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### *Lifestyle migration: escaping to the good life?*

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# Chapter 1

## Lifestyle Migration: Escaping to the Good Life?

Karen O'Reilly and Michaela Benson

At first glance, it is not immediately apparent what British migrants in rural France, Swedish seasonal visitors to the Spanish coasts, Westerners in Varanasi, 'residential tourists' in Spain and Turkey, and 'corporate refugees' in the mid-western United States could possibly have in common. They travel from and to very different places with apparently diverse motivations; they demonstrate distinct mobility patterns, some returning annually while others migrate permanently; finally, they migrate at various points in the life course and in different familial situations. However, the authors in this volume have spent long periods of time living amongst and collecting the in-depth narrative accounts offered by these relatively affluent twenty-first-century migrants. The accounts offered here reveal in intimate detail the meanings, dreams and aspirations that inspired each individual migration trajectory, the impetus supplied by personal tragedy or simply the dread of more of the same, and the inspiration provided by specific landscapes. What is revealed is the singularity of a fascinating phenomenon sharing several important themes in common, albeit with disparate threads, with the common pursuit of the 'good life' uniting these lifestyle migrants.

The chapters in this collection explore the lives and lifestyle choices of a range of contemporary migrants, including both international migrants and domestic, downsizing, migrants, backpackers and retirement migrants, second-home owners and those in cross-cultural marriages, and reveal a common narrative through which respondents render their lives meaningful (Cortazzi 2001). Each and every one of these mobile individuals presents migration as a route to a better and more fulfilling way of life, especially in contrast to the one left behind. This way of life can be distinguished from that sought by other migrants, such as labour migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, in its emphasis on lifestyle choices specific to individuals of the developed world; migration for these migrants is often an anti-modern, escapist, self-realization project, a search for the intangible 'good life' (Benson and O'Reilly forthcoming).

The volume offers a dynamic and holistic analysis of contemporary lifestyle migration, incorporating decision-making processes and experiences of migration (and continuing mobility and settlement). It demonstrates similarities in rhetoric, as well as the disparate ways migrants imagine a better way of life, the places where they hope to find it, the ways in which they try to realize it, and the realities

and experiences of everyday life following migration. Several of the chapters also contextualize migrations, exploring how lifestyle goals emerge from individual histories as well as from specific historical and material conditions. As a whole this volume thus illustrates some of the impacts and impetuses of global social transformations and the ways individuals and groups interpret and respond to changing circumstances (Castles 2008).

### **Lifestyle Migration as a Conceptual Framework**

Despite the significant and increasing incidence of various privileged forms of migration (with an increasing number of locations involved as both sending communities and destinations), in general they remain poorly understood and collectively conceptualized (Amit 2007). Previous research has attempted to link the mobilities to wider phenomena using umbrella concepts such as retirement migration, leisure migration, (international) counterurbanization, second-home ownership, amenity-seeking and seasonal migration (Buller and Hoggart 1994; King et al. 2000; Rodríguez et al. 2005; Casado-Díaz 2006). As a result of their restricted scope, to date none of these conceptualizations has succeeded in uniting the various elements of what we believe is a wider phenomenon or thereby addressing its full complexity. We are therefore using lifestyle migration as a conceptual framework, through which to examine both the similarities and differences within this growing trend as well as to begin to draw attention to its location in wider structural and historical forces and its local and global impacts. To offer a dynamic definition, which remains open to amendment in the light of new empirical data, lifestyle migration is the spatial mobility of relatively affluent individuals of all ages, moving either part-time or full-time to places that are meaningful because, for various reasons, they offer the potential of a better quality of life (Benson and O'Reilly forthcoming).

The different lifestyles sought by respondents in the chapters in this volume share some fundamental features, including alternative lifestyles (the 'good' or 'simple' life), escape from individual and community histories, or from changing circumstances, and the opportunity for self-realization. These are often reflected in the migrants' everyday lives in the new destination. Lifestyles following migration thus involve the (re)negotiation of the work-life balance, the pursuit of a good quality of life and freedom from prior constraints. It is through these strategies of reorientation that the migrants seek the greater good in life; lifestyle migration is thus a search, a project, which continues long after the initial act of migration. Examining these strategies within the context of the wider lifestyle choices that individuals make in their daily lives both before and after migration enables migration to be seen as a part of the individual's trajectory through life, avoiding a narrow focus on the decision to migrate (which is often reconstructed after the event), and concentrating instead on the entire migratory process as it develops across space and over time (Castles 2008).

