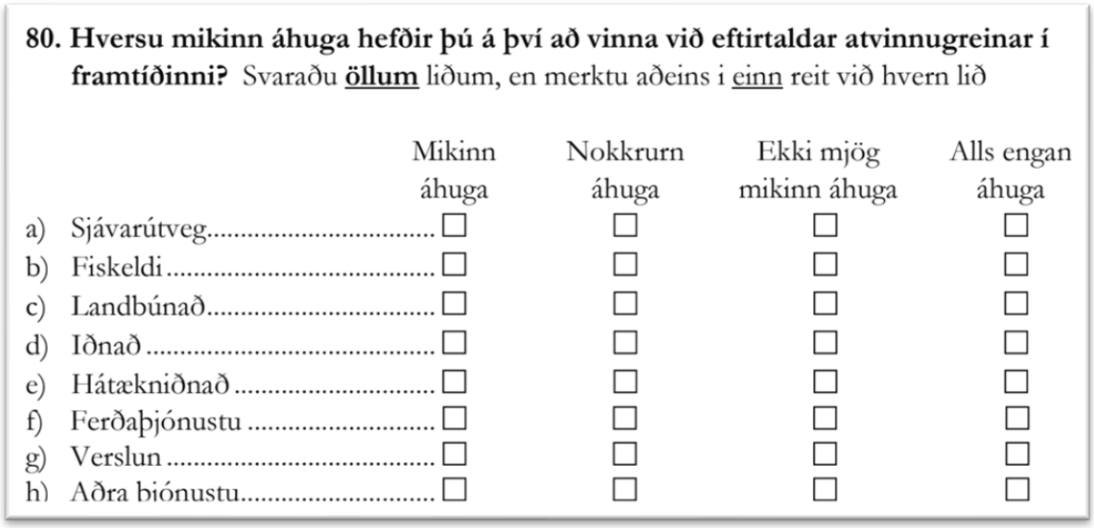
Hvar áttu heima núna? (Where do you live now?)

Hvar telur þú tekjumöguleika þína mesta í framtíðinni? (Where do you think your earning potential is greatest in the future?)

Hvar telur þú að auðveldast verði fyrir þig að fá vinnu? (Where do you think that it would be easiest for you to get a job?)

Hvar finnst þér líklegast að þú munir búa? (Where do you feel you are most likely to live?)

Hvar vildir þú helst búa? (Where do you want to live?)



80. Hversu mikinn áhuga hefðir þú á því að vinna við eftirtaldar atvinnugreinar í framtíðinni? Svaraðu **öllum** liðum, en merktu aðeins í einn reit við hvern lið

	Mikinn áhuga	Nokkrurn áhuga	Ekki mjög mikinn áhuga	Alls engan áhuga
a) Sjávarútveg	☐	☐	☐	☐
b) Fiskeldi	☐	☐	☐	☐
c) Landbúnað	☐	☐	☐	☐
d) Iðnað	☐	☐	☐	☐
e) Hátækniðnað	☐	☐	☐	☐
f) Ferðaþjónustu	☐	☐	☐	☐
g) Verslun	☐	☐	☐	☐
h) Aðra þjónustu	☐	☐	☐	☐

Figure 9. Example 2 of 2003 ESPAD survey question. (ESPAD 2003)

Hversu mikinn áhuga hefðir þú á því að vinna við eftirtaldar atvinnugreinar í framtíðinni? (How interested would you be in working in the following industries in the future?)

Mikinn áhuga (very interested), Nokkrurn áhuga (somewhat interested), Ekki mjög mikkin áhuga (not very interested), Alls engan áhuga (not interested at all)

Sjávarútveg (Fisheries)

Fiskeldi (Aquaculture)

Landbúnað (Agriculture)

Iðnað (Industry)

Hátækniðnað (High-tech industry)

Ferðaþjónustú (Tourism)

Verslun (Retail)

Aðra þjónustu (Other services)

Only questions 74-80 were referred to because these questions pertain to the subject matter on where survey subjects were born and raised, what industries their family members work in, perceptions of future migration intentions, levels of respect held for various job industries, levels of interest in pursuing said jobs, and how important certain industries are for Iceland, among others. Responses to questions were measured on Likert scales depending on the nature of the response. For example, responses to questions concerning levels of interest in working in certain industries were scaled from "very interested," to "some interest," to "not a lot of interest," to "no interest at all," and responses to questions concerning where respondents were born, where they currently live, and where they likely will live were categorized into "in the capital," "in a coastal town," "in an urban area," "in a farm area," and "abroad." All questions and responses of the survey were translated from Icelandic to English.

SPSS data was divided by geographic region which allows for comparison of survey results between the Westfjords region and the capital region of Reykjavík and surrounding areas. Male and female responses were also available separately, along with the total amount combined as well.

3.3.2 Statistics Iceland

Hagstofa Íslands (Statistics Iceland) is the official statistics institution in Iceland that provides a demographic database. Data was collected from this source to compile tables, graphs and map databases to illustrate temporal trends in migration patterns by gender, age, and other variables. In addition, data from the most recent volume of Iceland in Figures, a brochure of statistical data from Hagstofa Íslands published in 2018, was utilized for this project.

3.3.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Interview subjects were selected on the criteria of being born between 1987-89, having been born in the Ísafjarðarbær region of the Westfjords, and in some cases, by their connection to work in the fishing industry, whether through their own experience or familial ties. Each subject was placed into one of three categories: left, stayed, or left and returned. "Left" refers to those who grew up in the Westfjords but moved out. "Stayed" refers to those who grew up in the Westfjords and have never lived anywhere else, and "left and returned" refers to those who grew up in the Westfjords but moved somewhere outside of the Westfjords in Iceland or abroad, to pursue a different job or lifestyle elsewhere.

These interviews assess how participant's current lifestyles compare to the responses given when they were surveyed around 16 years old. They will also be asked to reflect on how their decision-making processes led to their choice to stay or leave. Interviews will attempt to determine how much participants' 2003 responses reflected the reality of their lifestyle over time, and serve as a primary source for understanding trends of rural youth's perceptions of out-migration.

Interviewees who "left and returned" were identified first through word of mouth and informal requests made to known locals of Ísafjörður to inquire about if they knew of anybody who fit the aforementioned criteria. Considering the size of the population, this was a simple yet effective approach to establishing a starting point of potential people to contact for interviews. Once a number of individuals were identified and contacted, verbal or written consent to participate was provided.

Nine individuals; four males and five females between the age of 26 and 36, were interviewed between October 2019 and April 2020. Of the nine, three were categorized as "left;" two males and one female. Two were categorized as "stayed;" one male and one female. Four were categorized as "left and returned;" one male and three females.

Although the initial target demographic was those born between 1987 and 1989, as that specifically targets the cohort of the 2003 survey, adjustments were made due to the difficult nature of identifying enough individuals for each category. This margin of error can speak

to the state of the social demographic in these more remote coastal villages, as we have seen the youth population decreasing in recent decades.

Semi-structured interviews were each held individually, asking questions and discussing topics that were highlighted in the 2003 ESPAD Survey. Basic questions about where the person was born and raised, if or when they moved away from there, and their reflections of each own's decision-making processes back when they were around the adolescent age of the survey's distribution. From there, the topic of fishing and their home community's culture surrounding the industry was discussed.

