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The View of Lifestyle Migration: A Brief Exploration of the Ethics of Seeking a Better Way of Life

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Introduction

One of the most popular frameworks that has emerged in recent times to unpack middle-class migration is that of lifestyle migration. This concept, which broadly captures those who have moved for the purposes of finding a better way of life, attempts to sociologically understand the motivations, experiences and structures both implicit and explicit that are involved when individuals seek to change their style of life through migration (Benson & O'Reilly 2009, 2016; Benson & Osbaldiston 2014). Scholarship as a result focusses at times on broad cultural narratives of self-development, authenticity, realisation and happiness by connecting these often to Bourdieusian notions of middle-class habitus (Benson, 2011, 2015; Oliver & O'Reilly, 2010). In more recent times, this critique extends to racial, gender and global structures that enable/disable movement while also privileging certain types of movers (Benson 2015; Benson & O'Reilly 2018; Croucher 2009; Knowles & Harper 2009; Korpela 2009; Hayes 2018). For instance, Hayes (2014, 2018) convincingly demonstrates how through geographical arbitrage, North Americans relocate to Ecuador with relative ease while also enjoying higher standards of life within their new homes due to the economic disparities between the North and South. In addition to this, others have shown how colonial structures of the past continue to feed migration patterns but also narrate experiences of landscape through a dichotomy of 'old' versus 'new' country (Higgins 2018; Osbaldiston, Picken and Denny 2020; Stones, Botteril, Lee & O'Reilly 2019).

Sociologically speaking, lifestyle migration appears to encapsulate the modern day privileged traveller or mobile person (Amit 2007; Salazar 2014). Individuals tend to hold 'high levels of cultural capital derived from education, professional skills and cultural knowledge' (Benson 2011, p.6). However, as Benson and O'Reilly (2009a) discuss initially in their work, it is the middle-class aspiration for a 'better way of life' that is built into their habitus that drives desire to relocate. Migrant imaginations are unpacked as a 'social structure' that is 'autonomous of the specific agent prior to migration, and have causal influence on actions, both enabling and constraining' (O'Reilly 2014, p.220). Additionally, as several have shown, the experience of being a migrant unfolds through the physical, social and at times emotional

transformations that take place (Benson 2015; O'Reilly, 2009; Oliver & O'Reilly, 2010; Osbaldiston, Picken & Denny 2020). Benson (2010), arguably the foundational thinker in this area, links this often to the desire for distinction embedded in the middle-class habitus. From here the actual lived style of life (*lifestyle*) that individuals pursue is unpacked as a quest to be authentic through distinction from other typical migrants (Benson 2010; Hayes 2018; Hoey 2014; Korpela 2019; Oliver & O'Reilly 2010; O'Reilly 2000, 2012). It is important to note however, that the idea of pursuing a better or even more ethical way of life (as this chapter argues) cannot be assumed to be a middle-class pursuit only. As Osbaldiston (2012) argues, even within the area of lifestyle migration, there is ample evidence of this idea traversing class divisions indicating a broader sense of discontent in modern urban life.

Thus, this chapter seeks to unpack further the question of lifestyle as a matter not simply of middle-class habitus but rather the result of deeper reflections on what a 'good life' consists of for migrants. Thus, the chapter questions the idea of lifestyle in the first instance arguing that this is not simply connected to some broader collective structural imaginary (cf. O'Reilly 2014). As Benson and O'Reilly (2016, p.28) recently propose, 'the early call [...] to develop and refine the concept (of lifestyle) has rarely been taken up'. Furthermore, attempts to solidify or quantify lifestyle are difficult. Rather, lifestyle migration research lends itself to inductive reasoning (or even maybe abductive) where the researcher is tasked to unpick the threads that tie together the style of life within migration experiences (Benson & O'Reilly 2016; cf. Huete, Mantecón & Estévez 2013). Part of the difficulty here lies in the continued use of theories that are tied to trying to negotiate agency and structure. For instance as noted, Benson (2010) and O'Reilly's (2000; Benson & O'Reilly 2009a) foundational works tend to rely heavily on Bourdieusian analysis (cf. Benson 2015; Hayes 2018). However, in this chapter, I seek to move beyond this into the metaphysics of what constitutes for individuals the 'better way of life' that they are seeking out.