However, these personalized stories of what appears to be a typically Baumanesque pursuit of the individual good life (Bauman 2008) must also be understood within their wider sociological, historical and material contexts. The search for a better way of life, which on the surface appears no different to that held by all migrants, is distinctive, reflecting the wider lifestyle choices that individuals in the late, liquid or post-modern world make on a daily basis. Indeed, although personalized quests for utopia have persisted for centuries, the recent increase in this phenomenon implies it emerges partly as a result of the reflexive assessment of opportunities (whether life will be better here or there) that Giddens (1991) identified as only recently made possible, rather than a direct outcome of relative economic privilege. There are a host of social transformations that have given rise to, or enabled, this type of migration and which explain its emergence as a distinct phenomenon over the last 50 or 60 years. These include, for example, globalization, individualization, increased mobility and ease of movement, flexibility in working lives, and increases in global relative wealth (Benson and O'Reilly forthcoming; cf. Giddens 1991; Bauman 2000; Amit 2007; Urry 2007). Finally, the material and social construction of particular places offering an alternative way of living is crucial; this is what explains the exact destinations chosen, revealing the role of imagination, myth and landscape within the decision to migrate.

### **Explaining 'Lifestyle'**

The stories here – from middle-class professionals in the United States escaping the drudgery of city living, to young Westerners seeking spiritual enlightenment (or good vibrations) in India; from second-home owners constantly on the move between two or more homes, to British people in rural France, who only leave once a year to visit friends and family – reflect the drive towards a better way of life, the meaningfulness and values ascribed to particular places, but also the potential for self-realization that is embedded within the notion of spatial mobility. The 'good life' takes many shapes and forms; narratives articulate ongoing quests to seek refuge from what they describe as the shallowness, individualism, risk and insecurity of contemporary (Western) lifestyles in the perceived authenticity of meaningful places. As the examples presented in this book (as well as many previous studies) demonstrate, lifestyle migration is about escape, escape *from* somewhere and something, while simultaneously an escape *to* self-fulfilment and a new life – a recreation, restoration or rediscovery of oneself, of personal potential or of one's 'true' desires.

### *The Quest for a Better Way of Life*

Lifestyle migrants' quest for a better way of life is a relative endeavour, pitted against negative presentations of life before migration. Migration is therefore described as 'getting out of the trap', 'making a fresh start', or 'a new beginning'

(e.g. Helset et al. 2005; Karisto 2005; Salvá Tomás 2005). Overwhelmingly, the migration stories told in these chapters (cf. Benson, Hoey, Nudrali and O'Reilly) include tales of escape, from monotony and routine, or from the individualism, materialism and consumerism of contemporary lifestyles. Sometimes the migrants are fleeing as a result of real experiences such as redundancy, divorce or crime; at other times it is unpredictability and risk in their working lives, uncertainty about economic futures or anxiety about crime that they describe as driving their mobility (Benson this volume; cf. O'Reilly 2007 and Benson forthcoming-a). They want to avoid the futures they both foresee and dread, involving predictable monotony, the burden of debt, lack of security, dead-end jobs or a lonely and isolated retirement (Nudrali and O'Reilly this volume). But in many cases these were only imagined futures, perceptions of a life not worth living had they not migrated (Casado Diaz this volume; Oliver 2008). What is relevant is the way they narrate their migration in terms of a trajectory away from negative lifestyles towards a fuller and more meaningful way of life.

In Korpela's chapter, on Westerners who sojourn in Varanasi for six months each year, this sense of escape is writ large. These lifestyle migrants wholly and actively reject life in 'the big, bad West', condemning voraciously the excessive consumption, stifling working practices, unpalatable futures and daily misery they have willingly fled. Alternatively, they warmly embrace what they perceive as the spiritual and community ethos, the slow pace of life and the closeness to nature provided through the 'good vibes' of life in India. The lives the migrants anticipate in the destination thus gain their value in opposition to negative depictions and predictions of life 'back home'. Desiring refuge or retreat from those personalized and societal-level features of contemporary Western lives discussed above, they seek community, neighbours, family and togetherness with people who share similar ideals (O'Reilly this volume; Casado Diaz this volume; and cf. Oliver 2008; Benson forthcoming-a). As expressed in several chapters (Benson, Casado Diaz, Gustafson, Korpela), they desire a slow and more meaningful way of life that is characterized, at least in part, by leisure and relaxation.