After the completion of the interviews, audio recordings were transcribed and coded to identify patterns and recurring themes or discussions. Interviewees were categorized into one of three groups: left, stayed, or left and returned and identified by gender and age.

Ethical research practices were implemented throughout the entirety of this study. Informed consent was received by each participant prior to each interview, and verbal consent was recorded and documented at the beginning of each interview. Interviews were conducted solely between the researcher herself and interviewed individuals in a private environment. Each interviewed individual was highly regarded in terms of respect and integrity, and full effort by the researcher was put forth to ensure each individual's ethical treatment throughout the research process. Considering some of the sensitive material discussed in some interviews, full anonymity was ensured to each interviewed individual who are all referred to solely as their gender, age, and migration label (stayer, leaver, or returner).

Ethical research in social sciences is crucial in conducting unbiased, scientifically accurate data that is void of any fraudulent practices. In particular, social sciences exclusively studies the behaviors and emotions of human beings, so it is necessary that ethical conduct is followed throughout the research process to ensure the health and safety of all humans involved. No scientific study is worth more than the well-being of any human life, regardless to what extent. This study adheres to the principles for human subjects research of the 1978 Belmont report. Anonymity was ensured through limited identification in all forms of this research presentation, whether verbal or written, and confidentiality was guaranteed during the informed consent process. The well-being of the community involved was prioritized by hosting the public defense of this research in an open presentation for the community of Ísafjörður. A substantial level of respect was maintained for each research participant.

Consideration for the community was observed on all platforms throughout the research process, and all human subjects were enrolled in a just and equitable manner.

4 Results

4.1 ESPAD 2003 Results

Survey respondents were asked Hvar vildir þú helst búa? (Where would you prefer to live?) and given the following response options: Á höfuðborgarsvæðinu (in the capital area), Í sjávarþorpi (in a fishing village), Í öðru þéttbýli (in another urban area), Í sveit (in the countryside), or Erlendis (abroad).

Questions for interviews were framed using responses given in the 2003 ESPAD Survey. For example, when asked how much interest you have working in the seafood industry, 27.2% of respondents from the Westfjords marked much or some interest, while only 12.8% of those from Reykjavík and the Southwest region marked either of those choices. In addition, 61.3% of respondents from Reykjavík and the Southwest region answered none to the level of interest, and only 39.7% of Westfjords respondents did. This difference in intention largely lies in the fact that there is just a much larger variety of job opportunities and other experiences that exist in the city and do not in the Westfjords. Fishing is a more concentrated part of the everyday culture in these smaller villages, although Reykjavík, as the country's capital, is also a large port for many fishing fleets.

Although this shows there is a considerably higher level of interest in working in the fisheries industry among Westfjords adolescents than the more urban counterparts in Reykjavík and the Southwest region, the ESPAD survey reports the interest in working in farming, another historically essential industry in the Westfjords, among either rural or urban cohort are similarly low.

HOW MUCH INTEREST DO YOU HAVE WORKING IN FISHERIES?		Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Reykjavík & SW region	Very interested	8.8	1.9	5.4
	Somewhat interested	10.7	4.1	7.4
	Not very interested	28.7	23	25.9
	Not interested at all	51.9	71.1	61.3
Westfjords	Very interested	14.6	4	9.8
	Somewhat interested	24.4	8.9	17.4
	Not very interested	31.7	34.7	33
	Not interested at all	29.3	52.5	39.7
WHERE DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE MOST LIKELY TO LIVE?				
Reykjavík & SW region	In the capital area	72.3	66.3	69.4
	In a fishing village	3.5	2.3	2.9
	In another urban area	6.2	6.4	6.3
	In the countryside	1.2	1.9	1.6
	Abroad	16.7	23.1	19.9
Westfjords	In the capital area	39.8	40.6	40.2
	In a fishing village	22.8	25.7	24.1
	In another urban area	20.3	20.8	20.5
	In the countryside	5.7	2	4
	Abroad	11.4	10.9	11.2
WHERE DO YOU WANT TO LIVE?				
Reykjavík & SW region	In the capital area	54.3	44.4	49.4
	In a fishing village	4.8	2.8	3.8
	In another urban area	6.8	5.9	6.3
	In the countryside	4.3	5.5	4.9
	Abroad	29.9	41.5	35.6
Westfjords	In the capital area	20.3	27.7	23.7
	In a fishing village	31.7	25.7	29
	In another urban area	18.7	18.8	18.8
	In the countryside	5.7	3	4.5
	Abroad	23.6	24.8	24.1

Table 1. Selected ESPAD survey results analyzed. (ESPAD 2003)

WHERE DO YOU CONSIDER INCOME POTENTIAL TO BE HIGHEST?		Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Reykjavík & SW region	In the capital area	69.9	64.8	67.4
	In a fishing village	2.5	1.3	1.9
	In another urban area	4.6	3.3	4
	In the countryside	1	1.2	1.1
	Abroad	21.9	29.3	25.6
Westfjords	In the capital area	44.7	47.5	46
	In a fishing village	20.3	16.8	18.8
	In another urban area	11.4	19.8	15.2
	In the countryside	3.3	1	2.2
	Abroad	20.3	14.9	17.9
WHERE DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE EASIEST TO GET A JOB?				
Reykjavík & SW region	In the capital area	77.1	74.2	75.7
	In a fishing village	3.8	2.1	3
	In another urban area	4.4	4.5	4.4
	In the countryside	1.5	1.8	1.6
	Abroad	13.2	17.4	15.3
Westfjords	In the capital area	44.7	41.2	43.1
	In a fishing village	25.2	27.5	26.2
	In another urban area	13.8	18.6	16
	In the countryside	4.1	1	2.7
	Abroad	12.2	11.8	12
HOW MUCH RESPECT DO YOU HAVE FOR FISHERMEN?				
Reykjavík & SW region	A lot of respect	22.8	20	21.4
	Considerable respect	30.7	37	33.8
	Some respect	30.7	33.4	32
	Little respect	15.7	9.6	12.7
Westfjords	A lot of respect	28.8	22.8	26.1
	Considerable respect	26.4	39.6	32.3
	Some respect	34.4	28.7	31.9
	Little respect	10.4	8.9	9.7

Table 2. Selected ESPAD survey results analyzed (continued). (ESPAD 2003)

HOW MUCH RESPECT DO YOU HAVE FOR FISH PROCESSING WORKERS?		Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Reykjavík & SW region	A lot of respect	16.8	14.8	15.8
	Considerable respect	20.5	24.4	22.5
	Some respect	35.3	40	37.6
	Little respect	27.4	20.8	24.2
Westfjords	A lot of respect	21.8	15.8	19.1
	Considerable respect	27.4	28.7	28
	Some respect	33.9	41.6	37.3
	Little respect	16.9	13.9	15.6
HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK FISHERIES ARE TO ICELAND?				
Reykjavík & SW region	Very important	75.6	69.4	72.5
	Somewhat important	18.5	26	22.2
	Not very important	3.1	2.8	3
	Not important at all	2.8	1.8	2.3
Westfjords	Very important	77	74	75.7
	Somewhat important	18.9	22	20.3
	Not very important	1.6	3	2.3
	Not important at all	2.5	1	1.8
HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK FISHERIES WILL BE TO ICELAND IN 2023?				
Reykjavík & SW region	Very important	57.4	49.9	53.7
	Somewhat important	28.9	35	31.9
	Not very important	10.1	12.8	11.4
	Not important at all	7.3	2.2	3
Westfjords	Very important	59.7	56.6	58.3
	Somewhat important	24.2	32.3	27.8
	Not very important	12.9	9.1	11.2
	Not important at all	3.2	2	2.7

Table 3. Selected ESPAD survey results analyzed (continued further). (ESPAD 2003)

The survey responses in Tables 1, 2, & 3 compare data between respondents living in the capital region and respondents in the Westfjords, as well as comparison between genders. The analysis of this data was utilized as a framework for interview discussion topics, and to determine how the Westfjords cohort in particular acted on the perceptions and intentions they provided in the survey responses.

