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Voluntary Immobility: A Global Analysis of Staying Preferences

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Abstract

In the last decade, there has been growing interest from both policy and academic communities in understanding why people migrate. The focus, however, remains biased towards understanding *mobility*, while the structural and personal forces that restrict or resist the drivers of migration, leading to different *immobility* outcomes, are much less understood. This paper offers the first global analysis of staying preferences, enhancing knowledge about the factors associated with voluntary immobility, defined here as the aspiration to stay in one's country of residence. We make use of the unique Gallup World Polls which provide information on aspirations to stay (as opposed to migrating abroad) as well as on individual characteristics and opinions for 130 countries worldwide between 2010-2016. Staying aspirations are widespread and far more common than migration aspirations, and we uncover important 'retain factors' often overlooked in research on migration drivers – related to social ties, local amenities, trust in community institutions, and life satisfaction. Overall, those who aspire to stay tend to be more content, socially supported and live in communities with stronger institutions, and better local amenities. We further explore differences in the relative importance of retain factors for countries at different levels of urbanization, and for different population groups, based on gender, education, rural/urban location, migration history, religiosity, and perceived thriving. Our findings contribute to a more holistic understanding of migration decision-making, illuminating the personal, social, economic, and institutional retain factors countering those that push and pull.

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Introduction

Pondering the determinants of migration in the mid-20th century, the sociologist William Petersen wrote, "the basic problem" before migration researchers "is not why people migrate but rather why they do not" (Petersen 1958, p258). Well over six decades later, migration researchers continue to ponder this same basic problem. Rates of international migration have not meaningfully increased since the 1960s, fluctuating around 3 percent of the global population (de Haas, Castles and Miller 2020). Considering new heights of global connectivity alongside widening disparities in wealth, well-being and security around the world, far fewer people are migrating than our migration theories would predict (Hammar et al 1997; Massey et al 1999, Schewel 2020).

We now know one important explanation for widespread immobility in our global age concerns the legal, financial and social constraints on migration that deprive people of the ability to move. Far more people may desire to migrate than actually do, a reality that Jorgen Carling highlighted when he first introduced the term 'involuntary immobility' (Carling 2002). Globalization has introduced new 'regimes of mobility' that facilitate the movement of the privileged at the same time that they introduce new restrictions to the already disadvantaged (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013; Shamir 2005).

Yet, migration constraints are not sufficient to explain widespread immobility, because most people do not have international migration aspirations. According to the Gallup World Polls, 85 percent of the world population would not migrate even if they were given the resources and opportunity to do so (Gallup 2022). 'Voluntary immobility' is thus far more common globally than migration or involuntary immobility combined, yet we know comparatively little about its causes and consequences.

To contribute to an emerging research agenda focused on immobility, this article presents the first global study of voluntary immobility using Gallup World Poll (GWP) data. We define voluntary immobility as the preference to remain in one's country of residence. Staying preferences are usually not analysed in a cross-country setting, due to the difficulty of obtaining comparable databases across countries, and even for migration aspirations, *global* analyses are limited (exceptions include Docquier, Peri and Ruyssen 2014; Migali and Scipioni 2019). We use individual-level information from the GWP that is comparable across 130 countries to map the prevalence of voluntary immobility by country, to explore important 'retain factors' that predict a preference to stay, and to better understand heterogeneity in how retain factors exert influence across and within countries.

Some readers may have reservations about whether a study of staying preferences matters. Because of the sometimes tenuous links between stated preferences and actual behaviour, the social sciences tend to focus more on 'what people do, not what they say' (Bernard and Taffesse 2014). Yet, if we only look at behaviour – in this case, actual immobility outcomes – it becomes difficult to differentiate between voluntary and involuntary immobility, or between those who stay because they prefer to do so, and those who stay because they lack the ability to leave (Carling 2002, Carling and Schewel 2018). To explain widespread immobility in today's world, more attention needs to be given to why so many people do not *want* to migrate.

A focus on why people do not want to migrate helps expand the type of factors considered relevant in migration decision-making models. Common rational-choice models frame migration decision-making in terms of an individual cost/benefit analysis. When costs and benefits are framed in primarily economic terms (e.g. income maximization), rational-choice models often fail to predict real-world trends; people often do not migrate when it would

be economically beneficial for them to do so (Uhlenberg 1973; Hammar and Tamas 1997; Cai et al 2014). Immobility under such circumstances may be explained in part by bounded rationality – limitations in information or the 'computational capacity' of the decision-maker (Simon 1990, see also Czaika and Reinprecht 2022). Yet, there are also important social, cultural and personal factors that can motivate a preference to stay (see Schewel 2020, Gruber 2021 for reviews). Relative to economic determinants, however, these non-economic factors remain comparatively understudied. In a comprehensive review of the determinants of migration aspirations (Aslany et al 2021), for example, it is striking how infrequently quantitative studies include variables related to personal dispositions, local social networks, place attachment, civic engagement or culture. Yet, qualitative inquiries into staying behaviour suggest these dimensions are crucial to explaining the desire to stay put (see Hjalm 2014, Preece 2018, Blondin 2021, Robins 2022, Vezzoli 2022).

This paper sheds new light on the extent of voluntary immobility globally and the personal, social and structural retain factors that encourage a preference to stay across national contexts and social groups. To some degree, our results mirror the findings of other studies exploring the determinants of migration aspirations. For example, we find that women are more likely than men to prefer to stay, and that voluntary immobility consistently increases with age. The likelihood of aspiring to stay is larger for those in a partnership or marriage, those with less than tertiary education, those who are satisfied with their standard of living, and among rural residents. However, because our aim is to explain voluntary immobility, we find evidence for a range of retain factors that remain largely ignored in quantitative studies of migration aspirations – factors related to community dynamics, opportunities for friendship, local amenities, feelings of safety, trust in police and approval of the country's leadership, religiosity, among others. When examining the relative importance of different categories of retain factors, we find variables related to individual characteristics, followed by community institutions, are more likely to predict voluntary immobility than respondents' economic situation, social ties or health factors.

To better understand variation in the extent of voluntary immobility and its determinants across contexts, we explore heterogeneity in staying aspirations in two ways. First, we distinguish countries by levels of urbanization (the percentage of the national population living in urban areas). Urbanization and income classifications based on GNI or GDP per capita are closely linked, in the sense that no high-income country has remained primarily rural (Ritchie and Roser 2018). Yet we choose urbanization levels to capture a range of social transformations beyond the economic, not least being a profound shift away from rural livelihoods and cultures towards urban social systems. As a growing share of national population in 'developing countries' leave agriculture and rural ways of life, most become internal migrants, but some inevitably migrate internationally (Massey 1988, 384). In this context, we explore which retain factors are the most important to explain voluntary immobility for countries at different stages of the urban transition. Second, we analyse various subsamples defined on the basis of specific characteristics of populations, based on gender, education level, urban/rural location, degree of thriving, religiosity, and migration history.

We find some retain factors are surprisingly consistent across country contexts and population subsamples. For example, higher levels of personal health, satisfaction with one's standard of living, satisfaction with local amenities, those who have relatives to count on and more opportunities to make friends, higher feelings of safety, greater trust in the police, and higher levels of approval of country leadership are all consistently associated with greater staying aspirations. Other variables – like educational attainment, civic engagement, or exercising voice – show greater variation, and their relationship with staying aspirations varies depending on the country context or population subsample.

Overall, our findings contribute new insight into the extent of voluntary immobility around the world and important retain factors associated with it. Our findings counter a tendency in migration studies to focus on the negative dimensions of staying put, particularly those associated with involuntary immobility or trapped populations. Here, we uncover the more positive features associated with place attachment: those who aspire to stay tend to be more content, socially supported and live in communities with stronger institutions and infrastructure.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. Section 2 provides an overview of related literature. Section 3 introduces and describes the data used in the empirical analysis extracted from the Gallup World Polls. Section 4 describes the empirical specification that we bring to the data and presents the benchmark estimates, as well as heterogeneous effects depending on household and country characteristics. Finally, Section 5 draws the main conclusions.

Related Literature

Migration research tends to focus on the causes and consequences of migration. This mobility bias in existing research is typified in the push-pull model of migration, a basic framework for studying migration that examines the forces that compel people to leave their homes (push factors) and those that attract them to another location (pull factors). The push-pull model has been extensively critiqued for being too simplistic, deterministic, and neglecting migrant agency (Skeldon 1990, de Haas 2011), and even updated into a more sophisticated 'push-pull plus' (Van Hear et al 2017). But these critiques and modifications do not address a fundamental flaw of the push-pull framework, namely that it fails to recognize a range of countervailing forces acting against those that push and pull. As Arango (2000) noted in his review of migration theories:

'the usefulness of theories that try to explain why people move is in our days dimmed by their inability to explain why so few people move. Clearly, theories of migration should not only look to mobility but also to immobility, not only to centrifugal forces but also to centripetal ones. The classic pair 'push' and 'pull' should at least be complemented with 'retain' and 'repel'. The existence of centripetal forces that lead to staying has been generally ignored by theories…' (Arango 2000: 293).

The same critique applies to other more sophisticated migration theories, such as neoclassical economics, dual-labour market theory, historical-structural and world systems theories, social capital or cumulative causation theories (see Massey et al 1999 for a review). These established theories still primarily focus on explaining the initiation and perpetuation of migration flows, implicitly treating immobility as the neutral backdrop to migration processes (Schewel 2020).

To contribute to an emerging research agenda that approaches immobility as a dynamic and differentiated process worthy of direct research focus, this article identifies important 'retain factors,' which we define here as the structural, social and personal conditions that encourage a preference to remain in place. What constitutes 'in place' could be one's national community or local village; here, we focus on immobility relative to international migration, or the preference to remain in one's home country.

Different disciplines have explored voluntary immobility, though using different terminologies, methodologies, and emphases. Within environmental psychology, for example, Lewicka (2011) reviews research on 'place attachment', and finds some of the

most important positive predictors of place attachment include residence length, home ownership, community involvement and family ties. Psychological perspectives also highlight how particular places can become part of a person's identity (see Lalli 1992). Within population geography, Gruber (2021) reviews staying and immobility across the life course in the context of internal migration, and Stockdale and Haartsen (2017) examine motivations for staying from the perspective of rural places. Recurring themes, Stockdale and Haartsen note, include the physical and social characteristics of a place as well as the role of family, friends and community in shaping a sense of home, belonging, and rootedness. (See also Schewel 2020, 338-344, for a related review). Economics literature tends to highlight the 'home bias' that influences how people invest, trade, or consume and also appears to shape how people think about migration (Djajić and Milbourne 1988; Batista and McKenzie 2021).

Some of the best-emerging insight into voluntary immobility comes from small-scale qualitative research of 'stayers', particularly in contexts where one would assume people should want to migrate. Preece (2018), for example, examines residential immobility in declining urban neighbourhoods in England. She shows why, in contexts of low-paid and insecure work, place-based mechanisms of social, emotional, and financial support become particularly important. Farbotko and McMichael (2019) examine voluntary immobility among Pacific Islanders facing sea level rise and coastal degradation. Despite these threats to their lives and livelihoods, many Indigenous populations prefer to remain on their ancestral homelands for cultural and spiritual reasons, including a deep connection to land and place-based identity, knowledge, and culture. Vezzoli (2022) examines staying preferences in a small Brazilian town experiencing economic decline and stagnation. There, she finds a good life is often described in terms of proximity to family, the natural environment, and the tranquillity and peacefulness of life in that place. Complementing the concept of 'relative deprivation' as a motivation for migration (cf Stark and Taylor 1989), she introduces the idea of 'relative endowment' as a motivation for staying. She further highlights the important role of hope for the town's future development in supporting a desire to stay.