Despite the focus on leisure, some migrants work after migration but they portray this in terms of the improvement to their lives brought about by downshifting or increased autonomy. Many of the migrants express an entrepreneurial spirit, establishing their 'dream' businesses or demonstrating their flexibility within the labour market. In these cases, migrants explained that they had wanted to be their own boss; working for themselves was seen as a more fulfilling alternative, allowing them greater control over their working lives (Hoey this volume). Others work in low-paid jobs in order to realize the quality of life they aspired to. In some cases, lifestyle migrants even return to their countries of origin in order to earn enough money to finance their next trip to the migration destination (Korpela this volume). For many of the migrants, establishing a more favourable work-life balance was a key feature of the 'good life' of imagined future lives.

But the key feature of the imagined new 'way of life' is that it should be more meaningful. A meaningful way of life is often described in terms of authenticity,

implying simplicity, purity and originality; it allows migrants to get ‘back to basics’, or to the things that are important in life (Hoey this volume; Korpela this volume; and cf. Benson forthcoming-a). This desire is reflected in migrants’ practices as well as their descriptions of the new life. For example, as described in chapters by Benson, Hoey and Korpela, they celebrate their consumption of locally produced and non-processed foods, of ‘simple’ or ‘pure’ religion, of an unalienated relationship with the products of their labour, and/or of a slow pace of life. Finally, many of the migrants in these chapters emphasize the desire to provide a better way of life for their children, who they wish to protect from the materialism, excessive consumption and insecurity of Western lifestyles (Benson this volume; O’Reilly this volume; and cf. Matthews et al. 2000).

### *The Rhetoric of Self-realization*

Behind the expansive (post-hoc) justifications and rationalizations for migration discussed above lies a belief that spatial mobility in itself enables some form of self-realization. As Caroline Oliver (2007, 2008) has shown for retirement migrants living in Spain, migration can be perceived as an opportunity to recast one’s identity, to wipe clean past mistakes, misadventures, and even ties and commitments (cf. O’Reilly 2000; Amit 2007). Migration is thus aspirational, not only in the sense of what it holds in store for you, but also in terms of what you can become. Nudrali and O’Reilly’s chapter describes the migration of British working-class people living in Didim, Turkey, for whom migration operates as an individualized escape strategy, a turning point in their ‘DIY biographies’. Similarly, Trundle’s chapter explains how ‘Anglo’ women now living in Florence, married to Italian men, had initially travelled to Italy as ‘romance tourists’. Their tales of travel, to a Florence which enabled them to embrace their creative spirits, symbolized also the freedom inherent in the transition phase between childhood and adulthood (and see Korpela this volume). When placed within the context of lives before migration (or lives imagined without migration), narratives of self-realization demonstrate the transformative potential of lifestyle migration (cf. O’Reilly 2000; Oliver 2008). However, as we reveal later in this introduction, it is not so easy in practice for the migrants to shed the skins that are their past lives.

How the migrants understand the decision to migrate and its impact on their lives and identities is also revealing of a wider rhetoric of self-realization. They present themselves as pioneers, breaking new ground, a metaphor underpinned by the belief that they are somehow different, committed to their new lives while others may not be (Benson this volume). Many claim a pioneering spirit, rejoicing in their bravery and courage in making such a move (Korpela this volume); or portraying themselves as worthy risk-takers (Nudrali and O’Reilly this volume). Several migrants’ narratives also emphasize migration as an unmediated personal choice (Trundle this volume), through which they gain personal agency that was otherwise out of their reach (Oliver 2008). Finally, migration may emerge as a response to some kind of personal crisis, a watershed event in life (Hoey 2005, this

volume; Benson forthcoming-a). Ironically, their migration to escape the horrors of the contemporary world, many of which stem from excessive individualism, is facilitated and explained precisely by the migrants' own individuality.

### *Geographies of Meaning*

One theme that unites the chapters in this volume is the search for, or move to, specific geographical places which hold certain meanings for the migrants in terms of their potential for self-realization. Lifestyle migrants seek literal and figurative places of asylum or rebirth, characterized as therapeutic (Hoey 2007, this volume), as self-making and enabling (Korpela this volume; Nudrali and O'Reilly this volume; Trundle this volume), as hedonistic (Casado Diaz this volume; Korpela this volume) and as providing escape. These representations of the destinations chosen were drawn from both personal experiences of the places through prior tourism and travel, but were also derived from wider cultural narratives. They can be categorized under three main headings: the rural idyll, the coastal retreat and the cultural/spiritual attraction (Benson and O'Reilly forthcoming).