Table 1 lists the responses asking how much interest one has in working in fisheries, where one feels they are most likely to live, and where does one want to live? Only 5.4% of respondents in the capital region responded to be "very interested" in working in fisheries, while over 60% responded to be "not interested at all." In the Westfjords, 9.8%, or almost twice the amount from the capital region, responded to be "very interested" in working in fisheries, and less than 40% responded as "not interested at all." This comparison indicates that generally more respondents from the Westfjords have an interested in pursuing work in the fisheries than those from the capital. However, this answer does not necessarily specify if those from the Westfjords who are interested in the industry intend to live there at home to pursue it or move elsewhere. It is possible that many survey responders could intend to move out of the Westfjords to pursue working in fisheries in the capital or elsewhere, so it does not indicate information for migration intentions. Regardless, these responses suggest that there is pride having been raised in small fishing communities like those of the Westfjords, and that is reflected in adolescents' perceptions of future job opportunities.

In addition, it is interesting to note from Table 1 that more adolescents from the capital want to, and feel they are most likely to, live in their home capital region than those from the Westfjords, although more responders from these fishing villages in the Westfjords indicated that they also want to, and feel they are most likely to, live in the capital region as well as opposed to their own home communities. Clearly, wanting to and being most likely to live in the capital is the strongest response amongst all respondents, however there is a larger difference of perception versus intention among the Westfjords respondents than that of the capital region. Almost 70% of those from the capital region feel they are most likely to live there, despite 20% less responses (49.4%) indicated that they actually *want* to live there. While on the other hand, the Westfjords responses indicate that although about 40% of

respondents feel they are most likely to live in the capital area, only 23% indicate that they want to.

It is also worth nothing that although 29% of Westfjords respondents indicate that they want to live in a fishing village (not specifically their own home, however) but only 24.1% indicate that they feel they are most likely to live somewhere like that. This may suggest that although they may be satisfied with the more rural lifestyle that comes from a fishing village, it is perhaps not a place that they can likely see themselves living in for the lack of opportunities that may exist elsewhere.

Unsurprisingly, Westfjords respondents are far more likely to want to and also feel they are most likely to move to the capital than vice versa. Only 3.8% of respondents from the capital indicate they want to move to a fishing village, and only 2.9% say they feel they are most likely to. These intentions reinforce that migration into the capital region is highly sought after among adolescents living in more rural regions.

Table 2 further discusses perceptions of job availability among survey responders. All responses from both the capital region and the Westfjords indicate that most adolescents perceive income potential to be higher in the capital region and for it to be easiest to get a job there. Between the two regions, more adolescents from the Westfjords perceive a closer balance of job opportunity either in a fishing village (26.2%) or in the capital region (43.1%). While, on the other hand, there is a significant majority of responses from adolescents in the capital (75.7%) in favor of finding it easiest to find a job there compared to any other survey option.

In contrast to prior research, more female respondents from the Westfjords perceive it to be easiest to get a job in the Westfjords than men, although the difference is small. This is not necessarily to suggest any relation to working in fisheries in particular, as there are more job opportunities than just that that exist in these fishing villages. However, it is worth noting that perhaps females perceive it to be more expected of them to be satisfied working and living in their home communities versus migrating out. There is no further information to justify further analysis of this claim in this study, but it is possibly worth pursuing in further research.

Table 2 also compares the levels of respect felt for fisherman between regions. More respondents from the Westfjords (58.4% total) have at least a considerable amount of respect felt for the position than those from the capital region (55.2% total), and more respondents from the capital region indicate little respect (12.7%) for the position than those from the Westfjords (9.7%). Although in a broad sense these comparisons are still relatively close enough to each other that it is not significantly meaningful, there is value in the pattern identified in that it further supports the suggestion that adolescents from the Westfjords fishing villages hold a higher regard for the fishing industry as a whole compared to their urban counterparts in the capital.

The last question in Table 2 and the first question in Table 3 are interesting to compare as well. 58.4 percent of respondents from the Westfjords have at least a considerable amount of respect for fisherman, while only 47.1 percent hold the same amount of respect for fish processing workers. Predictably, levels of respect for both positions are lower in the capital area, where 55.2 percent hold at least a considerable level of respect for fisherman and only 38.3 percent for fish processing workers. Again, we see a higher regard for working in the industry as a whole from those in the Westfjords than those in the capital. Males and females alike in the Westfjords hold more respect for fish processing workers than those from Reykjavík and the southwest region. However, it is interesting to note that in the Westfjords more males responded that they hold a lot of respect for fish processing workers than females responded, despite that kind of job in the fishing industry being very female-dominated on the shores compared to the actual fishing activities the men tend to work on the sea.

Table 3 also discusses perceived importance of the fishing industry to Iceland during the time of the survey as well as how important it will be in 2023, which at the time of the survey was 20 years into the future. 75.2 percent of respondents from the capital and 75.7 percent from the Westfjords answered that fisheries are “very important” to Iceland. 53.7 percent of respondents form the capital and 58.3 percent from the Westfjords answered that fisheries will be very important in 2023. Additionally, while only 5.2 percent in total between both regions find the industry to be “not very important,” this percentage jumps to 22.6 percent in total between regions when answering how important the industry will be in 2023. This suggests that adolescents possibly perceive the industry to be losing importance to their country over time, perhaps even continuing from how they perceived the importance to be in previous generations.

To summarize these findings, adolescents from the Westfjords hold a higher regard for the fishing industry as a whole than their counterparts in the capital region. They also perceive more variety of options for future living and job opportunities than those in the capital region, as they are more satisfied with the possibility of staying in a fishing village or moving to the capital, while those adolescents living in the capital feel like that is the primary place for opportunity for them. However, the majority of both Westfjords respondents and capital region respondents find the most opportunities to be in the capital region than anywhere else.