In this chapter lifestyle migration narratives are explored through the work of classical sociologist Georg Simmel. In particular, recent translations of his collected works entitled *The View of Life (Lebensanschauung)* (Simmel [1918] 2010) along with his relational sociology approach are utilised to make sense of how migrants reflect on their lives past and how they view their lives in the present. Using data from field work conducted throughout 2019 on internal migrants to the island state of Tasmania in Australia, the chapter argues three main points. Firstly, there is a recurring thread within individual narratives in this study where participants feel their lives are not aligning with their personalised ethics (their

'ought'). Such discontinuity between their actual lived experiences and how they feel they ought to be living sparks thoughts about transformation in their style of life. Secondly, ideas of how one ought to live emerges through constant reflection and interaction with others. As Simmel ([1918] 2010) argues, our relations consistently shape our own morals and values in life. Thus, pinning down the idea of the 'better way of life' in lifestyle migration to one or two categories for theorising is difficult. Thirdly, and more importantly, the idea of how one engages with their lived experience of the 'ought' is an unfolding experience, never really complete, according to Simmel ([1918] 2010). What this chapter proposes is that individual lifestyle migrants have their ethics shaped and recalibrated as life in their new communities unfolds. Everyday life for these migrants in Tasmania (colloquially also known as Tassie) shapes their values thus producing congruence between the way they live and the way they feel they should live. As many of the participants in this study suggest, 'Tassie gets under your skin'. It is hoped that by focusing on individuals' understandings of how they live in their everyday in comparison to how they feel they 'ought' to live will further extend our critique of lifestyle migration as not simply a quest for a better way of life, but an active attempt to find congruence between values and the everyday in the style of life.

Setting the scene

As mentioned above, the arguments in this chapter emerge from fieldwork conducted in the island state of Tasmania in 2019. Located off the southern coast of Victoria (see Figure 1) and as one of the smallest and more isolated states of Australia, Tasmania offers a different lifestyle to those found on the mainland of Australia. Known for its sparse landscapes and wild untamed natural beauty, the island state offers distinct ways of living attractive for potential lifestyle migrants. This includes a perception of authenticity of place where towns that sit alongside natural beauty resemble something lost in modernity on the mainland (Osbaldiston 2012). In particular, and not unlike other rural/coastal communities considered lifestyle migrant hotspots, Tasmania is seen as slower, less rushed and holistically better for one's well-being (see Osbaldiston 2012).

Tasmania has until recently suffered net migration loss, with younger populations in particular seeking out educational and career opportunities on the mainland (Jackson 2005; Jackson & Kippen 2001). However, this has changed recently with Tasmania encountering a population turnaround with net migration growth, especially through internal migration, experienced over the last five years (ABS 2019; Osbaldiston, Denny & Picken 2020). While

there is some evidence of return migration of former residents, for the most part this new influx of people resembles lifestyle migration. As a survey of 329 people conducted alongside this project found, lifestyle and environment (such as landscape/nature) are two of the predominant motivations that people select as their reasons for choosing Tasmania (Osbaldiston, Denny & Picken 2020)¹. In addition, one of the other prevailing variables was that of climate – suggesting that maybe climate change is starting to alter demographic trends within a place like Australia (Hugo 1996; Osbaldiston, Denny & Picken 2020). However, in this chapter the focus will remain on the issues of lifestyle.

Research in lifestyle migration research, as noted earlier, tends to involve ethnographic or participant observation to understand how individuals understand their migration experience and how they practice it (see O'Reilly 2012). By doing so, researchers in this area trend towards practice theory approaches (Oliver 2010; O'Reilly 2012; Stones, Botterill, Lee & O'Reilly 2019) whereby questions of agency and structure are opened up by investigating the everyday lives of migrants in their activities. In contrast to this, through recognising that this chapter seeks to undertake a relational approach to lifestyle migration, the focus is trained on how lifestyle is cognitively understood by migrants which is analysed via the language they use to describe it. In other words, how participants make sense of their experience of moving and their reflections on past, present and even future experiences allows us insight into how they interpret something abstract like 'a better way of life' (Cantó-Milà 2019).

The chapter is therefore based on the tradition of hermeneutic constructivism wherein language itself 'plays a central role in shaping' the participant's experience 'in ways that can then be shared with another person' (Peck and Mummery 2018, p.390). In accepting that language is the manner through which individuals make sense of their lives, this chapter draws upon ideas from hermeneutics to understand how thematics within the sample broadly reflect one another. Through this approach, the chapter can draw together narratives that are highly individualised into broader codes under the umbrella term of lifestyle. Such an approach potentially loses 'attention to detail' and nuance within the individual situation (Peck & Mummery 2018, p.391). However, by placing the individual as the focus of the narratives, it is hoped that this nuance is not lost entirely.

