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Urban nature and transnational lives

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Abstract

This paper explores ways in which first generation migrants living in a UK city engage with urban nature. Through understanding mundane connections with local nature (plants, animals and seasons), we attend to two questions 'what can narratives of urban nature tell us about experiences of migration', and inversely 'what can diverse migrant voices tell us about experiences of urban nature'? We draw on interview data with 23 participants, all born overseas, with a diverse mix in terms of age (young adults to older retired people), gender, country of origin and length of time resident in the United Kingdom. The analysis focuses on three areas: multisensory engagements with weather, care for nature and how transnational identities surface through the relational dimensions of nature narratives. We conclude by highlighting the potential of embodied nature engagement to support a sense of wellbeing and transnational identity across the life-course, with potential to more broadly reflect pluralist understandings of the urban environment.

KEYWORDS

cities, diversity, greenspace, natural environments, migrant, wellbeing

1 | INTRODUCTION

As succinctly stated by O'Connor (2010, p. 75), 'international migration is an inherently embodied process'. Within both academic research and popular culture, this embodiment is almost entirely recounted within a built urban context,[1] where common narratives of the mundane materiality of migrant lives are told through artefacts, food and paperwork. The spatial dimensions of transnational experiences are explored through appropriation and adaptation of the urban realm, played out through changes over time to shop fronts, eating establishments, places of worship and city squares. Our notion of the 'transcultural city' (Hou, 2013), the 'superdiverse street' (Hall, 2013), or 'cosmopolis' (Sandercock, 2003) is shaped by a tacit notion of materiality in the form of a built hardscape, albeit one which responds to multiple connections across global borders.

Yet within this built matrix is a locally specific vegetated softscape. Glimpsed through most urban windows, plants (trees, shrubs,

flowers and weeds) are present, themselves providing home and nourishment to a range of less visible scurrying and grazing creatures. Above the buildings is the mottled blue/grey/whiteness of the sky and the various flight paths of resident or migratory birds. This is how urban ecology is experienced: the planted and emergent ways in which nature is cultivated and cherished within designated public open spaces, tolerated in the cracks, or simply providing a backdrop of distant hills or changing skyscapes. People living in cities have their own nature connections, from the immediacy of growing within a garden or balcony, to the recreational use of the local park, to trips out to nearby countryside (Dobson et al., 2021). These reflect interests, values and competing priorities at different life stages as well as various opportunities of specific jobs, homes and neighbourhoods.

In this paper, we explore the extent to which urban nature reflects and informs transnational dynamics within the everyday lives of first generation migrants living in one city in the north of England.[2] Through narratives of being outdoors, feeling better (or not) and

engagement (or not) with urban flora and fauna, we attend to the ways in which perceptions and preferences for experiences of nature can be both local, embedded in the here-and-now, and transnational, defined here as reflective of global 'not-here' places. We develop a framing that focuses on the relational, encompassing intergenerational near and distant ties and the role of embodied sensory experiences.

The 23 interviews that provide the primary data for the study allow us to understand some specific dimensions regarding the value of nature for wellbeing. By focusing on people who were born and spent their childhoods in different regions of the world (all but two non-European), we are able to explore the influence on early years' experiences in informing adult preferences for outdoor places and environmental values. What remains, what changes? We focus on the challenges of adaptation, the range of responses to both novelty and familiarity in natural places (Rishbeth & Finney, 2006), and how this may reflect length of time in the new home country. And although our focus is primarily on the urban contexts of nature and use of greenspaces, we also tease out the various ways in which this is framed in relation to rural natural environments in the United Kingdom and in countries of origin.

The first question of this paper is 'what can narratives of urban nature tell us about experiences of migration?' This is a meaningful question to ask in that we learn how connecting with urban nature contributes to shaping migrant identities. We explore how talking about nature and embodied 'doing nature' in different ways lead to wider understandings of how migrants' relationships are conducted across time and space. We gain insight into how nature connections can support the wellbeing of someone who is a migrant and the diverse ways this happens across different life stages and personal histories.

Our second question is an inverse, potentially more oblique enquiry: What can diverse migrant voices tell us about experiences of urban nature? Such a question raises issues of environmental equity (Agyeman, Schlosberg, Craven, & Matthews, 2016), the need to expand ways in which 'nature' is understood, discussed and given value in increasingly ethnically diverse urban contexts. Our enquiry demonstrates that social inequalities (in particular living in neighbourhoods with higher levels of deprivation) can constrain access to nature (especially high quality greenspace), but also that a childhood spent in a very different typology of landscape does not diminish the value many migrants place on experiential qualities of nature, and indeed, these experiences are further enriched and made meaningful through transnational connections.

The intersection of these two questions addressing urban nature with transnational lives, is fundamentally multiscalar, scoping both a wide range of spatial and temporal dynamics of people and place. Though we are attentive to typologies of urban greenspace—woodland, parks and gardens—these are not neatly defined within the interview accounts, where narratives jump between long views and morning mists to pigeons and blossom. Change over time is reflected in both the human and the non-human: stories of personal movement between countries align with transitions from childhood to adulthood, and experiences of place are informed by seasons and times of day. The concept of urban nature in transnational lives as spatially and temporally multiscalar sit comfortably within theories that foreground space as the 'product of interrelations' and as 'simultaneity of stories so far' (Massey 2005, p. 9). In the spaces of our migrant participants' lives, urban nature and experiences of migration are (co) cumulative. Our research findings highlight just some of the assemblage components evident in stories about places, past lives, people and non-humans across different scales of 'nature spaces'.

In our discussion of the research findings, we interrogate specific embodied experiences with attention to nature-in-place and the importance of social contexts. We explore three themes in detail, before discussing more broadly the relationship between migrants living in cities and nature connections. First, we turn to responses to *weather*, on adaptation to specific differences experienced post-migration with an emphasis on embodied and sensory responses to place. Second, we address transnational (sometimes nostalgic) practices as explored through the notion of everyday *care* for urban nature. Third, we look at the relevance of human *relations* for nature connection and at the transnational dimensions of these for both newly arrived and long-settled migrants. These three themes that emerged strongly from the data also offer a route towards understanding what urban nature experiences tell us about migration and what diverse migrant experiences tell us about urban nature experiences. In the discussion, we expand understandings across disciplinary fields attending to urban nature, to migration and attendant notions of social inclusion and supportive relationships and places. We address omissions in academic debates that commonly fail to articulate both how 'bodies in nature' are migrant and non-White, and how nature is urban, often domestic, and everyday (Macnaghten & Urry, 2001).