4.2 Statistics Iceland

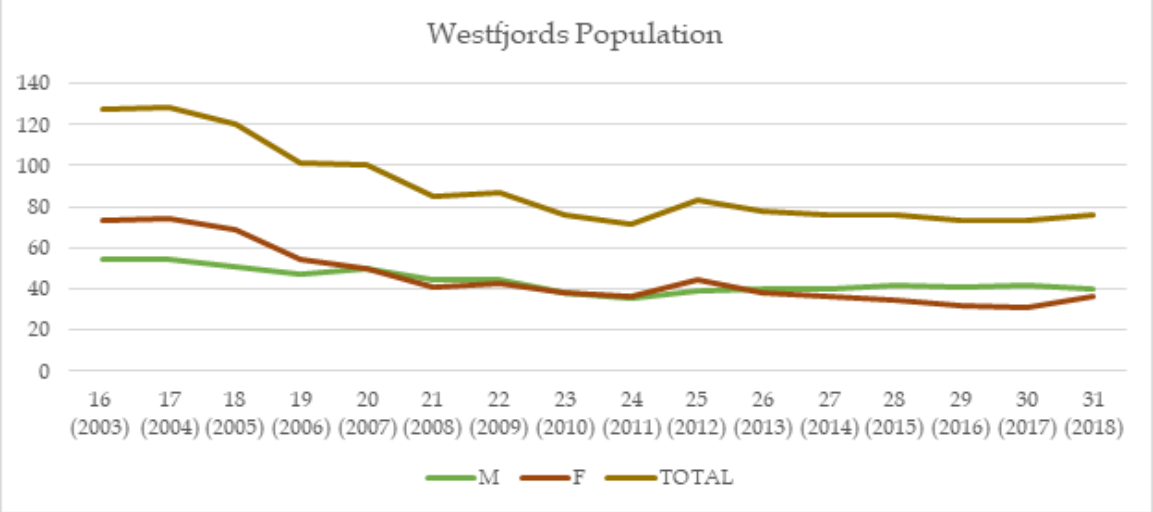


Figure 10. Westfjords population of 1987-born cohort by age, year and gender (i.e., 16 year olds in 2003, 17 year olds in 2004, etc…). (Hagstofa Íslands)

Figure 10 shows the population trend of this cohort in the Westfjords. The x-axis is understood as, "16-year olds in 2003, 17-year olds in 2004, 18-year olds in 2005," and so on. This data only provides for a general sense of the cohort, and does not differentiate between native-born Westfjords residents and any possible foreign immigrants who may have moved to the area during this time. In other words, this is a reflection of the total population of the given age in the given year and not just the cohort of the 2003 ESPAD

survey. This data represents the number of people in this cohort, and includes those who never left, those who left and returned, and both domestic and international immigrants.

As depicted in fig. 12, there is a general decline in population of both men and women in the Westfjords as the younger demographic aged from 16 to 31 between 2003 and 2018. There is a consistency between genders throughout the timeframe, although females had a slightly larger decline than males from 2003 to 2007.

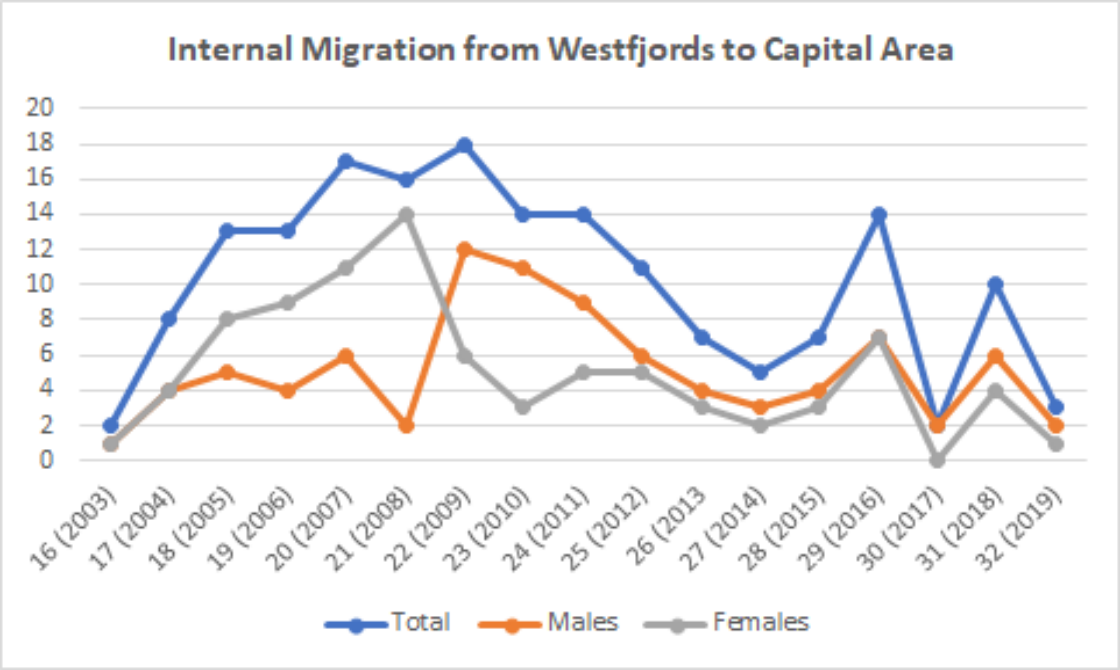


Figure 11. Male, female and total internal migration from the Westfjords to the capital region. (Hagstofa Íslands)

The graph above illustrates migration trends of this cohort, and how many in each year moved from the Westfjords to the capital region (Reykjavík and surrounding areas). As shown, there is an overarching peak for both men and women that moved to the capital area in 2009, as there were 18 total 22-year-olds who moved. Afterwards, the trend steadily decreases to 5 total 27-year-old residents who migrated in 2014 until it peaks again at 14 29-year-old residents who migrated in 2016.

4.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were each held individually, asking questions and discussing topics that were highlighted in the 2003 ESPAD Survey. Basic questions about where the person was born and raised, if or when they moved away from there, and their reflections of each own's decision-making processes back when they were around the adolescent age of the survey's distribution. From there, the topic of fishing and their home community's culture surrounding the industry was introduced and almost every interviewee has had some direct level of involvement working in one of the various sectors on shore or on the water. Interview subjects are categorized by gender and status of migration; those who never left will be referred to as "stayers," those who left and did not move back will be referred to as "leavers," and those who left but moved back at a later date will be referred to as "returners."

4.3.1 Experience working in fishing industry

Despite only two of the nine individuals interviewed currently working in the fisheries (and only one of the two doing so in the Westfjords), almost every person interviewed had some sort of experience working in some level of the industry at some point in their time growing up in this region. Even if this was just fulfilled as being a child merely participating in the activity because of family involvement, as is true for a few respondents, everyone except for one female could recall a memory of their direct participation in their local fishery. This female, however, goes on to discuss how she had a lot of male family members involved in the industry growing up, and she has always wanted to try.