¹ As noted earlier, quantifying the idea of lifestyle in a variable is a difficult task. Thus in this project which engaged with a mixed methods approach, quantitative research was only used to provide some broad ideas on why people were motivated to move to Tasmania. Qualitative research aimed to provide a thick description of these motivations (Geertz 1973).

Across 2019, a total of 26 participants were interviewed face-to-face in place in Tasmania. The sample was mostly gathered through a Facebook group entitled 'That's it I'm moving to Tassie' which has over 15,000 members. These participants were invited to participate through an advertisement placed on the group's page and then contacted prior via email. Preliminary conversations with the participants were held via online communication. In short, the researcher spent time with the migrants getting to know their backgrounds. In addition to this, a further 14 participants were interviewed solely via electronic means including email conversations due to time constraints in the field. However, for the purposes of this chapter only those who were interviewed face-to-face will be discussed. Of the 26 participants interviewed, there were 8 males and 18 females, with only 7 retired and the 19 either working in full-time or part-time roles. This reflects in part the broader trend of in-migration to Tasmania which is not dominated by retirees (Osbaldiston, Denny and Picken 2020). Rather, working couples and families are amongst some of the most common newcomers to Tasmania. However, the gender division is reflective of the imbalance on the Facebook group alone and not a wider trend. Pseudonyms for all participants are used in this chapter to maintain confidentiality.

Interviews followed some of the main themes found in the preliminary email conversations and thus were mostly open ended and lasted over one hour with some going as long as three. All of these were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis with emphasis on how people spoke about their former lives, how they identified and experienced their present environment and importantly, their associations with others. However underpinning this, as noted above, is the view that 'language' is not simply the way of describing past experiences, it is the medium through which 'we each come to understand and experience the world' (Peck and Mummery 2017, p.393). In particular, language (or in our case here conversation) is what 'nourishes and sustains our ongoing movement of being human'. Thus, hermeneutic constructivism concerns itself primarily with 'Person the Languager' (Peck and Mummery 2017, p.393). In short, how individuals communicate about their migration is in fact the medium through which they make sense of their journey. These narratives of how participants make sense of their migration are arranged into a few broad themes as located below. All of these are underpinned of Simmel's relational sociology.

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Simmel's relational sociological approach

It is difficult in the space afforded here to provide too much of an overview of Simmel's approach to sociology. Regardless there are a few fundamentals that are worth noting while also linking in his latter philosophies of life that the chapter will also draw from. Firstly, it is important to recognise that unlike his peers in the sociology of modernity, Simmel's work is difficult to pull into a concrete and overarching theory and/or methodology (Beer 2019; Pyyhtinen 2018). Rather it is somewhat 'wild, disorderly or untamed' requiring 'deep engagement' to make sense of (Beer and Pyyhtinen 2018, p.277). This is mostly due to the essayistic nature of Simmel's writings but also the way he went about organising his thoughts, theories and concepts. For the most part, Simmel's oeuvre 'contains an incredibly rich variety of unusual and peculiar topics' that range from fashion all the way through to the bridge (Pyyhtinen 2018, p.3).

Simmel (1910, p.386) proposes that we are as individuals 'from moment to moment composed out of reciprocal relationships to others'. Society in particular is not something concrete that can be studied within social institutions and the like. Rather, society is the result of 'interactions and interdependence between people' that allow forms or norms to emerge (Pyyhtinen 2018, p.4). As a consequence of this epistemological leaning towards how people interact, we can speak of Simmel's work as a relational sociology;

suggesting the priority of relations against the overly substantialist perspectives that still populate many strands of sociology today. Centring on the interdependencies, togetherness and associations between people, his work places relations into the head of sociology. Each and every unit(y) is for him comprised of relations. (Pyyhtinen 2018, p.4)

Indeed, this is where Simmel persists throughout his work on exploring fragments of social life to provide deep insight into culture (Frisby 1987, 1992; Beer, 2019). **Importantly for Simmel however is the ways in which social lives emerge through our relations which are themselves invested with elements of trust, reflexivity and emotion (Pyyhtinen 2018).**

The argument in this chapter therefore is that phenomena like lifestyle migration can be understood as the result of 'unfolding, dynamic relations' (Pyyhtinen 2018, p.5). From this lens, it is important to recognise that agency is shaped by numerous past and ongoing associations with others. Relations, in the context of lifestyle migration, impact on the decision to migrate in the first instance and shape the experience of the migration journey afterwards (see also Benson 2011). Thus, from this perspective, lifestyle migration is largely a social phenomenon – the result of unfolding relations that will continue into the future

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(Pyhtinen 2018). Like Heidegger who followed Simmel though, his work suggests that there is an also an element of the future impacting on the present – such as the ways we understand our relation to death and its impact on everyday life (Simmel [1918] 2017; Staiti 2017). While not the focus of this chapter, the temporal relationship of death to lifestyle is something that could be explored in more detail.