2 | NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS AND NATURE CONNECTIONS WITHIN ETHNICALLY DIVERSE CITIES

2.1 | Equity of access to nature for migrants

Nature connections can encompass a wide range of actions—noticing, caring and advocating; emotions—gratitude, acceptance and compassion; and sensations—pleasure and grounding (e.g., Birch, Rishbeth, & Payne, 2020; Lumber, Richardson, & Sheffield, 2017). Even in an entirely urban context, there is substantive evidence to demonstrate a wide range of positive impacts on personal wellbeing, especially related to mental health (Pritchard, Richardson, Sheffield, & McEwan, 2019; Villeneuve et al., 2012). What is often less well interrogated (both in academic debate and in environmental practice) is the relationship of these to human social diversity. Historically in the global north, ecology and conservation has been positioned within an 'anglo-normativity' (Byrne & Wolch, 2009, p. 752) a framing reiterated by leisure surveys that indicate lower 'frequency of visits' to 'natural environments' by members of Black and minority ethnic communities (Burt, Stewart, Preston, & Costley, 2013; Natural England, 2016).

Understanding of the dynamics between cultural diversity, migration and engagement with urban public open space, nature spaces, or what previous literature has often termed natural environments is gradually gaining traction as a theme of study, particularly within disciplines of landscape architecture, social geography and leisure studies. Research projects commonly scope the importance and intersection of various barriers—nonmajority cultural norms, demands of adaptation, impact of socio-structural factors such as precarious situations and low financial resources through methods such as literature reviews (Byrne & Wolch, 2009; Jay et al., 2012; Kloek, Buijs, Boersema, & Schouten, 2013; Ordóñez Barona, 2017) and large-scale surveys (Lovelock, Lovelock, Jellum, & Thompson, 2011; Peters, Stodolska, & Harolets, 2016). A more focused and context-specific work highlights the experience of being a person of colour in White-dominant spaces (Long, Hylton, & Spracklen, 2014), the impact of discrimination on confidence (Kloek, Peters, & Sijtsma, 2013), or the particularity of life situations (Rishbeth, Blachnicka-Ciacek, & Darling, 2019). Within this small but growing body of literature, the distinctions between an ethnic-cultural focus and that framed by a personal migration history begin to be teased out (we return to this in the following section) and the relationship of these to the notion of intercultural cities—urban life in an era of mobility (Council of Europe, 2016; Rishbeth, 2020). In this paper, we present a migration-specific lens, developed below in Section 3, while recognising the diversity of different migration trajectories and how these shape mundane experiences (Bhugra, 2004).

However, barriers to nature connection due to living in deprived or disadvantaged circumstances are relevant within this debate. In the global north, migrants and members of migrant communities disproportionately live within these contexts and neighbourhoods (Lukes, De Noronha, & Finney, 2018), which can contribute to levels of everyday stress (Spicer, 2008; Zontini, 2004), as well as often having access to a lower quantity and quality of greenspace provision (Brindley, Cameron, Ersoy, Jorgensen, & Maheswaran, 2019; CABE, 2010; Mears, Brindley, Maheswaran, & Jorgensen, 2019). Egoz and De Nardi (2017) analyse the evidence for spatial and cultural inequalities inherent in the provision of urban green infrastructure (parks, woodlands and waterfronts) as exacerbating and entrenching health inequalities. Drawing on and extending theories of equity in place, they convincingly argue that the relationship between migration and access to natural landscapes is core to enacting landscape justice. Research with a specific health focus supports this, with both quantitative (Roe, Aspinall, & Ward Thompson, 2016) and qualitative (Hordyk, Hanley, & Richard, 2015) research concluding that though access to naturalistic urban greenspace has significant positive impacts on wellbeing for many people, it has increased positive impacts for people in 'Black and Minority Ethnic' groups living with higher levels of deprivation. Hordyk et al. (2015, pp. 80–81) summarise some of the key benefits: nature as a no-cost recreational resource (especially when housing is of poor quality), opportunities for 'lingerings and diversions' which frame urban greenspace as a socially integrative environment, and nature as a buffer for stress. So though the potential for nature 'disconnection' is often high, the benefits of supporting access to nature can be claimed to support social equity in ethnically diverse urban contexts. This is significant for individual wellbeing (especially for migrants living in situations of hardship or precarity) but also for thinking more ambitiously about what it means—in theory and in practice—to value nature in an ethnically diverse society.

2.2 | Multiscalar aspects to urban nature, beyond a 'visiting' focus

Understanding something of the theoretical approaches to urban places reflected in the ethos and methods of this research is also important. Clearly, we are researching within intersections of migrant lives and place—but what does this mean in terms of conceptualising geographic (micro–macro-temporal) qualities of urban nature? Research agendas that give primary emphasis to social dynamics rather than qualities of specific places can tend towards a rather functional framing of urban greenspace as a public venue for integration (Peters, 2010; Seeland, Dübendorfer, & Hansmann, 2009), understanding these places as socially permeable resources but neglecting the relevance of materiality and the non-human within them. Research that examines specific typologies of the 'natural environment' usually evokes a stronger sense of place identity—the affordances of a park (Neal, Bennett, Jones, Cochrane, & Mohan, 2015) or a riverside (Goodall, Cadzow, Byrne, & Wearing, 2011)—but tend to analyse greenspace as a bounded entity, adrift from a broader analysis of the urban outdoor environment. More pertinent to our inquiry is Horolets' (2016, p. 144) compelling and evocative list of themes that she identified from her interviews about nature with Polish migrants living in a UK city. Defying scale or location, it includes air temperature, animate world (including domestic, farm, and zoo animals), plants, nature as place, nature as viewed landscape, seasons and weather. This eclecticism reflects experiential qualities of being in place that clearly leap from the page in many of the sociological focused explorations foregrounding urban nature, the relevance of sensory qualities (Bhatti et al., 2016, p. 144, on garden spaces and temporality Bennett's, 2015, being 'snowed in!'), and how these inform understanding of human presence alongside/as part of nature (Christensen, 2014; Sutcliffe, 2018). Therefore, in this paper, we attend to nature connection as an assemblage of things, actions, places and experiences across gradients of public/private, rural/urban, designed/spontaneous and moving/growing (Edensor, 2011). We explore multiscalar understandings of urban nature and the experiential qualities of being outdoors and do not limit discussion to *visiting* natural environments.

3 | MIGRANT EXPERIENCES OF NATURE

While drawing on literature that encompasses how different Black and minority ethnic communities do or do not access nature and greenspace in urban contexts, in this paper, we focus on the experiences of first generation migrants (in comparison with research informed by ethnic background). This shifts the emphasis. Though also referencing aspects of ethno-cultural values and preferences, and the relevance of often

visibly 'sticking out' (Askins, 2009; Rishbeth et al., 2019), this paper gives specific attention to the role of childhood experiences, and memories of these, in shaping nature connection (a dominant theme in research on environmental preference, Christensen, 2014; Ward Thompson, Aspinall, Bell, & Findlay, 2005). The paper also attends to the impact of potential unfamiliarity of both an ecological knowledge and of 'norms' of recreation and use of outdoor spaces.