"Yes, I did it from the age of 19 to maybe 21 but then I moved to Reykjavík. I'm a fisherman here... And I got myself hired on a fishing boat because it's a nice career that you can jump right into." -Male leaver, 33

“I never worked in a fish factory back home. I was only there as a kid sometimes putting labels on packages alone up in the attic after school when I was like 10 to 12.” -Female leaver, 34

“Yes, when I was like, 15. I was just on shore, in the [processing facilities] where they flake the fish and get it ready for packaging. And in the delivery, like counting and weighing and all that before it goes inside.” -Male leaver, 30

“No, actually since I had my kids this young, I didn't have much time to try it. But it’s something that I've always had… remorse or regret that I didn’t try when I had the chance. So maybe I should when my boys get older!” -Female returner, 32

“When I was 16, I used to cut fish open and take out the intestines for one summer and then two winters after, and then I did the löndun thing [working on the dock unloading fish from the boats] from sixteen to nineteen, but nothing serious. It has never crossed my mind to be a fisherperson... I think, though, I sometimes have thought about going to sea because it’s kind of cool to be able to say that.” -Male returner, 33

“I can tell you that I never had a job in the fish factory. Never. I was always on the line of education since forever. I had my first paid job as a babysitter outside the family when I was 9 and then when it came to summer jobs you know, starting from 12 or so. My sister was working in the fish factory and she got loads of money... And I sometimes went there to help her so... It was a much nicer place, a small family company and if she had to work on a Saturday or something I got to go with her to get some cash, but that’s sort of my whole fish job. I was never in that but obviously the whole family has been.” -Female returner, 36

“I was going [fishing] on and off for about two years and then I just quit the fishing factory because I was starting to not go there at all. When the ship has like 13 to 15 men on board stuck there if they have a position, and like a few who are like extras so then I was that far up in the queue that I had to ask for vacation from the ship so it was like 2 years and then I had like a position and then I changed ships so…. I did that for until what, 2018. 7 years.” -Female returner, 31

“Yeah, when I was a teenager I worked from when I was 14 until I was 18, in the summer... I worked there in Suðureyri and in Bolungarvík, and I also worked in Íslandssaga in Suðureyri and in Klofningur so I had pretty much done everything that has come to fish except going in a boat and going fishing.” -Female stayer, 25

“I was like the only girl working there for 3 years, but I liked it. Most of the time I felt really good- I was always challenging myself and doing the same thing as the others and I guess I had a big mouth. I said I could do it too, you know? But there it was, it didn’t end quite well there, there was this one pervert who kept groping me so I stopped working there because of that.” -Female stayer, 25

“I was like 13 or something in a place called slægja, the place where you carve the fish’s intestines, you gut them. I could just survive just one night and then I just quit. I was like, ‘no way, I can’t do this.’” -Male stayer, 29

4.3.2 Family history working in fisheries

These responses above are a strong indicator of just how significant fisheries are to these rural communities. Because they are so small in population, it is easy for everybody to have some level of connection to fishing. Many of their families have been working in fisheries for many generations, and it is a popular contender for young people in need of a summer job even if it is something that they end up hating and never wanting to do again. Direct family involvement in varying levels of the industry is prevalent among the majority of respondents; some had family members fishing on trawlers and one even had a father who owned his own fishing company.

“Yes, my dad was a captain.” -Male leaver, 33

“When I was in Bolungarvík my dad had a fishing factory there. he started out like with, my grandfather was a fisherman and he was a fisherman on a boat together with the husband, with his son-in-law. My mother’s sister, her husband. And they had, they were on a fishing boat together and the plan was for them to open a fishing factory in Bolungarvík together with my dad. But then in 1990 the boat like just before Christmas the boat got lost at sea and they both died. So, then it was up to my dad, ‘should I start it by myself?’ and he ended up doing that, and he was so young then. And he ran this fishing factory for years, it went bankrupt but then he just started again. So yeah since 1990 until the 2000, he had fishing factories all over Westfjords like in Bolungarvík, Bíldudalur, Tálknafjörður, [and] Þingeyri. But then that all went bankrupt I think in 1999 and then he moved to China in 2000 and then he had fishing factories in China where he would buy fish from Russia and have it manufactured in China. And he’s still doing this like now he [was] doing it in Iceland.” Female leaver, 34

“Yeah, my father is a ship captain. He spent most of life out in the sea. [There is] this fish factory in Hnífsdalur and I think my grandfather worked there some time ago.” -Male leaver, 30

“Basically, all my siblings and grandparents have all worked in you know, the fishing stuff. Both of my grandparents have done it, in both directions my mothers and father’s side, everybody. My brother was on sea for like one year when he was younger, he worked in the fishing stuff, same as I did but just a lot more. My sister worked for two years in a place like this cutting up the fish and selling it, and my father too. He was a man on sea, fishing and he also worked many years…” -Male stayer, 29

“I think everybody I know has worked in the fish industry.” -Male stayer, 29

“Actually, not close to me now, but when I was growing up, really many men in my family were working on the boats. The big boats, a big ship, some smaller boats just everything.” -Female returner, 32

“My grandfather was educated as a baker and he ran a bakery for a while but then he was a chef on a trawler for, I don’t know, 30 years or more. My grandmother worked in fish factories and in the prawns, she did that. My father, before he studied, was working in the fish factory as well, so he did that.” -Female returner, 36

“My brother probably went on a trawler when he was… young.” -Female returner, 31

There is mainly mention of male family members’ histories involved in the fisheries, and the only mention of female family members is working in processing facilities on shore and not ever out on the fishing trawlers. This directly ties to Skaptadóttir and Rafnsdóttir’s research on gendered labor in the industry, where only males tend to be taking up jobs in more traditionally masculine tasks like the hardships of being out on the sea that perhaps require more “toughness,” but a mix of both men and women working the jobs that occur on shore that are less physically demanding.

4.3.3 Intentions of working in fishing industry

The presence of a family history in the industry and the small experiences had by individuals growing up around the industry does not necessarily strike desire to further pursue working in fisheries into one’s adulthood. In fact, seven out of the nine interviewees did not decide to continue working in this field as adults, although some did consider it.

“I think I never wanted it, like I never had it in my mind. I just spent like, I think my mom worked for many years like in the store, and an old friend of my dad was asking like ‘so what’s [he] doing now?’ ‘oh, he’s doing nothing,’ and he says ‘oh, he can come on the boat.’ Then he called me like two days later.” -Male leaver, 32

“I just constantly called the captains of the two ships that were here then and eventually I wore one down and he said ‘okay, come,’ because it’s not really usual to have women on ships because they’re, no offense, weak and whine. But I went for one “go” and then I got to go back so I quit my job in Reykjavík got a job at the fishing factory and when some of the guys on the ship took vacation, I jumped in so I had like a contract with the fish factory and if I could go on the ship I would go.” -Female returner, 31

“I was like 13 or something, I was in a place called slaeng. The place where you carve the fish’s intestines, you gut them. I could just survive just one night and then I just quit I was like “no way, I can’t do this.” -Male stayer, 29

“I think um, I don’t want to go because I’m a little scared of the sea or get seasick and I would definitely like to try it you know because it’s always talked about as a man’s job so I want to try it to see if I can, you know?” -Female stayer, 25

“I think [my dad] was hoping I would. Me, myself, I thought that was what I wanted, like become this boss [managing the fishery] and its why I went to study business but then I realized like why this is not for me, not at all.” -Female leaver, 34

“No, actually since I had my kids this young, I didn't have much time to try it. But it’s something that I’ve always, had a remorse or regret that I didn’t try it when I had the chance. So maybe I should when my boys get older!” -Female returner, 32

Male leaver (age 32) and female returner (age 31) are the only two interview subject who chose to further pursue working in the fisheries as a career. However, both had different experiences entering the field. The male subject, whose father had been a captain before his passing away, was approached by one of his father’s friends in the industry asking if he was working anywhere and if he would work on the fishing boats. He also mentions that it was never something he particularly wanted to pursue while he was growing up, but took on the opportunity anyway. While, on the other hand, the female fisher had to make the effort to

call around herself and see if any boat would hire her. She mentions that it is uncommon for women to work fishing on the boats, and that she started out only working when the men who usually work those positions take vacation. Of course, this is likely largely in part to the fact that the male fisher grew up with a father who worked as a captain, and likely has more connections to people working in the industry than the female fisher, who says she only had a brother who "probably" worked on the trawler at some point. However, it is also worth noting the gender disparity that exists in this situation as well.