Simmel's relational approach feeds also into his later philosophies of life where he sets out some important considerations on how individuals live in modernity (Simmel [1918] 2017). In particular, the essay *Law of the Individual* that sets out to reverse Kant's distinction between *Wirklichkeit* (actuality or is) and *Sollen* (ought) provides intellectual and conceptual material that help make sense of narratives in this research. For Simmel ([1918] 2010, pg.100), how we continuously experience life is through the contestation between how we are actually (*Wirklichkeit*) living and how we feel we ought (*Sollen*) to be living. Unlike Kant however, Simmel ([1918] 2010) does not suggest nor advocate for a universal law through which we all experience the 'ought'. Rather, an abiding ethic through which we aspire emerges as a result of relations that we have with others, culture and institutions. In short, our moral compass is derived through not simply a broad institution (such as religion) but numerous interactions, relationships, ideas, knowledge and so on that we have encountered or will encounter which shape how we feel we *ought* to live. The result is a constant dialogue between the everyday and our ought;

My life is a constant dialogue between what I actually do and the person I strive to be; the extent to which I am able to relate these vital moments to one another defines the extent to which my Individual Law is actualised (Lee and Silver 2012, p.135).

Our life therefore is in constant struggle between a guiding ethic which if fully realised would result in self-actualisation and if fully misaligned, self-alienation (Lee and Silver 2012). This drama is not fixed however. What we feel we 'ought' to be shifts and changes with new relations and new experiences. For Simmel ([1918] 2010, p.119) our 'psychic life in each waking period' needs to be regarded as a 'continuously unfolding process'.

In the context of this chapter then, emphasis on how individuals discuss their past and present experiences need to focus on how they narrate their actuality and their ought. Within the language used by lifestyle migrants, it will be shown below how individuals within this movement experience incongruence/congruence within their guiding ethic of life. As such, it is proposed that lifestyle migration can be articulated as an attempt to live a more ethical life.

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But feel free to chop it out if you feel that it is not appropriate.

This is not to suggest a normative lens to lifestyle migration as the specific contents of that ethic are not all the same. However through the application of a hermeneutical lens to these individual stories, there are comparable thematics between participants that reflect a deeper ethical reasoning behind migration.

Understanding that life is not what it 'ought' to be

Broadly speaking, the term lifestyle within lifestyle migration requires some sensitivity to the context, temporalities and structures that the person lives within (Benson and O'Reilly 2016). In this research however, the focus lay on how the individual understands or perceives their life in that interplay between actuality and ought. Participants in this research do, however, demonstrate some recurring and consistent streams of thought on issues surrounding lifestyle. While fundamental ideals/values may have distinctiveness, there is a general theme that the style of life these people held prior to moving felt inconsistent with the life they felt they 'ought' to be living.

For example, a recent migrant to the North of Tasmania, Tabitha, suggests that in her former life in Brisbane (the capital city of the state of Queensland) she felt as though she had neglected something of more meaning to her individually. A former human resources officer, she suggests;

[d]espite my office career I have long been interested in sustainability, better farming practices and animal welfare. I think we can farm and regenerate our planet and turn around climate change. I wanted to be a *positive influence* rather than *despairing* on the sidelines.

Throughout the interview, Tabitha reflects on the problems of society by arguing that 'it's (all) about consumerism [...] we mass produce everything. We buy. We spend. We spend. We spend'. That mentality led her to desire a new 'lifestyle', one that 'reminds me of life a long time ago when it wasn't about money and efficiency and profitability'.

As her career progressed alongside her growing involvement intellectually in environmental issues, Tabitha suggests that eventually it got too much. She reflects on a time when she had to ask herself 'have we (society) got it all wrong?' and 'should we be going back to that more simple life where we try and grow things for ourselves and live a bit more simply?' This disjuncture between her 'ought' and 'actuality' eventually led to a chance conversation with

her daughter, Celina and other family members. Celina retells the story that one day the topic of overconsumption came up and eventuated in an idea ‘oh well what if we move to Tassie and started a farm?’ What started initially as a small jest however sparked Tabitha’s ethical imagination. After some work, along with her daughter Celina and son-in law, Tabitha now runs an organic farm in the North of Tasmania. Reflecting on this new style of life, she suggests that making food and living off the land has allowed her to be more ‘grounded’ but she also hopes to educate and lead people towards living sustainably.