Both Benson's and Hoey's chapters highlight the role of imaginings of rurality in migration. For Hoey's downshifting middle-class American workers, the Grand Traverse in rural Michigan has been imagined in the American psyche as a therapeutic and restorative landscape. It is thus through mobility that these lifestyle migrants, whose migration often coincides with a specific watershed event in their lives, restore their health and emotional well-being, but also their faith in the American dream of personal fulfilment. 'The rural' offers them the possibility of belonging, but also of self-transformation and personal renewal. Benson's chapter highlights the persistence of an idealized and romantic rurality – the rural idyll – within the migrants' renderings of the Lot, arguing that these representations are later reflected in their discussions of how to live following migration (cf. Benson forthcoming-a). By presenting themselves as adhering to the moral principles of rural living, principally community involvement and social integration, they distinguish themselves from other lifestyle migrants.

Alternatively, the most widely studied lifestyle migrants have been heliotropic, retirement (and younger) migrants in the Mediterranean and the southern United States. The chapters by Casado Diaz, Gustafson, Nudrali and O'Reilly, and O'Reilly explore some of these mobilities to coastal destinations. Here the social construction of tourism spaces as places for leisure, pleasure and escape from routine is relevant for migrants' expectations of their lifestyles post-migration and for their performance of mobility (O'Reilly 2009). Leisured lifestyles and visits to the tourist destination from friends and family facilitate a particular style of sociability in Casado Diaz's chapter, while Gustafson's chapter describes migrants who want to have the 'best of two worlds', seeking regular dwelling in the good life.

In contrast, Trundle's chapter tells a tale of the initial enchantment with Florence as a 'renaissance wonderland', a unique urban idyll with a long history of culture, which was also characterized, at least for her respondents visiting as young



women, by an undeniable spirit of play. Korpela's chapter similarly describes how Varanasi, a large sprawling city in India, has come to represent 'good vibrations' and a more spiritually engaged life (see also D'Andrea 2007). These associations between places and the imaginings of life available there are not just drawn out of the air; they rely on long histories of prior engagements and reflect wider cultural imaginings about particular places. The destinations chosen have culturally specific meanings derived from long histories – for example, Florence as a destination on the Grand Tour (Trundle this volume), and India due to colonialism (Korpela this volume) – which imply the privilege underlying these particular manifestations of lifestyle migration (cf. Amit 2007).

### **Investigating Everyday Lives**

The explanations given for migration (even where reconstructed after the event) are important not only in what they reveal about the motivations behind migration, but also because they provide insights into the lives the migrants envisage leading following migration. Several of the chapters in this collection take as their focus the everyday lives of the migrants within the destination and how they negotiate the resulting transformations in their lives. When understood within the context of migration explanations, a series of contradictions and ambivalences become clear.

#### *Negotiating New Lives*

Migration is undoubtedly a massive upheaval, bringing about many transformations in the migrants' lives. Within the context of the individualized quest for a better way of life, these transformations are presented as personal challenges to be overcome through the migrants' individual and group agency, as they learn how to live with their lifestyle choices. As the chapters in this collection demonstrate, the challenges of everyday life post-migration range from how to cope with lives led in two or more places (Gustafson this volume), to how to make new friends and, indeed, who to make friends with (Casado Diaz this volume); from negotiating cultural difference (Gustafson this volume; Trundle this volume), to how to achieve one's dreams (Benson this volume).

Gustafson (this volume) explores the ways in which Swedish seasonal migrants to Spain negotiate multiple dwellings through different mobility strategies and distinct relationships to place. However, Gustafson also explores how lifestyle migrants manage intercultural encounters, demonstrating their changing and ambivalent relationship with Spain through their residential strategies. Trundle's chapter emphasizes that for her respondents in Florence, cultural difference, which was exciting and exhilarating when they experienced it as 'romantic tourists', became the source of their disenchantment with the Italian way of life following marriage to Italian men. They found that, as married migrants, they had become

part of the hierarchical structure of the Italian family, with the result that their personal autonomy, which enabled their migration in the first place, had been limited. Their lives following migration are thus characterized by compromise and frustration.