4.3.4 Perceptions of gender disparities in the fishing industry

The perceptions of gendered job roles in Icelandic fisheries holds up strongly to what has previously been researched. Gender inequalities are prevalent in fishing communities, as can be seen through the more "feminine" jobs are allocated towards women, while what is thought of as more "masculine" jobs, such as operating heavy machinery and unloading fish from the docks, is given to the men (Skaptadóttir 1996). In the interview responses, the female returner (age 31) is the only female who has worked on a fishing boat. She mentioned herself that it is very uncommon for women to work this position because "they're, no offense, weak and they whine." She also mentions how "99% of other women would feel intimidated or threatened because [the fishermen] are big and strong, and they have harsh language and they don't like when people don't do things right." Her perceptions on the gendered working environment clearly reflect those that Skaptadóttir cites in her research.

Another female returner's (age 32) perceptions also stay true to this concept of gendered labor. Although never having experienced working in the fisheries, she describes how she had always been interested in pursuing it, despite her family urging her not to because it is a job meant for a man, and growing up she had many men in her family working in the industry. She mentions how "the women that I know that have been working on boats say that that's bullshit, that it's not the kind of strength that a woman cannot do," and later goes on to say, "Since I had my kids this young, I didn't have much time to try it. But it's something that I've always had a remorse or regret that I didn't try it when I had the chance.

So maybe I should when my boys get older!" These responses suggest that there could be a demographic of women in Iceland who have intentions to pursue working as a fisherperson, but perhaps are intimidated by the gendered perception that it is not work intended for women.

It is also worth noting that this female returner's decision-making process to migrate to Reykjavík was in part due to the fact that she decided to pursue an education as a hairdresser. Careers in cosmetology and beauty-centered subjects tend to be heavily female-centric, and it is interesting how she chose to go from one extreme to another, wanting to stay in the Westfjords and pursue a male-dominated industry but overall deciding to migrate to the capital region in pursuit of job opportunities that better "fit" her demographic. These perceptions have a clear impact on the intentions of women working in fisheries beyond the lower-level positions they are most commonly found working in.

Skaptadóttir and Rafnsdóttir (2000) make the argument that the working environment in Icelandic fish processing facilities is highly gendered. The interview responses in my study from both men and women alike reinforce these perceptions, and the discourse has not seemed to change since these previous studies. Not only had both of these female returners had experiences related to this as females, but some of the men interviewed had their own perceptions from the other side of the perspective as well. As one of the two interview subjects with direct experience working in the fisheries, male leaver (age 32) says that he has never worked on a fishing boat with a woman, although he knows of some women who have and it is not entirely non-existent, but definitely rare. However, he also mentions how he personally does not see why a woman could not do this job, but it is also that few Icelandic people in general go into it.

"I've never worked on a boat with a woman. It's happened, but it's not that common… I don't think it's a gender thing there because they are few [Icelandic] people who go into it. And the boats like I don't know I don't know why there [aren't] more women, I mean they could do it. But you have to be strong. But I don't see why a woman couldn't do it… I know

of girls working on fishing boats but not the boats I've been on because the cases are so rare." -Male leaver, 33

Another interviewee, the male stayer (age 29), discusses at one point that he does not ever wish to pursue work out on the sea because he is easily sea-sick, and equates that to non-masculine behavior.

"For me, like fish stuff, it's not the smell, I can handle the smell. but I cannot go on sea because I get sea sick- very sea sick- and I'm too much of a coward to try to tough it up you know, be a tough guy and be a man if you want to call it that- get some balls." -Male stayer, 29

The male stayer associated getting frequently sea sick as a non-masculine behavior that wouldn't be accepted in the social atmospheres of fishermen. At this point in our interview, I had not brought up any topic of gender disparity in the fisheries with this interviewee, and he had made a gender-based claim on his own volition. This even further supports the claim that there are certain assumed expectations of how men and women can behave working in this field. His perceptions suggest that showing vulnerability and getting nauseous from the sea is not something a man should do while working on the fishing boat.

In addition to a multitude of responses discussing the type of gendered environment that exists in the fisheries, one interviewee even went so far as to recall experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace from a male co-worker in a fish processing facility. The person says their experience working in a fish processing facility "didn't end quite well there. There was this one pervert who kept groping me so I stopped working there because of that. I just… yeah, I couldn't work there anymore... and for a long time, I thought no this isn't happening, no he's just accidentally did this, but you know then it happened for a long time and I was like, for a long time just lying to myself because I didn't want to believe it. I wanted to

believe that I could, as a female, work in a man's workplace because [name of processing facility] is like that, so it took me a while to just [say], 'no,' it's not my fault, I didn't ruin the reputation of this place." This unfortunate incident is likely not an isolated one, however further research in this particular area of the study is necessary in order to make any significant claims. However, any amount of sexual harassment in any work environment should not be tolerated at all, and any level of awareness brough to those in managaement positions in fisheries to improve the experiences of all workers in this environment should always be encouraged.

4.3.5 General migration perceptions

Throughout these interviews, it was apparent that all subjects had a positive relationship with their decision-making process to migrate or not. Although each individual story is completely unique from one another, a strong level of satisfaction and positivity is maintained throughout the entirety of each discussion, rather than any majorly negative experiences overall.

"I think that's very positive that the people who stay usually end up staying because they really appreciate the things that they- the qualities about living there… My friends that stayed back home, I feel like they're flourishing in that environment. Like they- it would never work for them [moving away]" -Female leaver, 34

"I had a very good childhood there and I'm very happy that I'm from this place but I always knew when I was living there that I would never live there as an adult… Iceland always felt, and still feels, very small to me. And it's not that- I love being here, I love Iceland, the nature, it's very easy to talk about all the positive things. But I still struggle that the kind of life I had in China and Shanghai, surrounded by people of so many different countries and just surrounded by so many different views on the same thing… there were so many opinions going on, so many discussions and it was so easy to go to dinner to talk about things and I

loved that. And it's very difficult to get into that kind of environment here because there are so few opinions going around and it's almost like a, there's almost like a silent agreement that if you know that the other person has a different point of view from you on something, whether it's politics or I don't know like building a salmon farm or whatever, you just know that you won't go there. Don't talk about it. And that's- I can't stand that. That's not something I like." -Female leaver, 34

Female leaver (age 34) is discussing her admiration for her experiences growing up in the Westfjords, despite recognizing the fact that she knows it is not an environment she ever saw herself living in forever. She talks about how there are some kinds of people who aspire to have a different lifestyle than she does, and that it is a positive reflection on the community that these people are able to thrive in their home environments, despite the fact that she wasn't. Although this is satisfactory for those who did decide to not migrate, those "stayers" are far and few in this region.