The experience of Tabitha could be described as a ‘seachange’ in the ways in which she lives her life (Osbaldiston 2012). She seeks daily now to live in a way that she feels is ethically and morally responsible to the environment. However, of importance to us is her relationship to her family, the conversations and social relations she had in Brisbane, and how this fed into the eventual shift to Tasmania. For other participants, the ecological challenges we face in the world also drew them to the island state. George and Linda for instance moved to Tasmania for a change of pace, but also to assist a social movement community. In particular they help as much as they can with a local climate change group (Extinction Rebellion) and are now active protestors. From Simmel’s ([1918] 2017) perspective, the values that these people hold are examples of how relations in the past (both positive and negative) shape their understanding of what is important and what they ‘ought’ to be doing.

However, not all come to Tasmania to follow an environmental ethic. Cassie, a health care worker who moved from the regional city of Newcastle to a small township in the North of Tasmania, tells a much different tale that reveals a personal ethic shaped significantly by relations. She retells her story about being in a marriage wherein she felt that she had little to no ‘control’. In particular, Cassie talks about how her ‘confidence’ in herself was ‘weakened’ leaving her confused, depressed and lacking strength. Following a breakdown in the marriage that led to becoming a sole parent, Cassie talks of reclaiming some control over her life again;

I’ve always wanted a welcoming home (again) and I’m able to do that here in (Tasmania). I’ve never felt I was made to live here, we have choices and with that comes decisions [...] *I need to stop doing nothing and live the way I see it in my head.*

Repeatedly in the conversations with Cassie, this narrative of regaining control over lifestyle kept appearing. Her marriage breakdown and the fact she felt so out of control fed an ‘ought’ which privileged ideas of being free, independent and having choice. In order to do this, Cassie describes that one day she decided to ‘simplify my life’ by cutting ‘out all the BS’.

This included for her leaving behind a coastal lifestyle in the city of Newcastle for a much smaller township in Tasmania. The 'BS' included for her the clutter of people, infrastructure but also memories of emotional pain. Cassie felt, she describes, the need for literal space to find her 'purpose' again and get 'on track'. Despite an initial trial of loneliness in her new community, she describes how eventually she felt freer, independent and in control of her lifestyle. She sums up the distinction between her old and new life as one of merely 'surviving' compared with one where 'I've got to *know myself a lot better*, what makes me happy and what doesn't'.

Cassie's 'ought' unfolded through relations she had with her husband in the past. Her new community provided a sense of home clearly lacking before. In addition to this, it was her desire to find control, and independence and meaning that drove her to Tasmania. Her attempt to find a better way of life was the result of some personally poignant negative experiences. Cassie was not the only participant to exhibit this kind of narrative however. Aileen, who was approaching the age of retirement, moved from the Central Coast region of New South Wales to a small town on the East Coast of Tasmania. She describes her motivation to relocate in the following;

Had to leave up there [...] It was grief, with me. And I just couldn't drive anywhere around without crying. And with just so many people dying in a space of two years, like I lost probably eight people. And around every corner I drove to I'd [pauses as she begins to cry] I came into another place where there was all these memories and the people are dead and it just got too much for me.

Aileen continues that the recurring deaths of friends and family in her town coloured her experiences in the everyday. However, the grief was not the primary motivator. Rather, the pivotal experience came when she felt a lack of emotional support from her family during her two years of grieving. Aileen comments that she wanted immediate family to help her but instead reports that it felt as though they just wanted her money and gave little back. Her 'ought' here revolved around what she expected from her closest social relations. Instead of being supported, she retells that it felt they were using her. She sums up her move as an 'emotional decision [...] because of the way I was feeling at that point of time'.

Aileen made her choice on the basis that she felt she had little emotional energy for herself. Rather, in constantly supporting others, she realised 'this has got to stop' and she needed to escape for her own benefit. Earlier in the conversation, Aileen also confessed that she is 'by

nature, or it may have been a result of a lack of nurture, somewhat of a recluse'. Thus, in her attempt to self-heal, Aileen sought out some isolation and escape on the shoreline of an East-Coast Tasmanian town. She describes this as an opportunity to 'reconnect' to her sense of self and recover from her grief. Nature, in particular, and her love of photography which is something she identifies with strongly, helps her 'get out of my head and gets me out of the fuckits'. Tasmania, Aileen hoped, would be an opportunity to capture congruence again with how she individually felt life ought to be, against the actuality of her life prior.