3.1 | Unfamiliarities of relocation

Experience of the outdoors and nature as unfamiliar (the shock of the new) may be more strongly felt among those recently migrated compared with people born abroad but long settled. More general experiences of dislocation and being unsettled can find focus in specific experiences of being outside, for example, difference in climate from a previous country of residence. Migrants talk about bodily reactions to seasons and weather, the greyness of the skies and bare winter trees (Rishbeth & Powell, 2013), indignities of slipping in the snow (Hurley, 2019; Leikkilä, Faehnle, & Galanakis, 2013) and the unusual smell of the not-warm air (Christou, 2011). Research in the United Kingdom with refugees and asylum seekers, both younger participants (Rishbeth & Finney, 2006) and adults (Rishbeth et al., 2019), emphasises the disorientation of unfamiliar typologies of public spaces—peri-urban and suburban parks, cemeteries and canal-sides—and how these can often be experienced as disconcerting: too quiet, possibly unsafe, and difficult to comprehend which activities are appropriate or not. Unfamiliarity is not necessarily 'bad' in itself and can be cause for concern or a point of novel delight dependent on context (Rishbeth & Finney, 2006). Research focused on urban gardening and allotmenting (Coughlan & Hermes, 2016; Lapina, 2017; Taylor & Lovell, 2015) mostly highlights positive emotional reactions, including recognition of plants and transnational practices of growing. The particularity represented by the non-human—a plant in place or out of place—does appear to support migrants developing broader conceptions of their own sense of (transnational) belonging (Rishbeth & Finney, 2006; Strunk & Richardson, 2017). Strunk and Richardson (2017, p. 19) suggest these micro-relationships indicate conceptions and challenges of nature, land-use and ecological imaginings, informing a need for urban environments to be shaped by and reflect social diversity.

3.2 | Being in outdoor natural spaces and cultures of recreation

In discussing recreation practices and 'new' migrants, there can be a tacit emphasis on leisure activities as paths towards integration and adaptation (Lewis, 2015). While being mindful of the potential for re-enforcing assimilationist notions (Byrne, 2012; Taylor & Toohey, 1999), foregrounding 'recreation' can shift stories of migrant lives beyond the functional and bureaucratic to recognise the importance of mundane joys, and the potential richness of hybrid and transnational identities. Nature connection, of course, is not always

related to recreation—the fox passed on the way to work, the bird outside the window—but longer periods of engagement with nature often reflect recreational cultures: walking, socialising and playing particular sports (Goodall et al., 2011; Hurley, 2019; Jay & Schraml, 2014; Kloek, Buijs, et al., 2013; Ratna, 2017). Though barriers to participation are commonly identified (many structural, many similar to those previously discussed in Section 2.1), striking across a number of research projects is the focus on outdoor leisure as reflective of aspirations and values, such as experiencing new activities (Lovelock et al., 2011), or even hope for the future (Stone, 2018). The idea of recreation as choice (Lewis, 2015) and as expressive of identity is one that we develop through this paper, and echoes some of Neal et al.'s (2015) discussion on the social solidarities of elective leisure found in parks.

3.3 | Transnational connections

Given the relevance that many accounts of nature connection give to the evocation of memory, it is unsurprising that research including migrant participants evokes 'translocal sensescapes', embodied responses to the smells, sounds and textures of city places (Lahiri, 2011, p. 855). Times spent in urban greenspace, views of rural landscapes, activities such as family celebrations, gardening or sport are all shown to evoke memories of past locations (Askins, 2009; Hurley, 2019; Ratna, 2017; Rishbeth & Finney, 2006; Silveirinha de Oliveira, 2012). Some researchers explore the cumulative influence of these recognitions for developing framings of transnational place attachment (Addas & Rishbeth, 2018; Silveirinha de Oliveira, 2012) and a sense of belonging shaped by relationship to urban landscapes (Lovelock et al., 2011; Peters et al., 2016; Ratna, 2017). Radstone (2011) highlights the elusive nature of transnational memories, emphasising the need for 'memory research' that gives 'an attentiveness to the locatedness of memory with an awareness of memory's potential to wander' (p. 114). This acknowledgement of hybridity reflects some of the nuances of landscape qualities, an openness and fluidity to memories and connections.

With regard to migration, a focus on process and time gains importance. Attending not only to recent arrivals but also to settled residents helps develop theory relating to transnational nature connections. Exploring across both the tangible and the experiential qualities of 'nature' extends place-based notions of transnational belonging (De Nardi, 2017), engages with cultural heritage through mundane practices (Goodall et al., 2011), questions the oft-assumed neutrality of natural environments (extending work by Askins, 2009; Kloek, Peters, & Sijtsma, 2013) and hopes to give weight to the way in which both connections and disconnections can shape a sense of a self in the world.

4 | METHODOLOGY

The interviews that inform our two central questions were undertaken as one component of a 3-year research project. Improving

Wellbeing through Urban Nature (IWUN) was an interdisciplinary project that involved multiple qualitative, quantitative and participatory methods to explore themes of mental health and wellbeing relating to proximity to and engagement with urban nature. All research activities focused on a city-wide case study of Sheffield, population 500,000, located in the north of England. Within this, we conducted a qualitative strand exploring cultures and values of urban nature, involving 90 participants of ages 16–80 in either in-depth interviews or in arts-based workshops (the latter specifically recruited people with lived experience of mental health difficulties). The findings of this paper are based only the data from the interviews. We drew on narrative approaches (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2008) and Tolia-Kelly's (2004) work on biographical mapping of landscape value to take particular account of the need to understand, deeply and in detail, personal stories around types and qualities of urban nature experiences. Ethics review and approval were made by the Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Sheffield ethics review panel.

The interviews analysed here are all with people who moved to the United Kingdom from another country after early childhood, a total of 23 participants. To provide some clarity about experiences of nature at different life stages, our recruitment focused on three age bands, loosely young people (16–25 years, five participants), middle age (40–50 years, nine participants) and older people (70 plus years, nine participants). There were 11 women and 12 men. Roughly half the participants lived in areas of multiple deprivation, and a few of those in the more affluent neighbourhoods lived in social or supported housing in these areas. The participants came from 13 different countries of origin and were broadly distributed from Africa (four), the Middle East (twelve), South Asia (eight), East Asia (two), Caribbean (five, all older age band) and Europe (two). The employment status of the participants was three homemakers (with degree education, two educated to PhD), five in paid work, seven retired, two in full-time postgraduate study, three unemployed and three asylum seekers.