The chapters also reveal the reality of migrants' practice following migration, often in contradiction to their stated aspirations. As chapters by Casado Diaz, Korpela, and O'Reilly demonstrate, despite the geographies of meaning discussed above, many lifestyle migrants seek social amenities which are often similarly attended by their compatriots and other lifestyle migrants. Casado Diaz's chapter, which focuses on members of the University of the Third Age (U3A), clearly demonstrates the extent to which establishing new social relations is part of everyday life following migration. Through their participation in certain clubs, voluntary organizations and attendance at particular events, migrants build up new social relations and embed themselves within the 'local' social structure, in the process accumulating social capital. But, as O'Reilly's chapter demonstrates, the local that migrants refer to is often made up of other incomers, with the result that there is little contact with host communities (O'Reilly this volume).

#### *The Contradictions between Expectations and Realities*

The long-term qualitative research on which the chapters in this volume are based allows for insights into life following migration and the extent to which expectations were often idealized and romantic. As several of the chapters demonstrate, reality bites once they have settled into life in the destination. The reality of the 'simple life' is revealed to be somewhat out of keeping with their positions of relative privilege, their embodied knowledge, or habitus, and their prior conceptions of the good life. Emphasizing the aesthetic appeal of their surroundings or venerating the local way of life, the migrants thus often choose to neglect the mundane, which by definition is routine, commonplace and even dull. Indeed, this neglect has been reflected in much early literature on this type of migration, which focused exclusively on trying to explain the decision to migrate (Buller and Hoggart 1994; King et al. 2000).

There is an irony in the fact that the 'simple' lifestyles which these migrants have the luxury to pursue are lives led out of necessity by their hosts, who would often happily give them up in favour of the more privileged lives of the migrants. The social distance between those living in the desirable locations and the migrants can be great and often becomes increasingly apparent following migration. As expectation meets reality, migrants come face to face with the limits of their knowledge of the local setting and way of life. While some had hoped for integration, they find it difficult to learn the local language (Huber and O'Reilly 2004; Oliver 2008; Benson forthcoming-b); the close-knit families that they had admired are experienced instead as controlling and even sexist (Trundle this volume); or they find themselves spurned by members of the local community (O'Reilly this volume). Despite their pretence that their lives before migration are

deemed irrelevant, it soon becomes clear that they long for elements of them, or benefit from a regular return (Gustafson this volume; Korpela this volume).

### *Ambivalence and Lifestyle Migration*

Lifestyle migrants' well-documented ambivalence, or liminality (cf. O'Reilly 2007; Oliver 2008; Benson forthcoming-a), is not only the result of being caught between two cultures, but reflects the tension between reality and imagination. Following migration, everyday life becomes a constant negotiation whereby the migrants seek to reconcile their experiences with their hopes and dreams. Some do not manage, despite protestations to the contrary, to release themselves from the perceived shackles of life before migration; structural difference and inequalities are reproduced rather than undermined (Oliver and O'Reilly forthcoming). O'Reilly's chapter about the children of lifestyle migrants living on the Costa del Sol in Spain who attend an international school specifically examines the extent to which lifestyle migration can be considered the individualized quest they present it to be; it is apparent that class remains salient as the children distinguish themselves from the wider Spanish population. Although they claim to desire the benefits of community, this emerges as a largely imagined community, at odds with their experiences of the 'real' Spanish community. In Benson's chapter, the self-presentations of British living in rural France are influenced by a middle-class habitus despite their allegations that they had left Britain to escape 'keeping up with the Joneses'. They continually engage in class-based processes of distinction when comparing their lives in the Lot with the lives of their friends and families back in Britain, lifestyle migrants in other destinations, and even their compatriots living locally.

While lifestyle migrants may wish to leave their old lives behind, they rely on aspects of these to facilitate their migration and their post-migration lifestyles. Korpela's chapter demonstrates the ambivalent position of Westerners in Varanasi, who return to their home countries in order to earn the money they need to support their lives in India, thus both relying on and reproducing the existing social structure and their Western privilege. Indeed, the lives they lead in the destination are not comparable to those of many of their Indian neighbours; the migrants do not work, engaging in musical and spiritual pursuits and might even employ people to work for them in their homes, or regularly pay for massages. It is thus a result of their Western privilege (and money) that they are able to experience a more fulfilling way of life in Varanasi. Past lives are not left behind in migration, despite claims to the contrary; lifestyle migrants are and continue to be structurally located within a global elite.