Not everyone in the sample told stories as deeply emotional or political as the migrants described above. Some describe their prior life as normal, but eventually punctuated by a life event such as retirement (see also Oliver and O'Reilly 2010). For instance, couple Steve and Melinda who shifted from Sydney to the North-East of Tasmania a few years ago, shifted simply to 'enjoy our third phase of life'. Like Hayes' (2018) discussion of North Americans seeking out their own third phase of life in Ecuador, these ex-Sydney siders were using a form of geographical arbitrage to retire (cf. Benson and O'Reilly 2019). In this situation, money gained from property sales in Sydney resulted in a much stronger economic position in Tasmania – an economy that is of much less value than those of the mainland states. However, even within Steve and Melinda's story, the development of what they felt the ideal lifestyle would look like reveals certain ideals about how retirement 'ought' to look like. Melinda in particular talks about their experiences in Sydney with the community and how this shaped their views on needing to relocate somewhere with a 'sense of community', a range of environmental, medical and cultural amenities, diversity of ages and ethnicities, and most importantly, a place where they could be financially independent (this is where geographical arbitrage plays a domestic role in Australia (see Osbaldiston and Picken 2014)). Important to them was a place where they could 'grow old' and 'never move'. Their ideas of what a 'good' retirement felt like drove them to seek out Tasmania specifically (against New Zealand which they also considered) as it supplied what they believed would be a comfortable 'third age'. While not as dramatic as the stories above, Steve and Melinda's tale is a lighter version of how the 'ought' of living a good retirement drove them towards their new lifestyle.

The unfolding of lifestyle migration – shifting perspectives of the 'Ought' through actuality

As noted above, the driving motivations of people seeking out a change in their style of life through migration is driven at times by very deep incongruences between how they viewed life ought to be and how it actually was. However, lifestyle migration scholars repeatedly show that migration is an ongoing experience that unravels after moving (Benson and O'Reilly 2009a, 2009b). As Benson (2016, p.9, *italics added*) relates in her ethnographic work of British migrants to rural France;

Framed by their imaginings of post-migration life, disappointment and frustration with the everyday realities of their lives in France were not uncommon. Given how migration intersects with self-fulfillment and subjectivity, *these emotional reactions should not be taken lightly.*

She continues by showing how inconsistencies between migrant expectations on their new lives and their actual experiences produce negative emotions such as loneliness (Benson 2016; Oliver & O'Reilly 2010; Osbaldiston, Picken and Denny 2020). While Benson (2016) focuses her work on these emotions, this chapter seeks to uncover how relations between the migrant and the social interacts with, and at times shapes, their 'ought' and how these impacts on their style of life.

One of the significant themes that recur in the stories of participants is how much Tasmanian people influence their sense of time. For instance, Sandy a middle-aged woman who moved from the coastal lifestyle destination of Coffs Harbour to a very small township in Northern Tasmania, suggests that when she first arrived in Tasmania, she simply sought a peaceful life. However, in her conversation, Sandy reveals that her own sense of self shifted over time. In particular, the 'relaxed way of life that Tasmanians have' assisted Sandy to feel comfortable and at ease. When asked if Tasmania had indeed changed her she responds;

It's a hard question because it's normally something that other people observe in you rather than you observe in yourself. I think I'm a bit more [long pause] I'm *becoming* less of a self-monitor [than in her prior life], so I'm happy being who I am rather than what *social expectations from other people* [say I should be] [...] I think I'm just a bit more happy doing what I want to do and being who I am.

Sandy, like many others in the sample, feels she is becoming something different as a result of the unfolding of her new style of life. The social, which we could define here as relations between individuals but also relations between institutions and people, slowly unravels and shifts their own personal ought. In the case of Sandy, her individual sense of how she felt she

should live (in relation to others) had started to shift where she no longer worried about people's opinions of her, and started to live simply.