Participants were recruited using a diverse range of 'enquiry points' both in terms of social context and geographically across Sheffield, none of which were related to nature or environmental causes. Over the duration of a year, we built up links with community and third sector groups, meeting at participants' choice of home or public meeting place. We approached participants with a careful process of information, request and consent, using video recordings to present the research information and consent process. We respected opting out, expressed both explicitly and obliquely and gave choices as to whether the interviews were conducted individually or as pairs (friendship or couples). Most participants allowed us to audio record and transcribe, with four of the interviewees requesting notes instead. The average length was 1 h. One person (Birch) conducted all the interviews, and a translator was used in only one interview with an older south Asian woman.

In aiming to capture a range of voices and experiences, and being particularly interested in people who *did not* see themselves as 'nature lovers', we thought carefully about how the research themes were initially communicated and developed during the interview. We avoided any mention of nature, 'green' or the environment in participant recruitment, choosing instead a much broader (but also accurate) framing of the content as relating to 'feeling good in Sheffield': What do you like about the city and what is not so good? The interview was carefully structured to help us maintain neutrality about the value (or not) of nature in the participant's lives. The first section focused entirely on 'feel good' places in Sheffield, asking for favourite locations and discussing these. This allowed evaluation of indoor and outdoor preferences. The second section focused on 'outdoor places' and times spent outside (including incidental times and journeys) allowing analysis that addressed a wide range of typologies including streetscapes, parks, rural surrounds and domestic gardens. The final third focused on 'nature', asking participants for personal definitions of this, ideas about what is 'Sheffield nature' and returning to the theme of favourite places but with an overt focus on we called 'nature places'. Within this section, and having by this point built a good rapport of trust, we used a visual participatory method, asking the interviewee to draw their favourite part of Sheffield nature. The interviewee was then asked to draw themselves in the picture, usually as a stick person, and add a speech bubble about what they thought nature would say to them. The drawing finished with them being asked what they would say back to nature. Though this exercise was always prefaced with a 'this might feel a little weird but have a go', and often accompanied by shared laughter, it was usually extremely effective in capturing something otherwise elusive about the participants' ideas and ethos around nature—gratitude, awe or care.

The analysis process was multidimensional, the primary focus being reading individual transcripts (verbatim, pseudonymised) and building up an understanding of individual narratives, values, contexts and engagements. An additional approach was the use of NVivo (qualitative data management software) to conduct a process of coding and aid thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We used both approaches to identify migration-specific broader themes and more detailed categories (spatial, relational, temporal and object related), aiming not to essentialise or perfectly mirror participants' experiences but allowing for researchers' own positions and perspectives to emerge (Lenz Taguchi, 2012, p. 268). We brought to the analysis our shared and diverse academic interests in cultural diversity of landscape use, including previous academic and nonacademic connections with migrant experiences, while attentive to our own positioning as nonmigrants.

The following three sections present findings from the study, with each section exploring a key theme to emerge from interviews. We foreground personal narratives and stories from participants, which indicate the significance of 'weather', 'care' and 'relationships', responding to the call from Kloek, Buijs, Boersema, and Schouten (2015) for a greater diversity of migrant perspectives. We then interweave perspectives from other authors working across a range of fields that include transnational and urban studies as well as cultural and health geographies.

5 | SENSORY ENGAGEMENTS WITH WEATHER

Bell, Leyshon and Phoenix (2019) discuss everyday nature experience as shaped by Ingold's notion of 'weather-worlds'—'a highly visceral form of everyday nature encounter' (p. 270 citing Ingold, 2011, p. 96). Sensory qualities of place are heightened by the immediacy of skin sensations and the cultural resonances of these—an embodiment that reflects a change in circumstance. Weather narratives, as references to ephemeral landscapes (Brassley, 1998), crept into many of points of interview stories, often told by participants as a point of reaction to the position of being a new arrival. Not being able to adapt well to the weather in Sheffield was a common (though incidental) way in which participants expressed aspects of unbelonging or not-yet-belonging, recounted in short-term exasperation or as a longstanding point of compromise to the adopted home. Such accounts give us insight into our first question about how nature narratives give insight into migration experiences. In attending to this, we also speak to the second question of how diverse migrant voices might give new perspectives about urban nature, suggesting that oft-overlooked dynamics of weather could be more clearly articulated as a dimension of urban nature (Horolets, 2016).

One of the participants who had arrived in the United Kingdom 6 years previously talked about his reaction to the weather:

> I've had times when I got very, very angry actually, [laughs] or, or it's, I think it's normal. … Because being caught in the rain, you know, it's just like being like, there's nothing you can do about it but it's just like why, especially if it, if it was sunny five minutes ago, so …
> Emil[3] (male, young, from Romania).

The 'uncertain' and 'unreliable' aspects of the British weather were often discussed, especially by newer migrants. In part, this appeared to throw up an unwelcome reflection on their own ability to practically cope in this new environment, an environment that did not do what it was *supposed* to do.

> Sometimes it will be very, very hot in the winter and it's not supposed to be really hot in the winter, maybe you are feeling very cold in the summer, and it's not supposed to be like that, so yeah. (It's kind of confusing is not it?) Yeah, it's kind of confusing, yeah. All the time I'll be keeping my umbrella in a bag. Because I do not know what time it'll be raining, so almost of the time.
> Rojwan (male, young, from Kurdistan, in UK one year).

In hearing disruptions to expected rhythms and patterns of weather, we recognise everyday challenges to people's sense of being 'in correct relation' with the environment, which has the potential to affect a wider sense of belonging (Bennett, 2015, p. 957),

In common with participants in the broader study who had lived in the United Kingdom all their life, many migrant participants talked about how they would spend less time outdoors in winter and in poor weather. This seasonal compromise can become more emotionally meaningful when compared with previous times and places in their lives without this constraint. Yet these understandable frustrations told only part of the way in which weather was experienced and voiced by migrants, and were counterbalanced in part by instances of fascination. The British weather was also a source of softness and playfulness, especially for people who had grown up with harsher, more extreme climates. Such *positive* weather experiences have not been revealed by other studies attending to barriers and enablers of greenspace use and urban nature access (Cronin-de-Chavez, Islam, & McEachan, 2019; Kloek et al 2011), potentially because of their 'visiting' greenspace focus, rather than broader aspects of living in a city.

Skyscapes and rain were commented upon by many, and though the regularity of rain was often a source of exasperation (most of the interviews were conducted in the damp summer of 2017), the material and tactile qualities of rain in England were also a novelty to some.

> In Great Britain you get a lot of drizzle, we do not get drizzles in Romania. In Romania if it rains, it rains like heavy, heavy drops, so if, if it's raining it's like full-on, here it's kind of sometimes it's raining, sometimes it's not, it's drizzling. Emil (male, young, from Romania)

> I love water then, okay, here, in my country and here, every time when the rain is come, if I am inside the house I go … I go outside and it's feeling in my face.
> Hadil (male, middle age, moved to the UK from Sudan within the last year).