But the migrants are not the only people with expectations. In some cases, particularly in Spain but increasingly in other destinations including Panama, Egypt, Costa Rica and Malaysia, local agencies are specifically promoting their destination for 'residential tourism', the extension of tourism through foreign investment in the second-home market. Despite the abundance of literature

critiquing the early developments in Spain, very little attention is paid to the negative consequences which can be similar to the environmental, social and cultural degradation wrought by tourism (Mantécon 2008). Nudrali and O'Reilly's chapter uniquely focuses not only on what lifestyle migration means for the working-class Britons moving to Didim, but also examines the ambivalent reception of the extant Turkish population. The Turkish are positive about the financial stimulus brought by investment and in-migration but express a number of concerns, which often mirror their wider ambivalence about their position within the European Union. Some expressed unease about the power and influence incomers might eventually obtain, leaving themselves 'second-class citizens' in their own country. Other anxieties concern the degradation that could be wrought by the cultural and religious differences between the two populations; they deprecate the culture of their new British neighbours, on the grounds that they have no community or family values and suggest the incomers have little respect for Turkish cultural values. However, few chapters in this volume address such issues and it is clear there is a call for a greater degree of research into the wider consequences and impacts of lifestyle migration. These migrations often perpetuate privilege yet have their own social needs, related to factors such as ageing in place and the migration of children.

### *The Ongoing Quest*

As the chapters in this collection demonstrate, migration is not a one-off move to a permanent destination, nor is it the final part of a journey. The search for the 'good life' remains an impulse in their daily lives. As Benson argues in her chapter, the British in rural France, through their continual efforts to distinguish their lives from those of others, (re)define their identities while confirming their progress en route to a better way of life. Trundle's chapter similarly demonstrates both the persistence and the changing nature of the quest for a better way of life within the life trajectories of 'Anglo' women living in Florence. In her chapter, O'Reilly argues that, engaged in this quest, lifestyle migrants are, to a degree, reminiscent of Bauman's liquid modern 'hunters', continually searching for a new hunting ground. In this rendering, the ongoing quest parallels Bauman's (2008) argument that as 'artists of life', we are all continually engaged in the pursuit of (an albeit vaguely defined) happiness. We might be seeking to live in utopia, but this is always just out of reach.

The ongoing quest for a better way of life explains the ambivalence that many of the migrants feel, while at the same time indicating that the initial destination may not be the final destination. While Korpela's Westerners admit to refining their image of the ideal place to live, other migrants are not so explicit about future migration. Instead, they stress that they are keeping their options for further migration open, emphasizing that if the place they had originally chosen becomes spoiled by extensive in-migration of other lifestyle migrants, they could move on to another place which offers the promise of the elusive good life. In this respect,

lifestyle migration can mirror the tourist's search for the authentic, which, in the process, destroys the authenticity it seeks (MacCannell 1976; Tremblay and O'Reilly 2004).

However, there is the additional sense that the good life is there, in their chosen destination, to be had if only they could learn how to get hold of it. Their stories tell tales of constant change and transformation on the level of the individual as they strive to negotiate their way through life. Daily life following migration is presented as a journey, as the migrants recall their travels through life (Hoey this volume). Their success en route to a better way of life reinforces the sense that they are bettering themselves; as individuals in the contemporary world, they have taken their lives into their own hands and are engaged in the process of improvement. Overcoming the obstacles in their way, their difficulties at adapting to life in the destination are presented positively. They learn how to cope with insecurity, turning it into a positive attribute, accepting their lack of pension (Korpela this volume), or their uncertain futures (O'Reilly this volume). Indeed, they express a sense of empowerment from taking individual responsibility for their actions and lifestyles.

Investigating the everyday lives of the migrants following migration, the chapters in this collection demonstrate the extent to which dreams of self-realization and improvement have been realized. They also demonstrate the ongoing nature of the quest for a better way of life, presenting migration as one lifestyle choice within a wider lifestyle trajectory (Benson and O'Reilly forthcoming). Nevertheless, the chapters also demonstrate that lifestyle migration is experienced and rendered differently.

Lifestyle migration is a complex and nuanced phenomenon, varying from one migrant to another, from one location to the next. It holds at its core social transformation and wider processes; it is at once an individualized pursuit and structurally reliant; and it is a response to practical, moral and emotional imperatives. The chapters in this contribution shed some light on its diverse and complex nature, but even as we write, more locations are becoming involved, privileged actors are placing their own unique signature on migration and everyday lives within destinations are changing.

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