Though far from exhaustive, the following list highlights examples of structural, social and personal characteristics that have been shown to be associated with higher staying aspirations (or to put it another way, reduced migration aspirations) in different settings:

- *Demographic characteristics:* Aspirations to stay increase with age (particularly from the 40s onwards), and tend to be higher among women, married adults, and those with lower levels of educational attainment (see Aslany et al 2020)

- *Personality traits*: Aspirations to stay have been found to be higher among adults with higher levels of risk aversion and trust (Jokela 2014, Klöbe 2021)

- *Cognitive constraints*: Aspirations to stay may be affected by the inability to "think beyond the border" (Van Houtum and Van der Velde 2004), 'satisficing' behaviour (Simon 1955; see Czaika and Reinprecht 2022), or a 'home bias' in economic reasoning (Batista and McKenzie 2021)

- *Life satisfaction*: Aspirations to stay tend to be higher among those with higher levels of happiness (Brzozowski and Coniglio 2021) and life satisfaction (Aslany et al 2020)

- *Location-specific characteristics*: Aspirations to stay tend to be higher in rural areas (Aslany et al 2020), generally increase with residence length (Fischer and Malmberg 2001, Lewicka 2011), and can be higher for populations with place-based identities, knowledge and cultures (Farbotko and McMichael 2019)

- *Economic ties:* Aspirations to stay tend to be higher among those with location-specific assets (i.e. home ownership) and insider advantages specific to a particular firm (i.e. career benefits) (Straubhaar 1988; Fischer, Martin and Straubhaar 1997)

- *Social embeddedness:* Aspirations to stay tend to be higher for those with stronger local networks of support (Fischer and Malmberg 2001, Uhlenberg 1973).

- *Commitment to place*: Aspirations to stay can be motivated by a commitment to place despite local decline–for example, by choosing to exercise 'voice' over 'exit' (Hirschman 1970, Schewel 2015, Beine et al 2021)–or hope that conditions will improve (Vezzoli 2022)

- *Community institutions:* Aspirations to stay have been found to be higher among those with greater involvement in a religious community (Myers 2000), in places with more community-oriented institutions, including local businesses, gathering places, and churches (Irwin et al 2004), and for those who are more satisfied with public amenities (Dustmann and Okatenko 2014).

- *Country context:* Aspirations to stay are highest in higher-income countries, followed by middle- and then low-income countries (Migali and Scipioni 2019).

Some of the characteristics and factors highlighted above are based on research in particular national or local contexts, and thus not necessarily generalizable globally. Other factors show more variation in their relationship to staying or migration aspirations, and there is not an immediately clear trend in how they relate to staying aspirations, suggesting their influence is particularly context-dependent (e.g., employment, governance; see Aslany et al 2021). To better understand how retain factors operate, more research is needed to understand *under what conditions* retain factors have their greatest effects and *for whom.* To advance further understanding of the social patterning of staying preferences, our analyses give attention to differences by gender, educational attainment, rural/urban location, thriving, religiosity and migration history. We also explore which retain factors are the most strongly associated with voluntary immobility in countries at different stages of the urban transition. Clearly, not all of the potential retain factors identified in this review section are possible to evaluate using the Gallup World Poll data, but this existing research inspired the wide selection of variables we include in our final analyses. Our findings provide a first broad brush overview of global trends that will be further refined through future mixed-methods research at various scales.

Data and Descriptives

Our analysis uses individual-level data from 130 countries where at least one Gallup World Poll has been conducted between 2010 and 2016. The surveys conducted by Gallup typically have a sample of around 1,000 randomly selected respondents per country, including rural areas.[1] Sampling is probability-based and nationally representative of the

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[1] That is with the exception of areas where the safety of the interviewing staff is threatened, scarcely populated islands in some countries, and areas that interviewers can reach only by foot, animal, or small boat. In some large countries such as China, India and Russia, as well as in major cities or areas of special interest, over-samples are collected resulting in larger total numbers of respondents. For a full description of the methodology, see Gallup (2022).

resident population aged 15 and older. The data are collected either through face-to-face interviews or through phone calls in countries where at least 80% of the population has a telephone landline. Our sample contains 297,654 observations for which information was available on all variables chosen for the analysis. Appendix Table A.1. gives an overview of the questions taken into account in the analysis.

Staying preferences

We define staying aspirations on the basis of the following question (Q1): "Ideally, if you had the opportunity, would you like to move permanently to another country, or would you prefer to continue living in this country?". Respondents are considered to have a preference to stay in their country of current residence as opposed to migrating permanently abroad if they answer negatively to Q1. The way in which the migration aspiration questions are interpreted might vary across countries, as observed by Clemens (2016) who underlines the risk of using contingent value surveys. Respondents may interpret "opportunity" in light of the possibilities currently available to them (legal migration, irregular life-threatening trip, with or without funding, etc.), which vary across countries. For this reason, we only exploit within-country variation in our empirical analysis by using country-fixed effects which control for differences between countries that can be considered constant during our sample period. This way, the GWP provide individual-level information that is adequate for our analysis and comparable across countries.

Figure 1. Staying preferences per country of residence
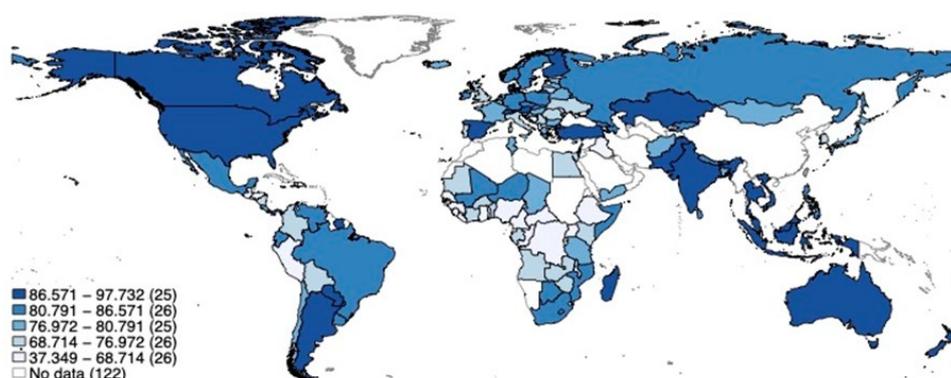
Notes: The figure shows the total proportion of respondents in the GWP who expressed the preference to stay in their current country of residence (as opposed to migrating permanently abroad) during the period 2010-2016. Darker shades of blue represent higher proportions (the number in round brackets denotes the number of countries falling each range); countries for which the GWP do not have data appear in white. Note that our sample also includes Hong Kong and South Sudan which could not be plotted on the map. *Source*: Own calculations based on the Gallup World Polls.

Figure 1 plots for each country in our sample the proportion of Gallup World Poll respondents who expressed a preference to stay in their current country of residence (as opposed to migrating permanently abroad) during the period 2010-2016. In almost all countries of the world, the majority of respondents prefer to stay in their country. The four exceptions include Dominican Republic, Haiti, Liberia and Sierra Leone, where more than half of the population aspires to emigrate. Staying preferences appear to be particularly

high in many Asia-Pacific countries and North America, while lower shares are reported in many African and to some extent also Latin-American countries. The complete list of countries used in our empirical analysis is presented in Appendix Table A.2.

Interestingly, the share of aspiring stayers increases with countries' urbanization rate: the average share of aspiring stayers stands at 73.2 percent in primarily rural societies (i.e., countries with less than 50% of urban population), and reaches respectively 76.7 and 81.6 percent in middle/transitioning countries (50 to 70% of urban population) and highly urbanized societies (more than 70% of urban population).[2] Appendix Table A.3. provides an overview of the countries in each category along with their share of urban population and aspiring stayers.

Factors associated with voluntary immobility

Our empirical analysis covers standard individual and household characteristics, including respondents' age and gender (female or male), education level (i.e., whether or not they completed four years of education beyond high school and/or received a 4-year college degree), residential area (i.e., whether or not they live in a rural area or on a farm, in a small town or village as opposed to a large city or a suburb of a large city), the number of children under 15 in the household[3], and the number of adults (aged 15 and above) in the household. We consider respondents' relationship status (whether they are married or in any form of partnership) as well as their country of birth (which allows to distinguish between natives and foreign-born). We also include a variable capturing the stated importance of religion as part of their daily lives (going beyond one's affiliation to a religion upon which one may not necessarily act).

Beyond these individual and household characteristics, our analyses incorporate additional factors related to an individual's health, economic situation, social life and community context.[4] Some variables are commonly used in migration studies (employment, network proxies, etc.) while others remain comparatively understudied (like the role played by religion or civic engagement).

Concerning health factors, health issues and poor healthcare services are mentioned as a potential reason why people want to or need to migrate (Bekaert, forthcoming; Castelli 2018; Van Hear et al 2017), but health-related issues could also motivate a wish to stay– for example, if someone has a specific health issue and would be reluctant to leave their trusted physician or care environment. To explore health factors, we include the GWP's Personal Health Index, which provides information on individuals' self-stated health combining measures on perceptions of one's own health and incidence of pain, sadness, and worry. We also include the Thriving Index as a proxy for mental health. Individuals were asked where they stand on a ladder with steps numbered from zero (the worst possible life) to ten

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[2] Information on countries' share of urban population comes from the World Development Indicators. Urban population refers to people living in urban areas as defined by national statistical offices. The data are collected and smoothed by United Nations Population Division.

[3] Note that we do not know whether these are the children of the person interviewed.

[4] We also considered including proxies capturing personality traits as in Klöbe (2021). The only variable in the GWP allowing to measure risk aversion is available only for the surveys conducted in 2010. Alternatively, Klöbe (2021) combines information about migration aspirations and socio-economic characteristics from the GWP and experimentally validated preference measures such as such as risk-taking, patience, and social preferences such as trust, altruism, positive and negative reciprocity from the Global Preference Survey. Unfortunately, these two datasets contain a personal identifier for each survey participant allowing to merge them only for the year 2012. Restricting our sample to 2012 so as to be able to control for these additional preference measures would imply too much of a drop in sample size in our analysis.

(the best possible life). Individuals are 'thriving' if they say they presently stand on step 7 or higher of the ladder and expect to stand on step 8 or higher five years from now.

To control for respondents' economic situation, we include their employment status (i.e. a dummy for working full or part-time for an employer or self-employed) as well as stated satisfaction with their standard of living.

To capture social ties, we consider whether respondents have relatives or friends whom they can count on, and whether they are satisfied with the opportunities to meet people and make friends in the city or area where they live. These variables help capture local social networks, which we expect to act as retain factors, enhancing the social costs of migrating abroad (see also Munshi and Rosenzweig 2016). We also include international networks, proxied by respondents' 'distance-one connections' abroad (i.e. whether they have relatives or friends abroad whom they can count on when needed). Such international networks have been systematically shown to exert a key influence on migration decisions (Bertoli and Ruyssen 2018): connections with individuals who have already moved contribute to improved job prospects at their destination (Munshi 2003; Patel and Vella 2013) and they can reduce the multifaceted costs of crossing a border (Carrington et al 1996).