Hadil, though a recent arrival to the United Kingdom, illustrates his physical engagement with the rain, as a positive 'dwelling with the weather' (Vannini, Waskul, Gottschalk, & Ellis-Newstead, 2012). This way of becoming 'weather connected' (De Vet, 2017, p. 145) is also something Helima has with her two decade experience of living in Britain. 'You adapt to it [you] can find out what it is and enjoy it'. Feelings about weather as nature, as with other kinds of nature, are dynamic and changeable across time (Skår, 2010).

Some participants articulated what they saw as the particular beauty of weather in the United Kingdom, describing some very specific conditions that spoke to their sense of natural qualities, some framing this as a privilege of living in England.

> When it rains you can see the cloud coming in a big mass and pouring down the rain. It's again a very beautiful thing to see, how the weather changes quickly and in such a dramatic way.
> Binita (female, middle age, moved to the UK from India sixteen years previous).

Idin described the pleasures of fog and mist, explaining how his 'connection' to nature becomes 'stronger' in these weather conditions:

> I like it especially when the clouds come down and it is cloudy—like today. This rain is so small. I have not seen it before. It does not make you wet. I like it. It comes on your skin and feels good. [...] When it is cloudy and foggy, it becomes stronger. I do not know why. It's like all parts come together, the cloud, the trees ...
>
> Idin (male, young, moved to the UK from Iran within the last year).

De Vet (2017, p. 141) terms these rich descriptions 'weather relations', which encompass not only meanings and understandings of local weather but also experiences and responses to it. They are 'somatic experiences' for Idin and Hadil who both cite a positive and sensed 'weather learning' as part of their experience of urban nature (Allen-Collinson, Crust, & Swann, 2018, p. 69). Although the sensory qualities of weather were mostly appreciated, the limits to this (positive and negative) were tested by experiences of snowfall. Some desired it, entranced: 'It is special when you come from elsewhere' said Antara from southern India. Others were cautious, 'it was fascinating for me [in] the beginning when I was young maybe'. But as they get older and have more responsibilities, the disruption to everyday life and movement can become more of a theme. Sri, an Indonesian woman who has lived in the United Kingdom for 20 years, loves watching snow fall, 'the whiteness of it ...' but only from behind the glass of her windows. Being able to feel in control of the strength and extent of nature experiences is sometimes important, being able to say 'enough'. An immersion is not always desired.

6 | CARE AND NATURE

There are many ways in which nature connection literature demonstrates the importance of mutual care between the people and the rest of nature. Engaging with trees, skies and wildlife can be associated with awe and wonder (McKewan, Cameron, Ferguson, & Richardson, 2020), and seeing a plant grow or an animal respond to you can be captivating and therapeutic (Gorman, 2017) but 'care' engagements also involve forms of agency and commitment. Although the interview questions gave no prompt about 'caring', these stories surfaced. In thinking about care and migration, does the act and intention and experience of caring have different, or additional dimensions? We became attentive to the ways in which individuals demonstrate care and how this reflected situations of upheaval, rerooting or transnational connections.

Most of the middle and older age migrant participants, men and women, talked about acts of growing, in gardens, yards, an allotment and a balcony. Those who appeared to have higher levels of nature connection generally were also those most keen on tending plants. Mr Miller, one of our oldest participants, in drawing his picture of his Sheffield nature chose to draw his allotment in plan view with 'a greenhouse with tomatoes growing'. He describes his experience there as 'Just happy, enjoyment and the best thing is to watch, watch them grow, watch the plants grow'. This response echoes others' study of older migrants' gardening experiences, which offered satisfaction and contributed to migrant's wellbeing (Beckie & Bogdan, 2010; Li, Hodgetts, & Ho, 2010).

The allotment is a place where Mr Miller has become both locally knowledgeable and productive. During the joint interview with his wife, he talked about differences in climate between the United Kingdom and Jamaica, about particular crops he grows and the territorial dynamics of birds in the allotment, naming many of them. There is significant effort involved in tending the allotment, and in the growing season, he is there most days. This is a 'labour of love' for Mr Miller but which care for self and for garden as part of daily life (Bhatti et al., 2009; Casey, 1993). When asked what the allotment would say to him, Mr Miller said 'I think it would say to me "well done"'.

Contributing to understanding the interrelationships between nature connections and migration experience, we find that in this case, the allotment is a clear point of establishment and commitment to 'here', and did not appear to be used, by choice of crops or growing methods, as a specific connection to Mr Miller's rural childhood in Jamaica or traditions and memories, (e.g., Gerodetti & Foster, 2016). This theme did however surface in other accounts, in which growing practices were given meaning through their intergenerational and transnational links.

Farooq spent most of his interviews talking about the poor social infrastructure of this low-income neighbourhood. Approaching older age, he has a number of health problems and is clearly impacted by the withdrawal of public services locally, feeling the loss of places to meet with friends, 'we can't sit all year round in the park'. The role of nature in his life appeared to be very minimal, until the discussion turned to his garden 'I don't have a big garden but I, I squeezed in a few fruit trees'. He went on to list cherry, apple, walnut, pears, prune and plum and talked about caring for and protecting them. He goes on to describe his own learning to try and graft fruit trees, researching on the internet and becoming frustrated with failed efforts. He aspired to be like his uncle, with 100% success. Farooq finally succeeded with 'a native fruit', a mulberry tree: 'I used to love it in my, back in, you know, where I was childhood ... We had a, like in Pakistan they have so many mulberry trees, every house they have two or three, four', and gave details about why the wood of the mulberry tree was highly valued in his home country. The passion Farooq had for his gardening shone through as an engaging and careful part of his life, with rich memories connecting him with older generations, and past practices with playing with his grandchildren here in Sheffield.

When prompted with a question about 'what is nature for you?' Farooq talked not about his gardening but about his past history of pet keeping: 'my kids used to love it, I had so many things I had in my garden' and listed three rabbits, a few hens, one cockerel, budgies and a parrot. When asked why he started keeping pets, he talked about

living a 'poor life' in rural Pakistan, the centrality of animals within the everyday practices of subsistence living and the status associated with the 'people who have more animal is the richest person'. His memories of this time were hard, working in fields with no shoes, gathering firewood for cooking, but also full of sensory pleasures (Waterton, 2007): 'picking and eating [wild fruits], they were so beautiful and every, and especially in spring the smell of their, you know, with the, from the leaves and flowers, oh my god [...], it's gorgeous, it's like, just like heaven'. When asked about his thoughts on Sheffield nature, he said he used to take his kids out to urban farms in Sheffield to see the cows and the horses, though he feels they are not farming as productively as they could. Though now preoccupied by the demands of living with his health condition and negotiating a diminished urban environment in this part of Sheffield, it appears that for Farooq 'urban nature' is almost entirely shaped by childhood contexts of tending and of utilising.