The two "stayers" interviewed in this project had nothing but positive things to say themselves when reflecting on their own decision-making process not to migrate. Their descriptions are akin to the type of environment that female leaver (age 34) mentions above about her hometown.

"I don't get greedy, in our lives, me and [my partner], we live very simple lives. We don't honestly spend anything on just anything. We can go to like trips to Tenerife or whatever twice a year if we want to… I'm honestly more like, down to the earth… I can accept just being and being here and not going anywhere for like 3, 4 years." -Male stayer, 29

"I guess it was partly because it's expensive to live in Reykjavik and I don't really like it there so much because I think it is such chaos and a lot of people and traffic and everything… if I could, which I did, I would study online courses. And I just worked at the same time because then I prevented from taking student loans." -Female stayer, 25

"I really like to raise my kids here, it's like a freedom for them… of course there's always a bad apple in every town, but you're not as afraid because like the whole community knows you, or most of the community… just like two days ago I was walking with my two children and the older one just went away and I [couldn't] find her for 10 minutes. But then I saw her

with a woman who was about to call me because she was like- “I knew she was alone and she had that face on she was not in a good mood, so I decided to call you” because… they care. We know each other and we take care of each other.” -Female stayer, 25

The two are describing the social aspects of their home communities that they value highly enough to decide not to migrate. As previously mentioned, these rural fishing villages make for cheaper and more family-oriented communities than those that exist in more urban areas such as the capital region. One of the female returners also cites family values as a reason why she decided to move back to the Westfjords after having kids.

“And also, when I lived in Reykjavík, I had a home with kids and boyfriend and everything but I just felt that I was coming home when I came here on vacation or whatever… Of course, I grew up here so here my family is and then I think it’s just the mountains and the sea and the nature… It’s just a gut feeling. I didn’t feel as good living in Reykjavík. Even though I had like home with both of my kids and my now ex-boyfriend. And we had like this normal household and kids and I never had quite the same feeling as living here in Ísafjörður.” -Female returner, 32

It is evident with these responses that the desire to raise a family in their home community in the Westfjords, rather than in the capital region, is a strong migration indicator. In fact, both stayers and three out of the four returners have children they are raising in the Westfjords. Only one leaver has children. Of course, there can be many positives to raising children in urban areas like the capital, however it is more expensive and it is more difficult to provide the same atmosphere of a close-knit community that the Westfjords offers.

In fact, it is possible that there is a pattern of moving away to return at a later time when one is closer to the age of settling down and starting a family. Many responses on migration perceptions focused only on the absence of a young adult age group.

“I think the age of like 20 to 35 is just missing here.” -Male leaver, 33

“I could probably count on my fingers people who are my age, maybe one year older or younger… how many I know [who] are living in Ísafjörður.” – Male leaver, 30

“I think it’s also… it has this fact, to do with this fact, that there isn’t really a university here for us. We have the university center which really makes a difference to have you guys [students] like sort of my age to move to town, which [there] wasn’t that generation for many, many years. But I think it’s also just a fact that you go and it’s very healthy for you to not be in the same place all the time.” -Male returner, 33

“Maybe it’s also not about escaping something but just about widening your horizon and getting to know the unknown.” -Female leaver, 34

These responses indicate there is a clear lack of opportunity for this age group in the Westfjords. The people interviewed all had indicated a satisfactory childhood and adolescence in the Westfjords, and many returned largely in part to give their children those same positive experiences. Of course, being raised in communities like this that are far removed from the more urban environments that exist elsewhere would likely instil a certain level of longing to any young person reaching the age of migration decision-making. Everyone should be able to fulfil the natural longing to “fly the nest” and explore what the world has to offer once they reach the age where they feel ready to.

Although the presence of young adults is few in these communities, it is possible that it is not entirely for lack of desire. As previously discussed from Table 1’s survey results, more respondents from the Westfjords indicated that they *want* to live in a fishing village (likely that of their home community), compared to the percentage who respond that they are likely to live there. In other words, it is maintained through the 2003 survey and the 2020 interviews that young people are, in fact, interested in living here, but perhaps there is simply a lack of opportunity in experiences someone in that demographic needs, like higher education opportunities or a variety of jobs to pursue.

5 Discussion

I found it interesting that all but one respondent had had some sort of previous history working in one or more sectors of the fishing industry, and the one respondent who had not had expressed their remorse for never having been involved when they were younger, and would possibly consider trying after their kids get older. Also, how a number of respondents started answering the question with a definitive "no," but soon after mentioning some sort of informal labor that was perhaps not a paid or consistent job, but there was some level of direct involvement. Whether it be one of the female returners (age 36), who helped her sister at the local fish factory on some weekends and made some money from the family that owned the business; or the male stayer (age 29), who started working gutting fish when he was 13 but quit after one day thinking, 'no way, I can't do this;' or the female leaver (age 34), whose father owned a fish factory that had been passed down from his father, and was only there as a kid sometimes putting labels on packages alone up in the attic after school- this is a generation who almost all had an opportunity (whether pursued professionally or not) to participate in the local fishing industries in these towns in the Westfjords.

Unsurprisingly, almost the same number of interviewees who were at any point directly involved working in the fisheries also had family members currently or at some previous point also directly involved working in the fisheries. As described in the introduction and background of this study, the location of the Westfjords of Iceland is highly centered around fish, both socially and economically. Everybody has a past, to some degree, with working in the fisheries or having family that worked or still works in fisheries. However, this seems to have little influence on whether or not the individual intends to pursue the industry as a career themselves.

As previously mentioned in the literature background, a recent study has shown that the trends of high out-migration to the capital region could be reversing. Garðarsdóttir, Bjarnason, Jónsson, & Shuttleworth (2020) show how the internal migration behaviors of Iceland is declining over time. This is, in part, due to changes in technology that allow for more job and educational opportunity to exist on an online platform, rather than necessarily having to exist in a physical university campus or work office that only tends to exist in more

urban areas. This suggests that further research is necessary to carry out a more in-depth analysis with a larger sample size to evaluate.

5.1 Limitations

The nature of this study inherently presents itself with a number of limitations. Researching quantitative data on population demographics in the study site created a solid foundation, but continuing to the next phase of the study introduced a number of difficulties. Of course, being located in the study site while trying to research why people have left poses the challenge of finding the people who are no longer there. In addition, the qualifications of a possible interview candidate were at first very narrow, and eventually had to be broadened for the sake of time and efficiency. Because this research is a follow-up to a previous study (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006), I wanted to maintain the same cohort demographic for consistency, and interview only those who are between the ages of 31-33, because that is the exact age of the cohort who were 14-16 years old during the survey data collection of the 2006 study. These qualifications were extended to 26–36-year-olds, as these people outside of the original age group were the only subjects able to be identified that fit the qualifications besides age.