The last category captures factors related to the quality of local institutions, trust in them, and political and civic engagement, which we broadly refer to in terms of 'community institutions'.[5] We include proxies for whether people are satisfied with local amenities, relating to the quality of institutions, including public transport, roads, air, water and healthcare quality, availability of housing and the educational system. We also account for their approval of the job performance in the leadership of their country, as well as a reflection on discontent and 'action-orientedness' in making the effort to talk to local officials, similar to how Hirschman theorized the exercise of 'voice' (i.e. expressing one's discontent with the hope of changing things in a company or state) instead of 'exit' (i.e. leaving) (Hirschman 1970). We also add the civic engagement index, which addresses the inclination to volunteer one's time and assistance to others. Finally, we include variables relating to perceived safety and security - e.g. feeling safe walking alone at night in the city or area where one lives, having confidence in the local police force, and whether one has been assaulted or mugged, or had money or property stolen in the last 12 months. Appendix A.1 includes the GWP questions for each of the above variables.

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for the factors considered in the empirical analysis either for the entire sample (left panel), for the subsample of aspiring stayers (middle panel) or aspiring migrants (right panel). 77.8 percent of the respondents in our sample state a preference to stay in their country. The sample subjected to our analysis is composed of 52 percent of women. The majority of the respondents are in partnerships or married, and most of them are native (4.5 percent is foreign-born). The average household in our sample has 1 to 2 children and 3 adults at home. 62 percent of the respondents lives in a rural area. For 75 percent, religion is an important part of their daily life. A typical respondent of the sample is native to the area and has a higher education level (either secondary or tertiary). 72 percent find themselves in good health, but only one in four respondents indicates to be thriving. Slightly over half are employed and satisfied with their standard of living. Around 80 percent has a local social network to rely on and find it easy to make friends,

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[5] We also considered questions capturing the extent to which people identify with their country, city or village, but these were asked only in 2012 for African countries and Middle East, which would have implied a dramatic fall in sample size and coverage.

while 38 percent have an international network to rely on. The majority of the respondents in our sample feel safe walking alone at night and have trust in the police, while only a minority (less than 20 percent) were the victim of a crime in the past year. One in three is civically engaged and around one in five has voiced their opinion to a public official in the past month.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for aspiring stayers and aspiring migrants

Variable	Overall sample		Aspiring stayers		Aspiring migrants	
	Mean	St. Dev.	Mean	St. Dev.	Mean	St. Dev.
Female	0.523	0.499	0.534	0.499	0.484	0.500
Aged 20 to 29	0.239	0.426	0.212	0.409	0.334	0.472
Aged 30 to 39	0.208	0.406	0.205	0.404	0.219	0.414
Aged 40 to 49	0.162	0.368	0.169	0.375	0.137	0.344
Aged 50 to 98	0.284	0.451	0.325	0.469	0.140	0.347
In partnership or marriage	0.567	0.495	0.599	0.490	0.455	0.498
Nr of children in HH	1.445	1.952	1.403	1.928	1.593	2.026
Nr of adults in HH	3.147	1.895	3.097	1.866	3.321	1.981
Tertiary education	0.140	0.347	0.140	0.347	0.140	0.347
Native	0.955	0.207	0.957	0.202	0.947	0.223
Rural area	0.620	0.485	0.630	0.483	0.584	0.493
Religion important	0.758	0.428	0.757	0.429	0.762	0.426
Personal Health Index	71.631	27.612	72.076	27.508	70.072	27.914
Thriving Index	24.771	43.168	25.476	43.572	22.297	41.624
Employed	0.562	0.496	0.562	0.496	0.563	0.496
Satisfaction standard of living	0.586	0.493	0.614	0.487	0.486	0.500
Relatives to count on	0.807	0.394	0.810	0.393	0.799	0.400
Opportunities to make friends	0.765	0.424	0.780	0.414	0.711	0.453
International network	0.382	0.486	0.345	0.475	0.513	0.500
Civic Engagement Index	33.857	31.863	33.681	32.016	34.469	31.313
Community Basics Index	58.730	29.031	60.967	28.639	50.886	29.032
Feeling safe	0.586	0.493	0.606	0.489	0.516	0.500
Trust in police	0.634	0.482	0.670	0.470	0.507	0.500
Experienced crime	0.184	0.387	0.163	0.370	0.255	0.436
Approval country's leadership	0.508	0.500	0.544	0.498	0.380	0.485
Exercising voice	0.220	0.414	0.217	0.412	0.233	0.423
Number of observations	297,654		231,579		66,075	

Distinguishing between aspiring stayers and migrants, we see gaps of different sizes for different variables. At first sight, there are no major differences between aspiring stayers and migrants in terms of household size, education level, migration history, religiousness, health or employment status. Yet, women are overrepresented among aspiring stayers, while aspiring migrants are predominantly male. Aspiring stayers are typically older, more likely to be in partnership or marriage, and more likely to live in rural areas than aspiring migrants. It is also interesting to note that those who aspire to stay are generally more satisfied with their life than those who aspire to migrate: those who wish to stay in their home country are more likely to be thriving, satisfied with their standard of living and opportunities to make friends, basic amenities in the community and appear to feel safer, and more trusting in the police and country's leadership.

Pairwise correlations for all variables in our empirical analysis can be found in Appendix Table A.4. Reassuringly, none of these is noticeably high (i.e., above |0.8|), which mitigates concerns about potential multicollinearity. The highest correlation value that we observe stands at 0.37 between the variables *Trust in police* and *Feeling safe*.

One note of caution regarding the interpretation of these results concerns the potential for cognitive dissonance. People who aspire to migrate might be more negative about their current circumstances than those who aspire to stay (who might be looking at things on the bright side). This could introduce measurement error potentially leading to biased results. We might be particularly concerned about this if the question about migration aspirations came before the questions about satisfaction with life and living conditions, because their response to the migration question might then influence their response to the following questions. Fortunately, this is not the case in the survey instrument used for the GWP.[6]

Empirical Analysis

This section outlines a stylized model of the determinants of individuals' aspirations to stay in their country of residence. Our framework draws from theoretical models of international migration (aspirations) which typically assume individuals to be rational agents choosing the location that maximizes their (expected) utility. As argued in the Section 1, existing literature has mostly focussed on understanding aspirations to migrate and the role therein of push and pull factors while retain and repel factors have been mostly overlooked, even if they may be of great value to explain prevalent staying preferences. By exploring both economic and non-economic retain factors, we contribute efforts to broaden analyses of 'utility maximization' so as to meaningfully incorporate social, physical and cultural factors that contribute to satisfaction or well-being and play an important role in migration decision-making (De Jong and Gardner 1981).

Specifically, we estimate the following empirical specification to analyse the determinants of voluntary immobility using a logit fixed effects estimator:

$$\text{Stay}_{iot} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 \text{Indiv}_{iot} + \beta_2 \text{Health}_{iot} + \beta_3 \text{Economic}_{iot}$$

$$+ \beta_4 \text{Social}_{iot} + \beta_5 \text{Instit}_{iot} + \delta_o + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{iot}$$

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[6] One alternative would be to consider objective indicators of the various push and retain factors in our model. Yet, these would likely be aggregate indicators which - to the extent that they measure country level characteristics - would be absorbed by the country fixed effects. Moreover, self-reported indicators matter more than objective measures when it comes to people's perceptions and experiences.

where the staying preferences ($Stay_{iot}$) of individual *i* in country *o* in year *t* are expressed as a function of individual ($Indiv_{iot}$) characteristics including a dummy for females, age dummies capturing whether an individual is aged between 20-29, 30-39, 40-49 or above 50 (relative to the baseline category of ages 15-19), a dummy for being in partnership or marriage, the number of children (below 15) and adults (above 15) in the household, and dummies for having completed tertiary education, for being born in the country of residence, for living in a rural area, and for religion being an important part of the respondent's daily life; health-related characteristics ($Health_{iot}$) including a dummy for being satisfied with the quality of healthcare, the GWP Personal Health Index and the Thriving Index; economic variables ($Economic_{iot}$) including a dummy for being employed and a dummy for being satisfied with one's standard of living; social variables ($Social_{iot}$) capturing whether the respondent has relatives to count on if needed, a dummy for being satisfied with opportunities to meet people and make friends in the city or area where one lives, and a dummy for having relatives or friends abroad whom the respondent can count on when needed; and variables related to community institutions and engagement ($Instit_{iot}$) including the GWP's Civic Engagement and Community Basics indices, dummies for whether the respondent feels safe, has trust in the police, for whether the respondent has experienced any crime, for approving of the country's leadership and for whether the respondent has voiced an opinion to a public official.

The inclusion of country and year fixed effects, δ_o and γ_t, allows to control, respectively, for the effect of unobserved time-invariant country characteristics and unobserved global trends. ε_{iot} is an i.i.d. distributed idiosyncratic error term. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation and clustered by country.

The tables displaying our estimation results present exponentiated coefficients, which can be interpreted as relative risk ratios. The latter indicates by how much the probability of aspiring to stay varies relative to aspiring to migrate abroad, following a unit change in a right-hand side variable, holding all else constant. Values greater than one indicate an increase in the likelihood of expressing staying aspirations, while coefficients smaller than one indicate an increase in the likelihood of migration aspirations.

Benchmark results

Table 3 presents the results for a number of specifications considering different categories of potential drivers of voluntary immobility before coming to the general model accounting for all categories together.

Focusing on individual and household characteristics first (column 2), effects broadly confirm the findings of previous studies of migration aspirations (see Aslany et al 2021, for a systematic review). We find that women are more likely to have a preference for staying than men: holding constant the other variables, the probability of aspiring to stay over migrating abroad is 22.6 percent higher for women than for men. Moreover, voluntary immobility consistently increases with age. The likelihood to aspire to stay relative to moving out is larger among people in a partnership or marriage (26,1% higher), among natives (37,8% higher), the religious (13,9% higher), and those without tertiary education. Staying aspirations are also higher in smaller households and in rural areas.

Table 2. Benchmark logit estimates on the whole sample of respondents

	Individual	Health	Economic	Social	Institution	All
Female	1.241***	1.251***	1.242***	1.252***	1.187***	1.226***
	(10.36)	(11.19)	(10.32)	(10.23)	(9.88)	(9.02)
Aged 20 to 29	1.121***	1.169***	1.201***	1.170***	1.220***	1.274***
	(7.50)	(9.92)	(10.20)	(9.40)	(10.04)	(9.74)
Aged 30 to 39	1.435***	1.549***	1.595***	1.510***	1.617***	1.757***
	(16.90)	(20.64)	(19.62)	(18.88)	(18.73)	(18.69)
Aged 40 to 49	1.864***	2.074***	2.128***	1.970***	2.086***	2.327***
	(22.38)	(26.00)	(25.54)	(22.55)	(23.44)	(21.99)
Aged 50 to 98	3.770***	4.315***	4.306***	4.061***	3.989***	4.711***
	(34.88)	(37.32)	(36.85)	(38.63)	(34.67)	(34.52)
In partnership or marriage	1.278***	1.264***	1.266***	1.274***	1.259***	1.261***
	(14.24)	(14.01)	(13.05)	(12.74)	(13.59)	(10.63)
Nr of children in HH	1.004	1.008**	1.008**	1.003	1.004	1.009*
	(1.16)	(2.45)	(2.55)	(0.73)	(1.08)	(1.96)
Nr of adults in HH	0.974***	0.972***	0.971***	0.976***	0.984***	0.980***
	(-7.14)	(-7.21)	(-7.16)	(-5.83)	(-3.60)	(-3.76)
Tertiary education	0.884***	0.850***	0.851***	0.905***	0.958	0.951
	(-4.89)	(-6.69)	(-6.50)	(-3.71)	(-1.50)	(-1.64)
Native	1.479***	1.453***	1.557***	1.368***	1.549***	1.378***
	(12.74)	(12.09)	(11.56)	(8.71)	(9.64)	(6.11)
Rural area	1.284***	1.294***	1.302***	1.306***	1.197***	1.231***
	(13.18)	(13.40)	(13.52)	(13.72)	(10.02)	(10.44)
Religion important	1.220***	1.217***	1.198***	1.192***	1.150***	1.139***
	(8.90)	(8.62)	(8.04)	(7.59)	(6.32)	(5.18)
Personal Health Index		1.006***				1.003***
		(21.57)				(8.94)
Thriving Index		1.002***				1.001***
		(10.14)				(3.69)
Employed			0.920***			0.972*
			(-6.01)			(-1.66)
Satisfaction standard of living			1.645***			1.356***
			(25.00)			(14.21)
Relatives to count on				1.231***		1.105***
				(10.90)		(4.54)
Opportunities to make friends				1.361***		1.121***
				(14.88)		(5.48)
International network				0.544***		0.534***
				(-28.32)		(-25.42)
Civic Engagement Index					0.998***	0.999***
					(-6.25)	(-4.28)
Community Basics Index					1.006***	1.004***
					(15.15)	(10.31)
Feeling safe					1.077***	1.064***
					(4.61)	(3.36)
Trust in police					1.381***	1.318***
					(18.37)	(15.17)
Experienced crime					0.766***	0.813***
					(-17.11)	(-10.68)
Approval country's leadership					1.628***	1.555***
					(20.77)	(19.57)
Exercising voice					0.907***	0.946***
					(-6.44)	(-2.79)
Constant	2.616***	1.615***	0.842**	0.942	0.430***	0.480***
	(20.41)	(9.09)	(-2.10)	(-0.83)	(-6.09)	(-8.28)
Observations	1,110,966	999,667	959,672	641,002	567,248	297,654

Notes: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$; t statistics in parentheses. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation and clustered across origins.