As in Farooq's case, most of the participants grew up in rural settings or talked about extended visits to grandparents' farms. Farm animals were cited by a number of migrant participants as included within their definitions of nature, of Sheffield nature and preferred nature places, as well as being listed within their 'feel good places' (rarely the case for nonmigrant participants in the broader study). Pets were infrequently mentioned. None of the migrant participants owned a dog, a couple mentioned them positively and a few others reported bad experiences with aggressive dogs (Cronin-de-Chavez et al., 2019).

Tending to nearby nature while being reminded of family in other locations was part of Idin's story too:

> [Idin] shows me two photos, on his phone, of a squirrel on the windowsill of his room. The sash window is open partly and the window is very close to trees in full leaf. The window is filled with a very bright green. A squirrel is on the windowsill, incongruously next to what looks like a red can of coke. The squirrel seems to look at Idin/the camera.
> [extract from researcher's fieldnotes associated with interview]

Idin talked with humour about how the squirrels in his yard come right into his room, and a time when he gave them peanuts. 'I don't know if it's right or wrong to give them food. I heard in this city that people don't give animal foods. [...] I need to read about it'. He rationalises this as part of his character and in particular his longstanding habit of feeding street cats in his hometown in Iran. He recounts the exasperation but also the acceptance of his mother: 'My mother said, "oh here is the next one!"' Having come to the United Kingdom as a young adult asylum seeker just a few months previously, these squirrels are linked back to his mother's voice, but also importantly a point of consistency, an identity of someone who loves animals and cares for them. At this unusual 'here and now' in his life, this possibly transgressive contact with wildlife allows a way of being present and having choices, of offering a welcome rather than seeking one.

7 | RELATIONAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF NATURE AS RESPONSIVE TO TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITIES

Nature connections are often highly personal, for most people an individual instinct, an unarticulated noticing. Yet the interviewee stories relating to care for the non-human are notable for the presence of humans. Idin remembers his mother's tolerance about the street cats. Farooq grafts mulberries, an act that connects him to his uncle in Pakistan, the fruit trees also providing a play area for his granddaughter. These people are not necessarily physically present in the story, or play a central role, but are intrinsic to understanding relevance and meaning. Across the various accounts of nature connection from the interviews, social relations appear important to understanding transnational dimensions to connections with urban nature.

Many of the relationships highlighted in nature stories were those pertaining to families, often intergenerational (older and younger). Grandparents were often mentioned in stories of childhood, people who played an important caring role in their lives, often rural dwelling and representing traditional skills of living off the land. Middle-aged migrant residents were aware that these relatives from previous generations in distant places were remote to their own children. Landscape recollections were one way in which these temporal and relational disconnections could be reconciled.

Helima is a middle-aged Algerian woman with four children who has lived in the United Kingdom for over two decades. Here, she describes her time spent at a peri-urban farm run by an educational trust. The account highlights multiple ways in which she makes transnational connections: intentionally taking her children here to connect them with her childhood, use of photos of Algeria, talking about her grandparents, picking of familiar fruit and the practice of jam making, and her emotional responses to these activities.

> I have, yeah, all grown my childhood in [location name], so my grandparent they are farmers, so they have like farm and they, yeah, they grow things and they sell it in the market and it is a living really [...] I took my children, [laughs] to give them experience of the farm things and all that, when, Whirlow Farm because you can pick your fruit and vegetables and all that, so when I tell them and bring them the photos of my, how I grow up and all the animals [...] I try in the holiday to get them into the farm [...], when we pick up the strawberries and all that, and I show them], we have to do it with it, yeah, make the [jam], yeah, the fruit and all that, so they were like fascinated, how do you know these things and all that? I said when I was young I was with my grandad, yeah, feeling and all that, yeah, so it's good and I give them the recipe because [...] my grandad used the recipe to put jam, strawberry jam, how to bake it, so I show them how to get, yeah, the jam. It was good feeling to give them, to make them learn something different.

Through these family stories, we learn that urban nature experience is, indicated in the introduction, a simultaneity of stories and a palimpsest of human relations across spatial and temporal scales. Nurturing of children, and how this relates to living in Sheffield but having memories of a childhood elsewhere, prompts reflection among parents in our study, especially female participants. Some talk about the difference between their childhood play environments (hide and seek in the streets of Jakarta and smelling market smells while walking to school in South India) and those available to their children (more constrained by worries about safety). At times, they ponder out loud about recollections prompted by visual likenesses of trees or views—and how their children laugh at them when they do this. Migrant parents often expressed positive feelings towards Sheffield for raising a family, and high-quality parks are seen as providing leisure and cultural opportunities. Older participants recall memories of times when their children were younger, when visiting Sheffield parks and the nearby countryside was a more frequent activity. These places are now sometimes revisited with grandchildren.

A different picture emerges regarding stories of urban nature and transnational connections for people who had moved to the United Kingdom more recently, especially males in the younger adult age group. Urban greenspace was used as a resource for spending free time, often alone, occasionally with loose groupings of friends. A key experience that emerged is a sense of personal peace in a period of significant life change and high levels of unfamiliarity. Idin who experiences depression takes walks locally to lift his mood. His drawing of Sheffield nature shows a few buildings surrounded by hills and trees. 'Nature says: Keep calm. Let's have a rest. Look at me and feel better'. What do you say to nature? 'I say: I love to be here.' Another asylum seeker, Hadil, spends long periods of time walking round Sheffield, using online maps on his phone to find and mark places of interest, seeing parks as places to 'find life' and watch people. Though he likes being in busier places, he also values relaxation, flowers, sitting alone or with his friend 'find a bench in the sun', with a small Bluetooth speaker he bought for £5 so he can listen to music at the same time. He misses the outdoor music that would play in outdoor places in his home country of Sudan. Rojwan is a young man who recently gained refugee status, having arrived as an asylum seeker a year previously. Coming from a country in which evening curfews operated, Rojwan described nature as 'free ... not any rules in nature'. In relation to our first central question, it is clear here that nature supports a sense of freedom for Rojwan and has extra resonance for someone with experience of such tight spatial and temporal restrictions to his movements. He too preferred being outdoors, mostly on his own, valuing the sensory and restorative qualities of urban greenspace, the freshness of air and quiet of early mornings. He described relevance for his own health 'if you have been in more green places you will be getting more health'.