It was easiest to first find interview subjects who had left and returned, because this is more common than not having left their home community at all. Previous networking had led me to my first interviews without any difficulty, but the remaining categories of "those who never left" and "those who left and never came back" were much more difficult. Snowball sampling was utilized by asking interview subjects at the end of each interview if they knew of anybody who fit the qualifications of being in this age group, having grown up in the Northern Westfjords, and having either never left at all or left and never moved back. Direct or familial experience in working in fisheries was also a preferred qualification, but not completely necessary. I eventually was connected to a number of interview candidates who left and never returned, as these close-knit communities allow for many to keep in touch with their childhood friends who have since moved away, and many of my "left and came back" interviewees gave me names fairly easily of these people who moved away. The

biggest challenge was finding those who fit this age group who never left their home communities, simply because it is so uncommon to do so. Therefore, I had to broaden my age range to allow for interviews with the married couple who were a bit younger than my initial age range.

The gender division is almost equal, with 5 female interviewees and 4 males. This is sufficient for representation accuracy, however in future studies I would recommend carrying out more interviews in general to increase the sample size. However, these hour long semi-structured interviews collected valuable information when it comes to individual anecdotal qualitative data.

6 Conclusion

Over the last few decades, perceptions and behaviors among the youth generation has changed to reflect given social and economic circumstances of a community, but one thing has seemed to remain consistent throughout the cohorts in this study: the decision-making process surrounding migration behaviors has remained very much in the hands of the individual. Throughout both the survey data analysis and interview analysis, there was little to no mention of any forced migration behaviors, or extreme pressure placed by external factors. In general, youth in this region tend to have a positive experience throughout the migration decision-making process, and make decisions based on free will and individual agency.

To more directly answer the research questions of this study, there are varying factors as to why people chose to stay, leave or return. It was found that the primary determinant for why people stay is simply because they are satisfied with the kind of lifestyle that the Westfjords has to offer: the cost of living being cheaper than more urbanized areas, and the strong sense of community that comes with the small population. However, the connection between migration decision making and pursuing jobs in the local fishing industry was not as strong as I had initially hypothesized. Those who stay know that they have the ability to travel to more urban areas when desired- for recreational purposes or accessing the kinds of resources

that are unavailable to them otherwise- but they do not desire to *live* in these places because the business of city life is not attractive in comparison to what the Westfjords offers. These "stayers" that have families also find it to be a large factor in their decision to stay- because the small, tight-knit community atmosphere provides a sense of security and safety in comparison to urban life.

In a similar vein, people who chose to return after having left at an earlier point in life do so in pursuit of the "simple life." These small villages are where the returners were raised, where most of their fond childhood memories were made, and where many returners stated that it is a place where they want to raise their own children- to offer them the same small-town, community-centered lifestyle they experienced in their own childhood.

On the other hand, those who chose to leave did so because their own personal desires required pursuit of a lifestyle other than what is offered in their home community. Their personalities as individuals crave a more fast-paced, metropolitan lifestyle than the small fishing villages of the Westfjords. They seek out broader opportunities for their careers and social lives, and simply do not fit well in a small-town setting. These leavers, however, have nothing but positive comments on their experiences growing up in this place. They recognize the positive aspects of the more rural lifestyles, and hold the memories they have had here fondly, but they simply do not want to continue pursuing the rest of their lives here. Again, it is the privilege of agency that exists in this community that allows individuals to make these migration decisions on their own, based on their own personal desires and needs.

It is also worth noting that a number of interview respondents discussed the increasing presence of foreigners moving into these communities and are replacing the need for locals to work in the low-wage positions of local industries. The replacement of local job positions by foreign workers is a topic that was not explored in this particular study, although it is evident that this phenomenon has some level of effect on youth migration trends, and should be explored further in future studies.

6.1 Management & Policy Implications

In terms of policy-making, this study suggests implementing programs and infrastructure that attracts more youth to these areas, regardless of if they are native to the area or not. Community development in local industries can be a sustainable, long-term solution to the youth flight trend. Young people want to live in places that provide opportunities for education and entrepreneurship, and non-urban places such as those found in the Westfjords have the potential for this and are already beginning to implement new infrastructure that is more attractive to the younger generation. In recent years, Ísafjörður has opened up a microbrewery, a coffee house centered around sustainable and locally-sourced products, and a number of other places that fit the interests of young people. In addition, the university center has attracted young people on an international level to come and pursue a Master's degree in coastal-related studies such as this. Flateyri has founded a type of school that is founded on the goal of allowing young people to pursue new activities and subjects, without the pressure of earning grades, that has allowed for many who are struggling with their next move in life to come and spend time in a low-pressure environment to help them consider various life choices.

Of course, establishing a school -whether at a university level or a "folk school" level, as mentioned above- in each small fishing village is not a sustainable option, as there are simply not enough resources or demand to fulfil this type of infrastructure in every fishing town. However, these kinds of places are laying the groundwork for the type of community activity that will, in theory, attract more and more young people to these places over time.

Increasing attention on educational opportunities and infrastructures in these local communities can attract a youth population that consider the Westfjords to be a unique and exciting opportunity to experience living in. And, in turn, often some choose to stay after finishing their studies and continue building and growing within the community further for years to come. Therefore, the youth demographic that *wants* to be living a more non-urban lifestyle that this region offers have the access to do so, and those who grew up there but more desire to move away elsewhere have the accessibility for that as well.

Within policy-making, one must consider the tourism industry in the area as well to be an opportunity for more youth involvement. As previously mentioned, the history of tourism in the Westfjords has centered greatly around fish and fishing. Career and internship opportunities around aspects of the industry that are not part of the production itself would be attractive for youth who are interested in business and economics to pursue. Some programs that would be specifically designed to encourage more young women in decision-making roles could potentially benefit both these local communities as well as the individual herself. Policies that embracing the significance of the region's history in fishing while simultaneously moving local industries forward should be prioritized.

6.2 Moving Forward

This research opens up the opportunity for further research in a number of scopes. Further analysis of current gender disparities in fisheries can call for in improvement in diversity in higher positions in the industry. More women being hired in higher level positions can improve overall management of fisheries. This also has the potential to increase populations in rural fishing villages, if more women perceived higher position job availability in the industry to be viable. As Dahlström 1996 found, women move from rural, male-dominated spaces seeking out higher education opportunities that exist elsewhere. If there were more access to education and training opportunities for young women to work at many levels within the local fishing industries, perhaps management processes could change for the better in the long-term, and there is value in putting previously underrepresented voices in the decision-making processes and see what new perspectives can bring to the table in terms of fisheries management and policy implementation.

Furthermore, establishing current perceptions and intentions among the adolescent cohort in this generation can help in community development by identifying aspects of the community

that need improvement to attract more adolescents and prevent further loss of the local youth demographic to more urban regions. These kinds of opportunities include, but are not limited to, more variety in job and higher educational opportunities.

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Háskólasetur Vestfjarða
University Centre of the Westfjords

Research ethics training and clearance

University Centre of the Westfjords
Suðurgata 12
400 Ísafjörður, Iceland
+354 450 3040
info@uw.is

This letter certifies that **Erin Kelly** has completed the following modules of:

(X) Basic ethics in research
(X) Human subjects research
(X) Animal subjects research

Furthermore, the Masters Program Committee has determined that the proposed masters research entitled **Trends of Migration Intentions and Expectations Among Coastal Youth in the Westfjords of Iceland and its Projected Influence on Local Seafood Industries** meets the ethics and research integrity standards of the University Centre of the Westfjords. Throughout the course of his or her research, the student has the continued responsibility to adhere to basic ethical principles for the responsible conduct of research and discipline specific professional standards.

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