Importantly, most of these estimated effects are qualitatively robust to the inclusion of additional variables (the only exceptions being the number of children in the household and having tertiary education, which consistently appear with the same sign, though their significance varies across specifications). Note also that adding categories of potential drivers of staying preferences reduces the sample size as some of the variables of interest have missing values for certain countries and/or years.

Adding health factors to the specification (as reported in column 3), we find that respondents are more likely to aspire to stay in their country when they are in good health and thriving.

Regarding economic factors, people who are employed seem more likely to express aspirations to move abroad. The negative significant effect of being employed (i.e. reducing staying preferences) might come across as counterintuitive but is not new (see also Migali and Scipioni 2019; Mintchev et al. 2004; Schewel and Fransen 2022), and might signal that being employed gives access to information, networks and know-how to imagine and pursue migration. The significant effect, however, disappears when all factors are accounted for (column 6), suggesting other factors are more important. Further, this variable only provides an indication of one's employment status, not compensation or job satisfaction. As one might expect, we find that aspirations to move away are smaller among those who are satisfied with their standard of living, which survives the inclusion of other factors.

Regarding social factors, those with relatives that they can count on and those who have opportunities to make friends are more likely to aspire to stay. Those with international networks, however, are much more likely to aspire to migrate.

Finally, as far as community institutions and other local factors are concerned, our results indicate that staying preferences are larger for those who feel safe, trust the police, and have not experienced crime. Those who approve of their country's leadership and are more satisfied with local amenities are also more likely to aspire to stay. We also ran regressions breaking down the Community Basics Index in its underlying dimensions (public transport, roads, air, water and healthcare quality, availability of housing and educational system). Each variable of the index (except for satisfaction with water quality) appeared significantly positively associated with aspiring to stay (results available upon request).[7]

Interestingly, we find the exercise of 'voice' is negatively correlated with staying aspirations, suggesting this indicator may reflect discontent with one's local situation more than a commitment to it. 'Voice' and 'exit' (i.e. migration) do not appear as two alternative actions as Hirschman's (1970) framework suggests, but seem to act as complements for the discontented (see also Hoffman 2010). Perhaps more puzzling is a similar trend for civic engagement. One would assume civic engagement reflects a degree of social embeddedness in a community, which tends to be associated with greater staying aspirations. However, those who volunteer their time to assist others are slightly less likely to aspire to stay.

In order to better understand the relative contribution of the various categories of independent variables in explaining preferences to stay, we conduct a dominance analysis. A dominance analysis determines the relative importance of each category by aggregating

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[7] However, given their obvious correlation and lack of robustness in their estimated effects across subsamples complicating the interpretation of the results, we decided to continue with the broader indicator in our final models.

fit metrics across multiple models containing each possible combination of independent variables in the full model (see Grömping 2007 for a discussion). Table 4 reports the general (standardized) dominance statistics and their ranking obtained through the Stata command 'domin', equivalent to Shapley values decomposing the overall fit statistic from the overall model (Luchman 2021). The general dominance statistics are derived as the weighted average marginal contribution that a category of independent variables makes to the overall R square across all models in which the category is included.

Table 3. Dominance analysis after the full model benchmark regression

Categories	Dominance statistic	Standardized domin. stat.	Ranking
Individual characteristics	0.0488	0.4419	1
Community institutions	0.0314	0.2841	2
Economic factors	0.0216	0.1954	3
Social ties	0.0071	0.0644	4
Health	0.0016	0.0141	5

Note: The table reports general dominance statistics, derived through the Stata command 'domin'.

The category *Individual characteristics*, for instance, has a value of 0.049 which means, on average, individual characteristics result in an increment to the R square of about four percentage points when they are included in the model. In fact, this is the largest contribution across all categories, good for 44 percent of the full model's explanatory power, hence ranking first. Interestingly, the variables that we include under community institutions – including trust and satisfaction with local institutions and amenities alongside civic and political engagement – are the second most important set, constituting 28 percent of the full model's explanatory power. Together, these have a greater influence on staying aspirations than other economic, social, or health-related factors.

Exploring heterogeneous effects

The relative importance of the various determinants of staying aspirations are, nonetheless, likely to vary both across countries - depending on their economic growth opportunities - and across population profiles within countries. To test this, we rerun our benchmark model on various subsamples defined on the basis of specific characteristics of countries – i.e., their level of urbanization or GDP per capita[8] - and of subpopulations – i.e., their education level, gender and area of residence. It is important to keep in mind though that discrepancies in findings between subgroups might to some extent also be related to differences in sample size as most of these breakdowns typically do not produce balanced

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[8] We also considered other country breakdowns e.g. differentiating between geographically large and small countries, the idea being that large countries offer more opportunities for internal migration while migration from small countries is more likely to involve the crossing of an international border. Aspirations to stay, however, did not considerably vary across these different country groups. The role of retain factors might also vary depending on countries' migration history or the porousness of their borders. Yet, as these country breakdowns are not associated with any straightforward hypotheses to explore, we leave this for future research.

samples, though the sample size in each of the subsamples is still sufficiently large to obtain reliable estimates.

Heterogeneity across countries

Table 5 presents the results from regressions on subsamples of countries by urbanization level, which we consider an underlying dynamic of economic growth capturing social changes beyond income level differences. We expect certain variables to operate differently for countries at different levels of urbanization. For example, what it means to be 'rural' in a country like the Netherlands is a very different reality from rural Ethiopia. Information on countries' urbanization levels are obtained from the World Development Indicators. Countries are distributed across three balanced groups corresponding to (i) primarily rural societies (i.e., countries with less than 50% of urban population); (ii) middle/transitioning countries (50 to 70% of urban population); and (iii) highly urbanized societies (more than 70% of urban population). Descriptive statistics according to urbanization levels can be found in Appendix Table A.5.

The table reveals that while some relationships hold for countries at all levels of urbanization (i.e., for gender, age and relationship status), some factors only exert an effect in the most urban societies, while others only seem to matter in predominantly rural areas. Living in a rural area is, for instance, associated with greater aspirations to stay across all levels of urbanization. In contrast, it appears that being tertiary educated increases the likelihood to aspire to stay only in primarily rural countries, while factors thriving, feeling safe, having relatives to count on, and being religious are significant retain factors only in more urban countries. Being employed and exercising voice are only significant and negatively associated with staying aspirations in the most urbanized countries. The stated importance of religion in one's everyday life has a stronger effect in more urban societies. The relationship is only marginally significant in rural societies, likely because variation is comparatively low there. Most people indicate to be religious in predominantly rural countries (i.e. 97 percent in the primarily rural societies in our sample), while there is more variation in the stated importance of religion among individuals in more urbanized countries (the share of practicing religious respondents stands at 57 percent in the highly urbanized societies in our sample, and 73 percent for those in between), which makes for a larger source of identification, explaining the positive significant effect in those countries.

Categorizing countries by a more traditional criterium like aggregate income rather than urbanization level reveals some diverging results, which we would expect given that – while correlated – these indicators are not perfectly overlapping. Appendix Table A.6. presents the results from regressions on subsamples of countries by income level using the World Bank income classification of countries into low, lower-middle, upper-middle, and high-income countries. It appears that being tertiary educated is associated with reduced staying aspirations only in lower middle-income countries, while the estimated effect remains insignificant in the other samples. Also the number of children in the household matters only in this group of countries. On the contrary, being born abroad is associated with a lower likelihood to aspire to stay in one's country in all but lower middle-income countries. Local social ties (having relatives to count on when needed and finding it easy to make friends in the local region), and being religious act as significant retain factors only in wealthier, i.e., upper-middle and high income countries. Aspirations to stay also decrease with the number of adults in the household only in this group. Thriving, being employed and exercising voice seem to affect aspirations to stay only in high-income countries (at the 1 percent significance level). Feeling safe at night seems to matter only in low and upper-middle-income countries. All other variables appear with a robust significant effect across country groups.

Table 4. Logit estimates on subsamples by countries' level of urbanization

	<50% of urban pop	50-70% of urban pop	>70% of urban pop
Female	1.330***	1.138***	1.215***
	(6.54)	(4.95)	(6.57)
Aged 20 to 29	1.174***	1.373***	1.379***
	(5.25)	(6.93)	(6.88)
Aged 30 to 39	1.607***	1.860***	1.990***
	(12.77)	(10.58)	(11.53)
Aged 40 to 49	2.343***	2.485***	2.341***
	(13.50)	(12.59)	(14.99)
Aged 50 to 98	4.630***	5.265***	4.615***
	(19.31)	(19.62)	(23.92)
In partnership or marriage	1.326***	1.164***	1.271***
	(8.08)	(4.18)	(7.88)
Nr of children in HH	1.004	1.014	1.002
	(0.72)	(1.19)	(0.21)
Nr of adults in HH	0.988	0.966***	0.982**
	(-1.58)	(-3.40)	(-2.40)
Tertiary education	0.853***	0.993	0.950
	(-2.63)	(-0.20)	(-0.91)
Native	1.294**	1.321***	1.564***
	(2.38)	(3.50)	(7.23)
Rural area	1.329***	1.201***	1.153***
	(8.11)	(5.47)	(5.72)
Religion important	1.072*	1.173***	1.152***
	(1.73)	(4.02)	(3.29)
Personal Health Index	1.002***	1.003***	1.004***
	(3.88)	(7.10)	(6.27)
Thriving Index	1.000	1.000	1.001***
	(-0.57)	(0.67)	(4.01)
Employed	0.981	0.992	0.913***
	(-0.69)	(-0.26)	(-2.82)
Satisfaction standard of living	1.293***	1.441***	1.367***
	(6.57)	(11.83)	(10.65)
Relatives to count on	1.061*	1.129***	1.172***
	(1.90)	(3.70)	(3.19)
Opportunities to make friends	1.021	1.162***	1.258***
	(0.77)	(3.92)	(7.11)
International network	0.560***	0.516***	0.534***
	(-15.28)	(-14.99)	(-14.46)
Civic Engagement Index	0.999***	0.998***	1.000
	(-2.60)	(-4.12)	(-0.69)
Community Basics Index	1.003***	1.005***	1.006***
	(4.14)	(8.76)	(9.21)
Feeling safe	1.039	1.097***	1.072***
	(1.06)	(3.78)	(3.26)
Trust in police	1.282***	1.322***	1.378***
	(9.30)	(8.56)	(8.87)
Experienced crime	0.839***	0.809***	0.788***
	(-5.27)	(-8.95)	(-7.65)
Approval country's leadership	1.432***	1.633***	1.658***
	(12.75)	(13.45)	(10.36)
Exercising voice	0.986	0.965	0.898***
	(-0.41)	(-1.34)	(-3.43)
Constant	0.559***	0.140***	0.412***
	(-3.88)	(-10.20)	(-7.00)
Observations	119,444	97,618	87,519

Notes: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$; t statistics in parentheses. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation and clustered across origins.