Another set of experiences we noted were those of loneliness and companionship. Emil, like Hadil, brings music into urban nature settings by busking in a large well-loved city park. He gains what he calls 'sanctuary' and a 'meditative state'. Yet, while gaining a sense of increased wellbeing, both he and Idin expressed that they would like companions to enjoy nature experiences beyond the city. Bassam expressed a sense of loss emerged as he talked about his outdoor-based social life during his youth in Sudan. In Sheffield, he seeks to be outdoors as a means of being alongside others, preferring 'lively' places. The city centre is quiet on Sundays, 'the worst', and staying indoors in his house makes him feel 'annoyed' and 'lonely'. We get a sense here of how relations in outdoor public spaces are important for a sense of 'self-worth, belonging and self-location' for young male migrants in particular[4] (De Martini Ugolotti, 2015, p. 26). Relational aspects of transnational connection seem weaker for participants at this stage of their migration history, or may be just too hard to talk about. Yet, at least for some, the neutral and engaging quality of spending time outside is shown as highly important and something that provides a measure of shared humanity, agency and dignity.

Although this paper has aimed to foreground the impact of migration histories on *understandings of* and *connections to* urban nature, it is also important to recognise that nearly all of the migrant participants also identify as being from a nonmajority ethnic background, a member of a visible community (used by Askins, 2009, and relevant especially when thinking through ways in which people of colour 'stand out' in White-dominated locations such as rural contexts). This positioning can also shape their experiences of being outdoors and potentially perceptions of nature. One of our participants, a young woman who wears a hijab, recounted an experience of feeling avoided in a park setting on account of her clothes—her experience of being judged while outdoors which quite differs from the 'not any rules in nature' perception held by Rojwan. While interrogating transnational connections and relational aspects of connecting with nature in urban settings, it is important to attend also to the social dynamics shaping these locations (Neal et al., 2015), and the relationship of visibly different bodies (as individuals and as groups) to others in 'natural environments'.

Nonfamily relationships and social networks are important to supporting access to nature (urban and peri-urban) (Horolets, 2016). We found this especially the case for many of the middle-aged and older migrant participants. These are often local social and cultural contexts (health and community centres and religious settings) that provide opportunities to spend time outside with others. Kay, a retired women born in Jamaica, values her involvement with a local community organisation. From connections instigated here, she has taken part in healthy walking groups round local parks and a 'learn to cycle' course and becoming a regular participant in the 'Black Women's Walking Group' in the nearby Peak District National Park. Kay says 'I prefer a group, it feels a safer environment', and this has given her confidence to lead her own sisters out for walks. Other female participants talk about parks as places to meet up and spend leisure time with people from their own cultural community.

However, being alone in natural places is also something many participants valued, and many engaged with nature in and around the city because they saw it as important to their own wellbeing. Both Christians and Muslims talked about walking in parks and woods as a

chance to pray. More broadly, emotional and spiritual benefits were recounted, 'feeling more energy' taking solo walks through woodland, and noticing the coming of spring 'Ah, it's time you came' (Mai, middle-aged female). Farida, a young female, spent time observing nature through a bedroom window as a way to build confidence during a period of ill health, and this resonates with other work indicating the value of indoor-experiences of outdoor nature for health and wellbeing (Speedy, 2015). A few have special places where they go escape some of the complexity of daily life. Mr Miller's goes to his allotment; Rojwan chooses a large open park; Helima drew *her* tree in a local park; she regularly returns to this tree throughout all seasons, sitting under it on her mat making time to reflect. These ritual embodied acts of 'homing' (Christou & Janta, 2019) with urban nature enable thinking space that supports everyday wellbeing.

Although there were concerns about visiting nature spaces both in and outside the city (most noticeably for younger, newer migrants or those living in more deprived neighbourhoods), a more persistent finding of this research is the variety of ways in which people noticed urban nature within everyday lives, rather than 'special visits'. Participants enjoyed nature as a context for spending time with friends or family and sought out nature experiences to support their own sense of a good life. Experiences of nature can allow for a cultural openness within 'transnational' lives, the ability for migrants to recognise and talk about differences and connections between multiple homes and life stages, and to conceptualise something of the respite of the non-human amidst human churn and change.

8 | CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

We return to the two central questions of our research, drawing together the narratives and themes of the interviews. In doing this, we review often the embodied qualities of experiencing nature, appropriating Crouch's reflection on 'space' as 'grasped through the doing, not as an object 'out there' or merely "felt" through the body; rather it is constituted by the numerous feelings, sensualities, and, in particular, the character of these things being expressed together' (2003, p. 1953).

Firstly, what can narratives of urban nature tell us about experiences of migration?

Talking about nature engages with migrant temporalities and life trajectories. Being a recent migrant (young or middle-aged participants in our study) or a long-established UK resident (some middle-aged and all of our older participants) was reflected through commonalities and dissimilarities in terms of nature connections. Earlier in the paper, we outlined notions of environmental unfamiliarity as experienced by recent migrants, raising the question of greenspace or ecological strangeness. This theme did surface through the interviews, yet in more oblique ways. Difference was acknowledged within a number of contexts, most commonly by recent migrants and most notably through experiences of weather. Although De Vet (2017) is more focussed on climate change adaptation, like us, she states the value in hearing people's small-scale and local weather experiences. In the

context of migration experiences, these provides insights into personal successes and barriers to adaptation, and feelings of confidence within the physical environment. Novelty was sometimes a pleasure and sometimes a problem and on occasions, a lack of nature related 'skill' (e.g., being without an umbrella and appropriateness of feeding wildlife), illustrative of disconcerting experiences of being a newcomer. Attending to nature connections highlights the demands of settling in a new country as not only intellectual (acquisition of information) but an embodied process of responsiveness and of gaining tacit knowledge. For many newcomers, access to different forms of nature and typologies of urban greenspaces are not taken for granted and experiencing the unfamiliar can evoke heightened sensory responses and a cautious or enthusiastic curiosity (Rishbeth & Finney, 2006).

We turn to discussions that illuminate how urban nature narratives illuminate wellbeing needs and experiences of migrants. Our research illuminates how migrants' personal stories of nature are bound up with matters of social justice and equity, which take account of experiences of being included or excluded in public spaces (Egoz & De Nardi, 2017). Our participants variously experienced nature as 'rule-free' (or not), felt enabled or disabled by the weather and found outdoor spaces where care can be felt and enacted. Yet we move beyond an overly polarised notion of inclusion and exclusion to foreground attention to migrants' *wellbeing* needs and gains, illustrating how this is not always found in public greenspaces but can also be located in domestic, garden or doorstep nature connections. Our findings support many of the common themes of previous research: opportunities for lingerings (Hadil in the park; Idin at his windowsill, Helima at her tree) and stress relief and opportunities for recreation (Hordyk et al., 2015; Roe et al., 2016). Spending time outside can provide some measure of pleasure and care when other options are limited, particularly during periods of poverty or precarity. For some like Farooq, these periods are experienced long term. For others, periods of hardship are mapped as times of arrival and settlement (Hordyk et al., 2015; Rishbeth et al., 2019). Social disconnection is more likely to be a feature of life for newer arrivals, especially those who have experienced forced migration or arrived without their families. However, while being outdoors in parks and awareness of nature can temporarily provide some distraction, interest or pleasure for participants in this situation, their accounts, like those of Idin and Bassam, also include aspects of loneliness and loss. This was markedly different from long settled participants, male and female, when times spent outdoors were often cherished whether alone (calm and introspective) or with others in social contexts. These participants often drew on memories set within these Sheffield places as well as referring to countries of birth.