The distinct social and cultural values of Tasmania also meant for many participants (including Sandy) a need to get 'into the rhythm of how Tassie works'. Several participants commented on the cyclical nature of Tasmania's social lives. In particular, the dramatic shifts in seasons meant that during winter everyday life shifted significantly. 'Shops will close earlier' in winter as Sandy suggests or even 'have three or four weeks off in the middle of winter'. This for some in the sample was an initial inconvenience but eventually, it causes them to reevaluate their style of life in line with the rhythm of Tasmania's culture (and climate). This enforces an appreciation for the indoors but also transforms values on how to live. As Sandy notes, older thoughts on consumerism for instance are challenged and she finds herself no longer spending as much as she used to on material possessions. The culture and environment of Tasmania, as noted before, is said to 'get under your skin'.

While it is argued above that migrants seek out to align how they feel they 'ought' to be living with how they live in their shift to Tasmania, in many instances this was further shaped and challenged by their new communities. For instance, Celina, the younger daughter of Tabitha who shifted with her to start the organic farm, relates the following in her experiences thus far in their migration journey;

it's such a *big lifestyle change for us*; I mean it has to because it's just different. But I think it's a good reminder of *what's important* [...] you have much richer life experiences, which I think is what – that's what life is about isn't it? It shouldn't be about stuff, what you're collecting. You're just going to throw it in the bin – yeah I think it's – it just give you a different perspective of what's really important.

She describes in other language how she feels, now with her husband and echoing her mother, more 'grounded'. A large part of this comes for her from growing their own food and looking after the animals on their property

However, for Celina, a former property manager in Brisbane, it is not simply the relations with animals and the land that has unraveled her considerations of the 'ought' of everyday life. She explains further;

When you work (in the city), yes you have friends [...] but you're disconnected from your actual community because you got to work [...] I think because you're in a regional area too, I think it's just different. People *look out for each other more*. You have to know

your neighbours because we have animals and they have animals. We are all forced to be connected because you want to know them in case something happens. We've got a shearing shed that we share [...] so *we have to talk to each other* and work together.

She complains that in her previous life 'everyone's in a hurry, on a hamster wheel' whereas here in Tasmania's North-West, time can be taken to stop 'just to chat'. This enforced sociality and slowing down, even of conversation, alters Celina's view on how life should be lived to the point that she reflects on past social relationships as rather fleeting and lacking meaning. Situations, especially in her role as property manager, where she was forced to mediate between parties who were complaining, causes Celina now to look back and ask 'who cares?' She rounds off this altered ethic by suggesting that experiences now have led her to believe there is a 'loss of community' in the city. Her fundamental ethic of sociality has been altered.

Celina reiterates though how her experiences of everyday life can at times challenge her new perspective. There are days where she has to reflect and ask 'oh did I do the right thing?' and then adds 'life is never that black and white'. Her 'ought' is never complete, as Simmel ([1918] 2010) would argue, but is constantly reflected on, affirmed and altered. Thus her lifestyle migration is a continual unfolding. Indeed, as she progresses, life events like pregnancy, children and even maybe the Covid19 pandemic will alter how that lifestyle migration is experienced. We see in some of our participants how events, out of control of the participant, can disrupt the ongoing congruence between ought and actuality.

For instance, Cassie who found her independence and control in her new life in a small town in Northern Tasmania, emailed later on in the project with a development that disrupted her lifestyle migration experience dramatically;

I'm writing to you to let you know my *happy world* here in (her place) has almost come to an end. The State Government announced at the end of September that a proposed/preferred site of a 270 bed maximum, medium and minimum prison is to be built 2km from my front door at a cost of \$270 million dollars [...] The health impacts are becoming obvious to most residents, with lack of sleep, headaches, unhappiness and insecurity, the *State Government does not care*. I've always been a plan a,b,c, kind of person but I didn't have a plan b when I moved here [...] The second stage of this Prison will be complete in 2029 and *have decided I won't be around to see it happen so there's uncertain times ahead for sure*.

Along with her neighbours, Cassie turned her attention towards a grassroots social movement that was designed to put pressure on the Tasmanian government to look elsewhere for the prison site. At an individual level, the congruence between how she was feeling she 'ought' to live and how she actually experienced life was being broken apart by circumstances out of her control. Again, this is precisely the value of life (being in control) she found so important to her lifestyle migration experience.

This sort of situation where lifestyle migrants feel themselves losing their sense of place is an oft cited issue across the world (Osbaldiston 2012). In several of these contexts, it is not uncommon to see migrants join with local community members in a type of 'save our town' campaign. In the situation with Cassie, someone who admits to rarely being politically motivated, her 'ought' has now been slightly altered to one of community political action – a fight to save the value of place in their community. However, if the plan goes ahead, Cassie has already decided to uproot herself again and leave, demonstrating how powerful the experience of her lifestyle migration has been on her.