Heterogeneity within countries

Tables 6 and 7 present the results from regressions on subsamples of the population to explore the impact and intensity of retain factors across social groups. Specifically, in Table 6, we rerun the benchmark regression separately for men versus women (columns 1-2), low versus high educated (columns 3-4), and respondents living in rural versus urban areas (columns 4-5). In Table 7, results are shown separately for those who are thriving or not thriving (columns 1-2), the religious versus the non-religious (columns 3-4) and natives versus the non-natives (i.e. foreign-born) (columns 5-6). The breakdowns reported in Table 6 are common in the literature; those shown in Table 7 are less explored but potentially interesting.

For example, one might imagine that a person who aspires to migrate even though they are reportedly 'thriving' at home is probably different from aspiring to migrate because of strong discontent with one's home situation. If a person is reportedly thriving, a tertiary education degree may increase their opportunities for work and thus the likelihood of staying. If a person is not thriving, achieving tertiary education may increase their ability to migrate internationally. Similar reasoning could apply to employment too. If you are content with your life and you are employed, this may enhance desires to stay, but if you're dissatisfied, being employed may actually help you to afford the costs of migration and imagine leaving.

We include religion because this expressed religiosity acts as an important retain factor, particularly in urban societies. As mentioned above, one reason for this is because religiosity is less of a differentiating factor in more rural societies. This analysis allows us to zoom in on potential differences between religious and non-religious populations within countries.

Finally, we differentiate between natives and non-natives (i.e., those who are foreign-born) to allow for heterogeneity stemming from the migration history of the latter. Former migrants might be more inclined to migrate again given that they already have migration experience, or in order to return to their birth country.

Table 5. Logit estimates on subsamples by individual characteristics (I)

	Male	Female	Low educ	High educ	Rural	Urban
Female			1.244***	1.118***	1.294***	1.138***
			(8.88)	(3.44)	(8.78)	(6.02)
Aged 20 to 29	1.215***	1.331***	1.264***	1.116	1.270***	1.287***
	(5.66)	(10.01)	(9.64)	(0.80)	(9.16)	(6.69)
Aged 30 to 39	1.652***	1.858***	1.752***	1.454***	1.744***	1.796***
	(13.35)	(16.58)	(18.96)	(2.71)	(17.58)	(13.10)
Aged 40 to 49	2.208***	2.447***	2.358***	1.769***	2.376***	2.294***
	(17.05)	(20.31)	(22.03)	(3.97)	(19.11)	(18.42)
Aged 50 to 98	4.410***	5.042***	4.849***	3.375***	4.996***	4.420***
	(27.23)	(33.62)	(34.33)	(8.59)	(32.32)	(28.66)
In partnership or marriage	1.276***	1.237***	1.259***	1.241***	1.252***	1.271***
	(9.70)	(9.00)	(9.63)	(6.81)	(8.76)	(9.24)
Nr of children	1.006	1.012**	1.007	1.027**	1.005	1.015**
	(1.15)	(2.13)	(1.51)	(2.18)	(0.96)	(2.56)
Nr of adults	0.986**	0.974***	0.980***	0.987	0.983***	0.977***
	(-2.32)	(-3.99)	(-3.72)	(-1.30)	(-3.32)	(-3.05)
Tertiary education	0.974	0.931*			0.916**	0.971
	(-0.83)	(-1.94)			(-2.44)	(-0.87)
Native	1.402***	1.367***	1.360***	1.470***	1.409***	1.356***
	(5.19)	(6.07)	(5.37)	(5.65)	(4.79)	(6.03)
Rural area	1.182***	1.280***	1.256***	1.111***		
	(6.97)	(10.56)	(10.82)	(3.30)		
Religion important	1.131***	1.157***	1.134***	1.159***	1.185***	1.099***
	(4.16)	(5.07)	(4.79)	(3.85)	(6.04)	(2.71)
Personal Health Index	1.003***	1.003***	1.003***	1.004***	1.003***	1.003***
	(7.71)	(7.21)	(7.94)	(7.51)	(6.61)	(8.71)
Thriving Index	1.001***	1.001**	1.000**	1.001***	1.001**	1.001***
	(3.56)	(2.32)	(2.24)	(3.21)	(2.21)	(3.30)
Employed	0.985	0.983	0.963**	1.019	0.986	0.946**
	(-0.63)	(-0.80)	(-2.04)	(0.60)	(-0.69)	(-2.54)
Satisfaction standard of living	1.392***	1.321***	1.340***	1.479***	1.379***	1.331***
	(11.74)	(12.65)	(13.10)	(13.52)	(11.79)	(11.65)
Relatives to count on	1.081***	1.134***	1.113***	1.099*	1.101***	1.113***
	(3.13)	(4.99)	(4.86)	(1.67)	(3.64)	(3.81)
Opportunities to make friends	1.107***	1.130***	1.099***	1.270***	1.115***	1.124***
	(4.04)	(5.03)	(4.50)	(6.33)	(4.58)	(4.24)
International network	0.564***	0.504***	0.527***	0.579***	0.538***	0.532***
	(-20.77)	(-24.69)	(-25.11)	(-12.86)	(-21.28)	(-24.63)
Civic Engagement Index	0.999***	0.998***	0.999***	1.000	0.998***	1.000
	(-2.58)	(-4.49)	(-4.97)	(0.36)	(-4.99)	(-0.56)
Community Basics Index	1.004***	1.004***	1.004***	1.006***	1.004***	1.005***
	(7.90)	(9.99)	(9.63)	(8.97)	(7.82)	(10.81)
Feeling safe	1.031	1.095***	1.067***	1.037	1.083***	1.037*
	(1.20)	(4.70)	(3.37)	(1.06)	(3.11)	(1.74)
Trust in police	1.355***	1.277***	1.295***	1.455***	1.290***	1.357***
	(13.38)	(10.68)	(13.67)	(11.32)	(11.82)	(12.70)
Experienced crime	0.814***	0.810***	0.815***	0.806***	0.825***	0.796***
	(-8.91)	(-9.98)	(-10.19)	(-5.36)	(-8.75)	(-9.30)
Approval country's leadership	1.568***	1.541***	1.531***	1.683***	1.508***	1.622***
	(18.03)	(17.51)	(19.14)	(12.27)	(17.29)	(16.20)
Exercising voice	0.960	0.927***	0.944***	0.957	0.950**	0.942**
	(-1.52)	(-3.57)	(-2.69)	(-1.28)	(-2.11)	(-2.39)
Constant	0.493***	0.550***	0.502***	0.398***	0.602***	0.388***
	(-6.58)	(-6.28)	(-7.28)	(-5.12)	(-4.72)	(-9.18)
Observations	141,981	155,673	255,990	41,658	184,585	113,069

Notes: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$; t statistics in parentheses. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation and clustered across origins.

Table 6: Logit estimates on subsamples by individual characteristics (II)

	Thriving	Not thriv	Religious	Not relig	Native	Not native
Female	1.154***	1.247***	1.243***	1.182***	1.221***	1.324***
	(5.30)	(8.33)	(8.06)	(6.06)	(8.71)	(6.05)
Aged 20 to 29	1.300***	1.263***	1.241***	1.428***	1.278***	1.222**
	(6.64)	(9.01)	(8.31)	(7.33)	(9.75)	(2.43)
Aged 30 to 39	1.839***	1.731***	1.691***	2.057***	1.753***	1.876***
	(11.60)	(18.06)	(17.30)	(11.67)	(18.66)	(7.93)
Aged 40 to 49	2.301***	2.335***	2.294***	2.536***	2.326***	2.388***
	(17.32)	(19.86)	(20.03)	(14.92)	(22.28)	(7.26)
Aged 50 to 98	4.141***	4.885***	4.757***	4.906***	4.744***	4.262***
	(26.42)	(33.27)	(32.29)	(21.37)	(34.55)	(12.95)
In partnership or marriage	1.387***	1.225***	1.286***	1.178***	1.261***	1.293***
	(10.71)	(8.37)	(9.77)	(6.40)	(10.67)	(4.24)
Nr of children	1.003	1.010*	1.006	1.029**	1.009*	1.015
	(0.36)	(1.81)	(1.22)	(2.55)	(1.75)	(1.36)
Nr of adults	0.986*	0.979***	0.983***	0.971***	0.980***	0.989
	(-1.80)	(-3.91)	(-3.00)	(-3.06)	(-3.82)	(-0.87)
Tertiary education	0.998	0.911***	0.941*	0.953	0.955	0.860**
	(-0.05)	(-2.60)	(-1.70)	(-1.21)	(-1.43)	(-2.46)
Native	1.443***	1.360***	1.415***	1.309***		
	(5.93)	(5.00)	(5.03)	(5.45)		
Rural area	1.175***	1.245***	1.263***	1.131***	1.239***	1.130
	(5.61)	(10.30)	(10.90)	(3.68)	(10.90)	(1.60)
Religion important	1.127***	1.145***			1.146***	1.037
	(3.79)	(5.02)			(5.30)	(0.61)
Personal Health Index	1.004***	1.003***	1.003***	1.003***	1.003***	1.004***
	(7.38)	(7.43)	(8.17)	(5.87)	(8.60)	(4.11)
Thriving Index			1.000*	1.001***	1.001***	1.001**
			(1.80)	(4.17)	(3.45)	(2.16)
Employed	1.023	0.952***	0.981	0.946**	0.974	0.942
	(0.80)	(-2.60)	(-0.93)	(-2.37)	(-1.47)	(-1.32)
Satisfaction standard of living	1.302***	1.379***	1.330***	1.446***	1.356***	1.341***
	(8.26)	(13.62)	(12.20)	(12.80)	(13.80)	(6.00)
Relatives to count on	1.057	1.119***	1.124***	1.046	1.104***	1.141*
	(1.07)	(4.85)	(4.95)	(1.03)	(4.37)	(1.77)
Opportunities to make friends	1.222***	1.100***	1.080***	1.249***	1.118***	1.173***
	(6.09)	(4.41)	(3.80)	(6.32)	(5.36)	(2.63)
International network	0.562***	0.526***	0.530***	0.546***	0.532***	0.604***
	(-16.99)	(-24.58)	(-23.55)	(-15.68)	(-24.94)	(-10.60)
Civic Engagement Index	0.999	0.999***	0.999***	1.000	0.999***	0.999
	(-1.13)	(-4.22)	(-4.40)	(-0.94)	(-4.22)	(-0.72)
Community Basics Index	1.004***	1.004***	1.004***	1.006***	1.004***	1.006***
	(6.87)	(9.89)	(8.34)	(10.54)	(10.04)	(5.86)
Feeling safe	1.099***	1.050**	1.076***	1.033	1.066***	1.040
	(3.14)	(2.43)	(3.25)	(1.29)	(3.46)	(0.65)
Trust in police	1.326***	1.315***	1.282***	1.412***	1.318***	1.334***
	(8.35)	(15.23)	(12.05)	(13.23)	(14.63)	(5.11)
Experienced crime	0.839***	0.807***	0.829***	0.749***	0.814***	0.806***
	(-5.41)	(-10.42)	(-8.51)	(-9.65)	(-10.03)	(-4.03)
Approval country's leadership	1.582***	1.543***	1.527***	1.651***	1.555***	1.548***
	(14.82)	(17.77)	(18.17)	(13.45)	(19.19)	(7.02)
Exercising voice	0.976	0.940**	0.960*	0.920***	0.945***	0.956
	(-0.92)	(-2.57)	(-1.75)	(-3.09)	(-2.81)	(-0.89)
Constant	0.239***	0.529***	0.539***	0.514***	0.639***	0.890
	(-9.68)	(-6.97)	(-6.58)	(-5.35)	(-6.06)	(-0.62)
Observations	73,731	223,923	225,746	71,880	284,272	13,358

Notes: * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01; t statistics in parentheses. Standard errors are robust to heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation and clustered across origins.