Talking about nature and time spent in natural places also highlights themes common in discussion of transnational research relating to awareness of distance (O'Conner, 2010). Grandparents, parents or uncles might be 'passed away' (time distance) but also or alternatively 'away' by geographic distance. These important childhood memories become doubly intangible and difficult to communicate. Aspects of re-enactment of practice, often reflecting recreational cultures

(Hurley, 2019; Kloek et al., 2015), were sometimes a knowing link—the jam making, the mulberry grafting and the forest walks. These material practices (Tolia-Kelly, 2004) and the embodied visceral qualities of them (Blachnicka-Ciacek, 2020) allow for transnational connections and make these communicable, something that can be shared especially with younger generations. Though experiences of nature engage the senses in a particular 'now' (and often an ecological specificity), the narratives here reflect some of the themes of Pahl's research on migrant belongings and artefacts (Pahl, 2012), in which a requirement for an exact likeness recedes. The significance and emotional resonance are remade by a combination of stories told and objects touched.

Secondly, how can awareness of migrant experiences inform understandings of urban nature?

We believe that the findings of our fieldwork shape a challenge to, and a necessary refinement of, notions of urban nature. Helpfully, urban nature discourses already include a rupture of the 'country/city and nature/city' dichotomies (Braun 2016, p. 647). We build on these and additionally situate ideas of urban nature as a mix of inside/outside and more boldly as dimensions of multi-ethnic urbanism. Too often nature—rural, wild and urban—has predominantly been articulated by White middle-class voices, often nostalgically informed by memories of playing out or holidaying in the British countryside (Barkham, 2019) and sometimes with disturbing colonial or exclusionary underpinnings (Smyth, 2019). In talking about understandings of nature that are 'lost' (Macfarlane & Morris, 2017), there appears to be little reflection of what might be 'gained' through migrant knowledges or learnt though connections with other natures, other ruralities and ecologies. Nature conservation and environmental organisations highlight their own agendas of broadening participation (visiting and volunteering) in nature-related activities and spaces (Craig, 2019), and indeed, it is important to acknowledge environmental advocates and activists from ethnically diverses backgrounds both individual and collective.[5] It is outside the scope of this paper to represent the diverse ways in which this engagement is or is not (could or could not be) of interest or beneficial to the large number and range of people living in the United Kingdom, who are first generation migrants.[6] But the narratives offer some starting points for a deeper understanding of the perception and value of everyday, remembered, relational and embodied urban nature(s).

Our findings also point to the need to understand the wellbeing benefits of urban nature, not 'in isolation from human experiences and social behaviours' (Egoz & De Nardi, 2017, p. S83) but embodied in narratives of one's own life history. By finding ways to share and articulate nature narratives across the life-course, it is possible to glimpse insights into the fullness of individuals' values and life histories and how these support a sense of self and of belonging. This can be seen across many spatial scales. Intimate experiences of near nature evoking a dynamic of 'care-giving' (to plants or animals), and city-wide incidental noticing of nature while out and about were both mentioned as ways of 'feeling good' or 'feeling better'. And while migrants usually (initially) have a restricted knowledge base regarding the ecological specificity of unfamiliar geographic terrain (in our case

northern European), we found no evidence that this constrains an ability to engage with nature in a range of ways. An educational focus on an inability to identify (e.g., species of birds or flowers, Lisewski-Hobson & Watkins, 2019) will miss much that people value. Joyful sensations (views, novel weather conditions, animal or plant observation) can transcend language (Horolets, 2016). Memories of elsewhere as shaping understandings of the present is a common insight in transnational urbanism (Hou, 2013). In this paper, we have extended this field, demonstrating how rarely articulated engagements with nature are highly personal and often meaningful ways in which place experiences transcend the purely local.

We conclude by highlighting a framing of urban nature and migrant lives, which emphasises temporality, multiscalar understandings of nature and the importance of relational contexts. Embodied sensory connections with local nature can resonate with transnational imaginings—engaging in the present with elsewhere people, activities, flora and fauna. These engagements may be fleeting or sustained, poised between comfort and sadness, but are often powerful and valuable in their ability for a sense of personal identity beyond a formal national identification. And though nature is often rooted, a locally specific ecology, it also can be migratory, shaped in different ways by non-local dynamics. How city residents 'think' and 'feel' about nearby nature is not reductive but pluralist—embracing both the known well and the novel, finding familiarity in unfamiliar places and points of connection through a responsive sensing. Diversity of nature cultures, that which is remembered as well as that which is familiar, can provide a small window into mutual belonging in a globalised world.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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ENDNOTES

[1] The commonly understood pattern of international migrants moving into urban areas is one clearly reflected in Office for National Statistics (ONS) statistics (ONS, 2019, fig. 1), though we acknowledge that patterns of agricultural employment have led to rural areas in the United Kingdom having increased percentages of non-UK born residents (ONS, 2017, fig. 3).

[2] Though our research was conducted in a second-tier English city, we suggest that the focus on nature in urban environments is pertinent to migrants living in town contexts (especially if the nearly rural environment is not a primary feature of everyday life, e.g., through agricultural employment) and not just the highly metropolitan framing of an 'arrival city' (Saunders, 2012).

[3] All participants' names are pseudonyms.

[4] A more extensive discussion of the experiences of younger people (ages 16–25) in the study is given in Birch et al. (2020).

[5] As a starting point (UK specific): Judy Ling Wong (Black Environmental Network, London National Park City), Maxwell Ayamba (Black Men Walking), Mya-Rose Craig (Black2Nature), David Lindo (the Urban Birder), Zakiya Mckenzie (Forestry Commission writer in residence, Green and Black Initiative), Sheree Mack (Wayfinding: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Great Outdoors), Kabir Kaul (RSPB Youth Council member), Carole Wright (Peabody Housing Association).

[6] Within the research team, we have published a range of 'practice guides' from the broader research findings including focusing on supporting wellbeing through urban nature and challenging inequalities (Birch & Rishbeth, 2019).

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