Differentiating by gender (Table 6, columns 1-2), we find that staying preferences rise with the number of children in the household for women but not for men. Women's staying preferences also increase as they feel safer, while this does not seem to play a role for men. The effect of tertiary education – rising aspirations to migrate - seems to matter only for women, but remains only marginally significant. This is not the case for exercising voice, which appears to have a strongly significant negative effect for women but remains insignificant for men. Focusing on the magnitude of some of the effects, having relatives to count on when in need appears as a stronger retain factor for women than for men: the probability of aspiring to stay over migrating abroad stands at 13.4 (8.1) percent for women (men) who indicate having relatives to count on versus those who do not. In contrast, men are relatively more responsive to being able to trust the police: the probability of aspiring to stay over migrating abroad is 35.5 (27.7) percent higher for men (women) when they have trust in the police versus when they do not.

Distinguishing those with tertiary education from those with lower education (columns 3-4) also reveals some stark differences. Only the highly educated seem more likely to aspire to stay if there are more children in the household, while the latter does not affect aspirations to stay or migrate for those with less education. In contrast, employment, civic engagement and exercising voice only have a significant and negative effect on aspirations to stay for those with lower levels of education. Similarly, feeling safe acts as a retain factor only for this group. In terms of magnitude, having relatives to count on matters more for those with less education, while those with tertiary education seem to attach more weight to opportunities to make friends when considering living abroad versus staying.

Concerning the rural-urban breakdown (columns 5-6), we find that staying aspirations rise with the number of children in the household only for those living in urban areas. Tertiary education contributes to greater migration aspirations in rural areas but has no significant effect in urban areas – perhaps because it is harder to find professional work in rural areas, introducing the need to migrate for work, while there tend to be more opportunities for professional employment in urban areas. Employment, on the contrary, is associated with greater migration aspirations only in urban areas.

As can be seen from columns 1 and 2 in Table 7, achieving tertiary-level education reduces the likelihood to stay and increases aspirations to migrate only for those who are struggling in life, while for those who are thriving, tertiary-level education does not seem to affect staying or migration aspirations. The same holds for employment status and civic engagement. Interestingly, those who are struggling might be more inclined to stay when they have relatives to count on, while there is no significant relationship with staying/migration aspirations for those who are thriving.

For the (non-)religious (columns 3-4), it seems that more children in the household acts as a retain factor for migration only for the non-religious. Employment is associated with greater migration aspirations for the non-religious but has no significant effect for the religious cohort. Alternatively, those who are religious are more inclined to stay if they have relatives to count on and feel safe in their area of residence, while these variables are not significant for the non-religious.

Focussing on natives versus non-natives (columns 5-6), we find that tertiary education reduces incentives to stay for those who were not born in their current country of residence. Staying aspirations are higher for natives residing in rural areas, for whom religion is important and who feel safe, while those factors do not seem to be significant for non-natives. Also exercising voice seems to matter only for natives, not for the foreign-born. A stronger significant effect is also obtained for having relatives to count on among natives than non-natives.

Finally, the dominance analyses for the regressions on the subsamples provides strikingly similar results as those obtained from the dominance analysis conducted after the benchmark regression on the full sample. The only exception where a different ranking of the importance of the various categories is obtained is for the sample of tertiary educated, for whom indicators related to community institutions now even top the ranking before individual characteristics. The results for the latter are reported in Appendix Table A.7.

Conclusion

This paper provides the first global study of voluntary immobility and the characteristics and contexts associated with the aspiration to stay. We use the unique Gallup World Polls which provide information on aspirations to stay (as opposed to migrating abroad) as well as on individual characteristics and opinions for 130 countries worldwide between 2010-2016. Mapping staying preferences around the world reveals that voluntary immobility is a remarkably widespread phenomenon. The vast majority of the population in almost all countries surveyed prefers to stay in their country of residence.

Some of our findings on the factors associated with staying aspirations may be unsurprising to those familiar with research on migration aspirations. For example, the findings that staying aspirations increase with age and are more common among women and married adults. Age is the strongest retain factor across models – particularly for individuals over age 50 – and reiterates the importance of a lifecourse perspective in migration and immobility research. We also find evidence for other important retain factors that have not yet received significant attention in quantitative studies of migration intentions, but appear to be crucial to explain widespread desires to stay put—such as the importance of community institutions and local amenities, approval of one's country's leadership, feeling safe or personal health.

Many of the retain factors we find are intuitive. Our findings generally support the idea that individuals who are more content with their life circumstances are more likely to want to stay where they are. We find staying aspirations are higher for those who express higher levels of life satisfaction, higher satisfaction with the institutions and amenities of their community, those who have stronger local networks of support and opportunities to make friends, those who feel safe, have not experienced crime, have trust in the police and approve of their country's leadership. These findings resonate and add to recent research into the relationship between migration and happiness. Brozozowski and Coniglio (2021), for example, find that unhappy individuals from unhappy households are significantly more likely to declare their intentions to migrate abroad. Our findings show the relevance of different factors that contribute to overall life satisfaction and happiness and thus a preference to stay.

Other relationships are less immediately intuitive. For example, previous research shows that individuals who choose to migrate tend to be healthier than the average population (Jasso et al 2004; Antecol and Bedard 2006), yet we find here that individuals who are healthier are generally more likely to aspire to stay. Higher levels of education and employment are not associated with greater desires to stay – in fact, they are more often associated with greater migration aspirations, but their influence varies for different population groups. Interestingly, greater civic engagement (or those who volunteer their time and energy to help others) is more often associated with greater migration aspirations, perhaps because those individuals who take the initiative to volunteer may also be more likely to take the initiative to migrate. Relatedly, exercising 'voice' through, for example,

contacting a public official, is also associated with migration aspirations, though this relationship only holds in highly urban societies and for particular population subsamples like women or those with less education. One implication is that exercising voice may reflect discontent with one's local situation more than a commitment to it.

When thinking about the relative contribution of different types of factors on staying aspirations, a dominance analysis reveals that individual characteristics hold the highest contribution to the full model's explanatory power, followed by indicators of community institutions which outrank all other categories, i.e., economic factors, social ties and health indicators in that order. Although economic factors are clearly important, other factors should be given equal if not more attention to understanding staying (and migration) aspirations. Our findings begin to clarify the wide range of 'non-economic' factors that could be given more systematic attention, with community-level dynamics emerging as a central area for further exploration.

One important limitation of our analysis is that we are unable to examine whether respondents have a realistic opportunity to migrate internationally, and how lacking the ability to migrate might contribute to adaptive preferences. Within the category of voluntary immobility, one can distinguish between those with and without the capability to migrate and question whether the immobility of those without the capability to migrate is *voluntary* in the same way as those who can migrate. Schewel (2020) introduced the concept of 'acquiescent immobility' to highlight those who do not wish to migrate and are unable to do so. Some of the acquiescently immobile may have never aspired to migrate; others might have once aspired to leave but in the face of significant constraints on their mobility, adapted their preferences towards immobility to avoid the cognitive dissonance and discomfort that comes from being unable to realize one's aspirations (Carling and Schewel 2018). We were not able to explore these differences in voluntary immobility, but this is an important area for further research.

Finally, we could not give each indicator the attention it deserves in this overview article. Further mixed-methods and country-based research could address some of the puzzles raised by our findings. For example, under what conditions would higher levels of education or employment contribute to greater desire to stay? How can we better distinguish between migration aspirations stemming from a discontent with one's circumstances and migration aspirations motivated by more positive forces (i.e., a desire for adventure or to see the world)? What is the relationship between religiosity and (dis)content, and how might this affect migration or staying aspirations for different social groups? Why is the exercise of voice associated with diminished staying aspirations for only some population groups, like women, those with less education, natives, or the religious?

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Appendix

Table A.1. Overview of variables used and corresponding questions in the GWP

Variable name	Definition and link with corresponding GWP question
Stay	Dummy for a negative answer to "Ideally, if you had the opportunity, would you like to move permanently to another country, or would you prefer to continue living in this country?"
Female	Dummy for being female based on "Gender"
Age categories	Age dummies created on the basis of "Please tell me your age"
In partnership or marriage	Dummy for being in a partnership or marriage based on "What is your current marital status?"
Nr children in HH	Answer to "How many children under 15 years of age are now living in your household?"
Nr adults in HH	Answer to "Including yourself, how many people who are residents of this country, age 15 or over, currently live in this household?"
Tertiary education	Dummy for having completed four years of education beyond 'high school' and/or received a 4-year college degree, based on "What is your highest completed level of education?".
Native	Dummy for a positive answer to "Were you born in this country, or not?"
Rural area	Dummy for living in a rural area or on a farm, or in a small town or village as opposed to a large city, or a suburb of a large city
Relation important	Dummy for a positive answer to "Is religion an important part of your daily life?"
Personal Health Index	The Personal Health Index measures perceptions of one`s own health and incidence of pain, sadness, and worry
Thriving Index	The Thriving measures respondents perceptions of where they stand on a ladder scale with steps numbered from 0 to 10, where "0" represents the worst possible life and "10" represents the best possible life. Individuals are "thriving" (index value 100) if they say they presently stand on step 7 or higher of the ladder and expect to stand on step 8 or higher five years from now, where not thriving corresponds to an index value of zero
Employed	Dummy for being employed full or part time, for an employer or for oneself as opposed to being employed part time do not want full time, employed part time want full time, unemployed, or out of workforce
Satisfaction standard of living	Dummy for a positive answer to "Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your standard of living, all the things you can buy and do?"
Relatives to count on	Dummy for a positive answer to "If you were in trouble, do you have relatives or friends you can count on to help you whenever you need them, or not?"
Opportunities to make friends	Dummy for a positive answer to "In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with _____? The opportunities to meet people and make friends"
International network	Dummy for a positive answer to "Do you have relatives or friends who are living in another country whom you can count on to help you when you need them, or not?"
Civic Engagement Index	The Civic Engagement Index assesses respondents' inclination to volunteer their time and assistance to others
Community Basics Index	The Community Basics Index measures satisfaction with aspects of everyday life in a community, including education, environment, healthcare, housing, and infrastructure.
Feeling safe	Dummy for a positive answer to "Do you feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live?"
Trust in policy	Dummy for a positive answer to "In the city or area where you live, do you have confidence in the local police force, or not?"
Experienced crime	Dummy for a positive answer to either "Within the last 12 months, have you had money or property stolen from you or another household member?" or "Within the past 12 months, have you been assaulted or mugged?"
Approve country's leadership	Dummy for a positive answer to "Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of this country?"
Exercising voice	Dummy for a positive answer to "Have you done any of the following in the past month? How about voiced your opinion to a public official?"

Table A.2. Overview of countries in the sample

(Sub)continent	Obs.	Stayers	(Sub)continent	Obs.	Stayers	(Sub)continent	Obs.	Stayers
Africa								
Western Africa			*Central Africa*			*Eastern Africa*		
Benin	2,640	71.5	Cameroon	3,745	66.4	Comoros	976	63.0
Burkina Faso	3,749	72,1	CAR	916	68.3	Ethiopia	1,674	66.9
Ghana	2,631	54.5	Chad	3,773	77.6	Kenya	3,741	74.0
Guinea	2,692	64.5	Congo Brazzaville	1,687	64,8	Madagascar	2,850	90.8
Ivory Coast	1,710	70.8	Congo Kinshasa	2,420	53.1	Malawi	2,789	69.1
Liberia	1,647	41.1	Gabon	2,650	69.7	Mozambique	773	81.9
Mali	3,769	81.5				Somalia	1,853	83.4
Mauritania	2,510	74.9	*Northern Africa*			South Sudan	661	75.3
Niger	3,797	85.5	Egypt	1,822	76.4	Tanzania	3,866	80.2
Nigeria	4,368	53.0	Tunisia	1,585	77.6	Uganda	2,722	63.8
Senegal	3,850	65.5				Zambia	1,705	72.0
Sierra Leone	2,490	37.3	*Southern Africa*			Zimbabwe	3,425	71.2
Togo	704	60.4	Angola	632	73.6			
			Botswana	3,767	81.6			
			South Africa	4,801	84.9			
America								
Northern America			*Central America*			*South America*		
Canada	908	90.4	Costa Rica	3,072	79.7	Argentina	2,952	86.8
Mexico	1,568	85.2	El Salvador	3,031	59.7	Bolivia	2,902	73.4
United States	917	91.2	Guatemala	2,182	67.4	Brazil	3,336	86.6
			Honduras	2,720	53.2	Chile	3,208	79.0
Caribbean			Nicaragua	2,112	74.9	Colombia	3,180	72.5
Dominican Rep	2,992	48.2	Panama	3,141	87.0	Ecuador	1,570	84.4
Haiti	1,370	42.6				Paraguay	3,160	89.1
Jamaica	332	57.8				Peru	2,963	66.6
Trinidad & Tobago	313	77.6				Suriname	321	88.8
						Uruguay	2,534	85.5
						Venezuela	2,119	85.1
Asia								
Western Asia			*Central Asia*			*Eastern Asia*		
Armenia	2,018	58.7	Kazakhstan	2,182	87.9	Hong Kong	654	71.1
Azerbaijan	1,528	83.2	Kyrgyzstan	2,562	83.0	Japan	1,392	79.9
Cyprus	1,367	71.8				Mongolia	2,490	78.6
Georgia	1,686	84.1	*Southern Asia*			South Korea	1,375	73.1
Iraq	660	68.6	Afghanistan	2,187	78.5	Taiwan	1,376	76.7
Israel	2,197	87.0	Bangladesh	2,997	77.9			
Lebanon	806	77.9	Bhutan	1,617	93.6	*South-Eastern Asia*		

Palestinian Territories	1,619	80.8	India	14,033	94.6	Indonesia	3,174	97.7
Turkey	2,988	89.0	Nepal	2,852	85.7	Malaysia	2,361	88.0
Yemen	1,187	78.3	Pakistan	3,369	88.8	Philippines	4,387	85.6
			Sri Lanka	2,761	86.2	Singapore	2,380	86.3
						Thailand	3,280	97.4
						Vietnam	997	92.1
Europe								
Western Europe			*Eastern Europe*			*Southern Europe*		
Austria	1,647	90.7	Belarus	1,304	80.4	Albania	2,011	56.5
Belgium	1,632	76.0	Bulgaria	2,485	78.4	Bosnia & Herzeg	2,263	68.7
France	1,635	80.4	Czech Republic	2,631	85.9	Croatia	1,792	79.5
Germany	1,733	85.1	Hungary	2,442	80.0	Greece	3,074	80.4
Luxembourg	1,720	87.8	Moldova	2,231	67.3	Italy	1,628	69.8
Netherlands	1,718	80.1	Poland	2,158	82.0	Macedonia	1,877	69.4
Switzerland	435	90.3	Romania	2,285	74.9	Malta	1,254	77.7
			Russia	5,996	85.0	Portugal	1,268	75.4
Northern Europe			Slovakia	2,383	85.6	Serbia & Monten	6,365	76.0
Denmark	1,629	91.0	Ukraine	2,087	75.0	Slovenia	1,615	78.7
Estonia	1,821	79.1				Spain	764	87.7
Finland	1,690	89.9						
Iceland	466	78.8	**Oceania**					
Ireland	1,812	83.7	Australia	1,794	93.5			
Latvia	1,725	79.5	New Zealand	1,430	91.5			
Lithuania	2,054	77.0						
Norway	824	85.3						
Sweden	1,638	84.8						
United Kingdom	1,563	74.7						

Note: The table displays the countries in our estimation sample by broad geographical region, along with the total number of observations per country and the corresponding percentage of aspiring stayers over the sample period 2010-2016.

Table A.3. *List of countries by urbanization level*

Country	Urb	Stayers	Country	Urb	Stayers	Country	Urb	Stayers
Afghanistan	23.3	78.5	Albania	51.1	56.5	Argentina	90.4	86.8
Bangladesh	28.2	77.9	Angola	60.5	73.6	Australia	84.8	93.5
Benin	43.6	71.5	Armenia	63.7	58.7	Belarus	73.3	80.4
Bhutan	37.1	93.6	Austria	58.0	90.7	Belgium	97.6	76.0
Bosnia & Herzegovina	45.2	68.7	Azerbaijan	52.8	83.2	Brazil	83.4	86.6
Burkina Faso	23.0	72.1	Bolivia	65.1	73.4	Bulgaria	72.3	78.4
CAR	38.9	68.3	Botswana	62.4	81.6	Canada	80.8	90.4
Chad	21.9	77.6	Cameroon	49.7	66.4	Chile	86.9	79.0
Comoros	27.9	63.0	Congo Brazzaville	63.7	64.8	Colombia	76.8	72.5
Congo Kinshasa	39.5	53.1	Costa Rica	68.2	79.7	Czech Republic	73.3	85.9
Egypt	43.1	76.4	Croatia	55.0	79.5	Denmark	86.5	91.0
Ethiopia	18.6	66.9	Cyprus	67.7	71.8	Dominican Rep	70.0	48.2
Ghana	48.7	54.5	Ecuador	62.1	84.4	Finland	83.3	89.9
Guatemala	47.5	67.4	El Salvador	62.8	59.7	France	77.9	80.4
Guinea	34.0	64.5	Estonia	68.5	79.1	Gabon	86.1	69.7
Haiti	45.6	42.6	Georgia	54.4	84.1	Germany	76.6	85.1
India	29.9	94.6	Honduras	49.9	53.2	Greece	75.9	80.4
Indonesia	47.5	97.7	Hungary	68.5	80.0	Hong Kong	100.0	71.1
Ivory Coast	46.9	70.8	Iraq	68.9	68.6	Iceland	93.4	78.8
Kenya	22.4	74.0	Ireland	61.1	83.7	Israel	91.6	87.0
Kyrgyzstan	35.3	83.0	Italy	68.1	69.8	Japan	88.1	79.9
Liberia	46.7	41.1	Jamaica	53.9	57.8	Lebanon	86.8	77.9
Malawi	15.2	69.1	Kazakhstan	56.6	87.9	Luxembourg	88.2	87.8
Mali	35.2	81.5	Latvia	67.9	79.5	Malta	94.0	77.7
Mauritania	43.9	74.9	Lithuania	66.8	77.0	Mexico	76.9	85.2
Moldova	42.7	67.3	Macedonia	57.1	69.4	Netherlands	85.4	80.1
Mozambique	30.4	81.9	Malaysia	68.4	88.0	New Zealand	86.3	91.5
Nepal	15.8	85.7	Mongolia	64.6	78.6	Norway	78.5	85.3
Niger	16.2	85.5	Nicaragua	56.3	74.9	Palestinian Territ	73.5	80.8
Nigeria	40.8	53.0	Panama	64.3	87.0	Peru	75.8	66.6
Pakistan	34.6	88.8	Paraguay	58.3	89.1	Russia	73.6	85.0
Philippines	45.5	85.6	Poland	61.0	82.0	Singapore	100.0	86.3
Senegal	42.5	65.5	Portugal	59.4	75.4	South Korea	81.6	73.1
Sierra Leone	37.7	37.3	Romania	53.7	74.9	Spain	78.0	87.7
Somalia	37.6	83.4	Serbia & Montenegro	54.8	76.0	Sweden	84.7	84.8
South Sudan	18.6	75.3	Slovakia	54.7	85.6	Switzerland	73.6	90.3
Sri Lanka	18.3	86.2	Slovenia	52.4	78.7	United Kingdom	80.8	74.7
Tanzania	26.1	80.2	South Africa	60.6	84.9	United States	80.4	91.2
Thailand	40.0	97.4	Suriname	66.2	88.8	Uruguay	93.8	85.5
Togo	38.0	60.4	Trinidad and Tobago	54.4	77.6	Venezuela	88.0	85.1
Uganda	17.9	63.8	Tunisia	66.4	77.6			
Vietnam	28.5	92.1	Turkey	69.7	89.0			
Yemen	31.2	78.3	Ukraine	68.1	75.0			
Zambia	37.9	72.0						
Zimbabwe	33.7	71.2						
Average	33.9	73.2	Average	60.9	76.7	Average	83.2	81.6

Notes: The table displays the list of countries by urbanization level (in %) and aspiring stayers (%). `Low urbanization' denotes countries with at most 50% of urban population, `medium urbanization' countries are those with between 50 to 70% of urban population, and `highly urbanization' countries have more than 70% of urban population. Sources: information on urbanization comes from the World Development Indicators; information on staying aspirations is computed from the Gallup World Polls.

Table A.4. *Pairwise correlations for all variables included in the empirical specification*

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	Female	1.0000												
2	Aged 20 to 29	0.0099*	1.0000											
3	Aged 30 to 39	0.0082*	-0.2873*	1.0000										
4	Aged 40 to 49	-0.0078*	-0.2464*	-0.2254*	1.0000									
5	Aged 50 to 98	-0.0016	-0.3532*	-0.3231*	-0.2771*	1.0000								
6	In partnership or marriage	-0.0125*	-0.1689*	0.1634*	0.1748*	0.1003*	1.0000							
7	Nr of children in HH	-0.0028	0.0172*	0.1362*	0.0286*	-0.2022*	0.1196*	1.0000						
8	Nr of adults in HH	-0.0523*	0.0720*	-0.0663*	0.0011	-0.1272*	0.0094*	0.3811*	1.0000					
9	Tertiary education	-0.0021	0.0112*	0.0560*	0.0296*	0.0040*	0.0263*	-0.1292*	-0.0896*	1.0000				
10	Native	-0.0072*	0.0260*	-0.0021	-0.0045*	-0.0348*	-0.0101*	-0.0009	0.0076*	-0.0530*	1.0000			
11	Rural area	-0.0285*	0.0001	0.0025	-0.0013	-0.0218*	0.0563*	0.1494*	0.0635*	-0.1586*	0.0545*	1.0000		
12	Religion important	0.0352*	0.0376*	0.0190*	-0.0184*	-0.0673*	0.0233*	0.2011*	0.1531*	-0.1640*	0.0520*	0.1148*	1.0000	
13	Personal Health Index	-0.0566*	0.0936*	0.0247*	-0.0213*	-01647*	-0.0327*	-0.0299*	0.0239*	0.0691*	0.0102*	-0.0261*	-0.0441*	1.0000
14	Thriving Index	0.0291*	0.0092*	-0.0006	0.0018	-0.0249*	-0.0140*	-0.1186*	-0.0643*	0.1633*	-0.0209*	-0.1221*	-0.1266*	0.1523*
15	Employed	-0.1955*	0.0067*	0.1427*	0.1466*	-0.1162*	0.1399*	0.0227*	-0.0386*	0.1283*	-0.0004	0.0211*	-0.0566*	0.0438*
16	Satisfaction standard of living	0.0103*	-0.0063*	-0.0195*	-0.0104*	0.0088*	0.0202*	-0.1173*	-0.0413*	0.1043*	-0.0054*	-0.0794*	-0.0620*	0.2407*
17	Relatives to count on	0.0211*	0.0267*	-0.0155*	-0.0262*	-0.0125*	-0.0530*	-0.0986*	-0.0409*	0.0960*	-0.0033	-0.0602*	-0.0791*	0.1606*
18	Opportunities to make friends	-0.0098*	-0.0193*	-0.0137*	0.0024	0.0246*	-0.0134*	-0.0561*	-0.0330*	0.0299*	0.0060*	-0.0597*	-0.0023	0.1113*
19	International network	-0.0070*	0.0220*	-0.0048*	-0.0095*	-0.0191*	-0.0298*	-0.0158*	-0.0011	0.0934*	-0.1036*	-0.0760*	-0.0121*	0.0317*
20	Civic Engagement Index	-0.0281*	-0.0141*	0.0096*	0.0337*	0.0101*	0.0332*	-0.0187*	-0.0130*	0.1083*	-0.0172*	-0.0243*	0.0418*	0.0275*
21	Community Basics Index	0.0250*	-0.0467*	-0.0320*	0.0016	0.0716*	0.0181*	-0.1345*	-0.0786*	0.0228*	-0.0073*	-0.0231*	-0.0316*	0.1643*
22	Feeling safe	-0.1125*	-0.0308*	-0.0014	0.0233*	0.0301*	0.0572*	-0.0216*	-0.0092*	0.0321*	-0.0200*	0.0972*	-0.0497*	0.0942*
23	Trust in police	0.0113*	-0.0566*	-0.0200*	0.0144*	0.0771*	0.0511*	-0.0227	-0.0251*	0.0116*	-0.0283*	0.0563*	0.0008	0.0967*
24	Experienced crime	-0.0064	0.0479*	0.0170*	-0.0083*	-0.0686*	-0.0378*	0.0659*	0.0396*	-0.0255*	0.0061*	-0.0255*	0.0457*	-0.0784*
25	Approval country's leadership	0.0083*	-0.0163*	-0.0083*	-0.0019	0.0106*	0.0269*	0.0355*	0.0097*	-0.0131*	-0.0262*	0.0389*	0.0485*	0.0953*
26	Exercising voice	-0.0708*	-0.0243*	0.0194*	0.0398*	0.0150*	0.0308*	0.0096*	-0.0014	0.0820*	0.0010	0.0106*	0.0065*	-0.0193*

		14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
14	Thriving Index	1.0000												
15	Employed	0.0465*	1.0000											
16	Satisfaction standard of living	0.2894*	0.0194*	1.0000										
17	Relatives to count on	0.1487*	0.0215*	0.2023*	1.0000									
18	Opportunities to make friends	0.0999*	0.0218*	0.1598*	0.1013*	1.0000								
19	International network	0.0883*	0.0256*	0.0861*	0.1629*	0.0475*	1.0000							
20	Civic Engagement Index	0.1135*	0.1214*	0.1329*	0.0809*	0.0923*	0.1197*	1.0000						
21	Community Basics Index	0.1560*	-0.0224*	0.3011*	0.1033*	0.3016*	0.0274*	0.0932*	1.0000					
22	Feeling safe	0.0548*	0.0619*	0.1209*	0.0339*	0.1067*	0.0262*	0.0511*	0.2308*	1.0000				
23	Trust in police	0.0540*	0.0005	0.1467*	0.0534*	0.1377*	0.0029	0.0520*	0.3025*	0.3718*	1.0000			
24	Experienced crime	-0.0250*	0.0243*	-0.0589*	-0.0191*	-0.0424*	0.0415*	0.0848*	-0.1019*	-0.1584*	-0.1427*	1.0000		
25	Approval country leadership	0.0567*	0.0098*	0.1688*	0.0363*	0.1109*	-0.0153*	0.0510*	0.2453*	0.1527*	0.2581*	-0.0492*	1.0000	
26	Exercising voice	0.0476*	0.1026*	0.0447*	0.0303*	0.0345*	0.0840*	0.3148*	0.0112*	0.0289*	0.0130*	0.0778*	0.0117*	1.0000

Note: * denotes significance at the 5 percent

Table A.5. Descriptives statistics according to urbanization levels

	>70% of urban pop		50-70% of urban pop		<50% of urban pop	
	Mean	**St. dev.**	**Mean**	**St. dev.**	**Mean**	**St. dev.**
Female	0.555	0.497	0.536	0.499	0.488	0.500
Aged 20 to 29	0.177	0.381	0.236	0.425	0.289	0.453
Aged 30 to 39	0.186	0.389	0.204	0.403	0.229	0.420
Aged 40 to 49	0.174	0.379	0.162	0.368	0.153	0.360
Aged 50 to 98	0.390	0.488	0.301	0.459	0.188	0.391
In partnership or marriage	0.558	0.497	0.525	0.499	0.607	0.488
Nr of children in HH	0.732	1.152	1.101	1.555	2.271	2.376
Nr of adults in HH	2.587	1.534	2.949	1.578	3.723	2.184
Tertiary education	0.221	0.415	0.156	0.363	0.063	0.243
Native	0.933	0.250	0.966	0.182	0.964	0.186
Rural area	0.433	0.496	0.618	0.486	0.761	0.426
Religion important	0.567	0.495	0.734	0.442	0.926	0.262
Personal Health Index	72.562	27.157	70.813	28.106	71.563	27.527
Thriving Index	40.18	49.026	24.150	42.800	13.668	34.351
Employed	0.565	0.496	0.536	0.499	0.579	0.494
Satisfaction standard of living	0.710	0.454	0.560	0.496	0.512	0.500
Relatives to count on	0.887	0.317	0.829	0.377	0.731	0.443
Opportunities to make friends	0.806	0.396	0.756	0.430	0.742	0.438
International network	0.389	0.487	0.433	0.495	0.336	0.472
Civic Engagement Index	35.823	32.387	32.128	31.61	33.807	31.576
Community Basics Index	63.333	28.197	59.022	28.585	55.101	29.576
Feeling safe	0.584	0.493	0.587	0.492	0.586	0.493
Trust in police	0.640	0.480	0.625	0.484	0.637	0.481
Experienced crime	0.154	0.361	0.181	0.385	0.208	0.406
Approval of country's leadership	0.494	0.500	0.465	0.499	0.554	0.497
Exercising voice	0.220	0.414	0.216	0.411	0.223	0.416
Observations	87,519		97,618		119,444	

Table A.6. Logit estimates on subsamples by countries' income level

	Low income	Lower middle inc	Upper middle inc	High income
Female	1.344***	1.286***	1.106***	1.224***
	(4.18)	(5.84)	(3.64)	(6.57)
Aged 20 to 29	1.172***	1.176***	1.396***	1.554***
	(3.20)	(5.04)	(7.25)	(7.11)
Aged 30 to 39	1.587***	1.588***	1.864***	2.356***
	(7.66)	(11.74)	(9.95)	(11.35)
Aged 40 to 49	2.475***	2.166***	2.430***	2.791***
	(9.41)	(12.95)	(11.56)	(12.08)
Aged 50 to 98	5.016***	4.343***	4.929***	5.663***
	(13.10)	(18.44)	(20.76)	(17.91)
In partnership or marriage	1.351***	1.327***	1.175***	1.176***
	(5.07)	(7.29)	(4.44)	(5.16)
Nr of children in HH	0.995	1.015**	1.009	0.995
	(-0.71)	(2.27)	(0.65)	(-0.35)
Nr of adults in HH	0.990	0.987	0.961***	0.983**
	(-0.98)	(-1.48)	(-3.88)	(-2.37)
Tertiary education	1.055	0.853***	0.942	0.992
	(0.68)	(-3.10)	(-0.89)	(-0.22)
Native	1.514***	1.152	1.490***	1.397***
	(5.57)	(1.07)	(4.57)	(5.51)
Rural area	1.360***	1.302***	1.123***	1.208***
	(4.94)	(7.86)	(3.50)	(6.95)
Religion important	1.105	0.978	1.130***	1.292***
	(1.45)	(-0.53)	(2.89)	(6.32)
Personal Health Index	1.003***	1.002***	1.003***	1.003***
	(3.78)	(2.85)	(7.40)	(4.91)
Thriving Index	0.999	1.000	1.001	1.001***
	(-1.37)	(-0.12)	(1.64)	(3.41)
Employed	1.063	0.962	0.957	0.912***
	(1.62)	(-1.16)	(-1.57)	(-2.66)
Satisfaction standard of living	1.236***	1.342***	1.347***	1.532***
	(4.83)	(6.55)	(8.96)	(16.18)
Relatives to count on	1.070	1.037	1.191***	1.279***
	(1.61)	(0.98)	(3.99)	(7.80)
Opportunities to make friends	1.028	1.044	1.100**	1.379***
	(0.70)	(1.40)	(2.35)	(8.06)
International network	0.589***	0.534***	0.516***	0.524***
	(-10.05)	(-14.04)	(-14.84)	(-11.65)
Civic Engagement Index	0.999**	0.999**	0.998***	0.999
	(-2.16)	(-2.14)	(-2.69)	(-1.45)
Community Basics Index	1.003***	1.003***	1.005***	1.007***
	(5.27)	(3.29)	(8.98)	(11.12)
Feeling safe	1.098**	1.025	1.138***	1.020
	(2.03)	(0.64)	(6.33)	(0.61)
Trust in police	1.219***	1.274***	1.301***	1.453***
	(6.74)	(7.34)	(6.37)	(19.39)
Experienced crime	0.826***	0.809***	0.838***	0.771***
	(-5.01)	(-5.24)	(-8.08)	(-7.01)
Approval country's leadership	1.407***	1.506***	1.636***	1.639***
	(9.45)	(10.77)	(8.84)	(12.90)
Exercising voice	0.975	0.982	0.941	0.911***
	(-0.41)	(-0.51)	(-1.54)	(-3.50)
Constant	0.465***	0.704*	0.124***	0.449***
	(-4.10)	(-1.93)	(-11.60)	(-6.08)
Observations	44,023	95,660	83,949	72,646

Table A.7. Dominance analysis after the regression on highly educated respondents

Categories	Dominance statistic	Standardized domin. Stat.	Ranking
Individual characteristics	0.0292	0.2667	2
Health	0.0062	0.0567	5
Social ties	0.0114	0.1045	4
Economic situation	0.0200	0.1827	3
Community institutions	0.0426	0.3893	1

Note: The table reports general dominance statistics, derived through the Stata command 'domin'.

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