Cassie's experience shows how the lifestyle migration journey can be ruptured through other factors (see also Benson 2016; Osbaldiston, Picken and Denny 2020). However, unlike Cassie and others above, not all have had their 'oughts' affirmed initially in their migration journey to Tasmania. Aileen, the East Coast resident who shifted to find solace in nature away from family, immediately indicated in her initial discussions that she was considering 'moving back to the mainland'. When pressed on why this might be the case, she suggests that 'all residents seem to have an opinion of entitlement (on newcomers) [...] unless you've been born and bred here'. Her experience of her lifestyle migration is suggested by her as cluttered with moments of difficulty with neighbours, local townspeople and gossip. Aileen feels like an outsider in her new place and subsequently feels looked down upon and judged. She relates in her conversation how this feels;

So I'm at the stage where I just think, well, fuck you's [...] If you don't accept me for who I am and for what I am, you know, nothing's wrong with me. I'll stand up to you; I won't let you push me around but I won't go out of my way to create enemies or be nasty [...] And I just think, I just came down here for a piece of tranquility and a nice place to [eventually] retire.

Although Aileen is a self-confessed loner of sorts, she suggests that her new community feels 'too isolating'. Despite her best efforts to overcome some of the boundaries set up for her by

the local town, Aileen feels that her desire to live peacefully amongst nature is now disrupted by a consistent barrage of gossip and rejection. She suggests that her lifestyle migration has been marginalising. The ongoing interjection of the community into her life disrupts any congruence between her ought and actuality to the point that she is likely to move again. Perhaps a new cycle of onward lifestyle migration.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to take up the call of Benson and O'Reilly (2016) to unpack what lifestyle entails in the supposed quest for a better way of life. All too often, as these authors argue (see also Benson and Osbaldiston 2014), lifestyle is a signifier emptied of meaning and broadly adapted into the phrase 'for a better way of life' which they argued in their 2009 seminal piece. To a degree, this type of theorising makes it difficult to determine what is distinct about this form of migration to others (such as labour, familial or temporary) (Benson and O'Reilly 2016). While agency is a clear concern amongst scholars in this space, it is clear that even that has limits with structure also limiting how, where and maybe even why people move in the first place. Also, as scholars like Benson (2011) argue, middle-class mentality or habitus continues to structure experiences later in the lifestyle migration journey.

In this chapter, unlike others in this space, it is argued that lifestyle migration is grounded in an ethics of life. Rather than taking a broadly Kantian position though of normalising that ethic, the argument contained here is that lifestyle migration is an individual reflection and debate on how the person feels they 'ought' to be living versus how they are 'actually' living. Following Simmel's ([1918]2010) latter works, it is this 'ought' that needs to be understood to unpack the 'why' of lifestyle migration.

As noted earlier, this comes through Simmel's call to a relational mode of thinking in examining the social. Here the 'interdependencies, togetherness and associations between people' a central to the project of sociology (Pyyhtinen 2018, p.4). Thus as this chapter has tried to set out, how people come to understand their own personal ethics is brought about through their relations with others and with culture more generally. In the case of lifestyle migration, this tells us a significant story about what it is that people are seeking out in their journey. In short, and using Simmel's (1918[2010]) *Law of the Individual* as a guide, the chapter has shown how lifestyle migrants' experience prior to their shift are characterised by growing incongruence between their sense of how they feel life 'ought' to be lived and how

they are actually living. Lifestyle migration then can be seen as an ethical decision (not in the normative sense) where individuals seek to capture a style of living that aligns with their personalised ought of life. In a sense then, it would make some sense to call lifestyle migration a 'quest to live the way one ought to'. This does not mean we normalise lifestyle migrants as showing society how to live life better. Rather, this is the quest to live in congruence with a personalised ethic.

As Simmel ([1918]2010) argues, life is a never-ending process that unfolds repeatedly over time. Lifestyle migration is no different as several authors have shown (see for instance Benson 2011, 2016). Individuals experience host communities, they are impacted on by social relations with them, and at times they alter their values accordingly. What this chapter has shown is how societal relations can shape ethics on things like consumerism, time, sociality and community. Participants' experiences, in this context, with local Tasmanians tend to shape not just their own views about how to live within their new place, but also create some negative feelings about urban spaces.

However as shown above, the new lifestyle that migrants adopt tends to involve a slowing down of life, and a constant reinvestment and reflection on what truly matters for these participants. As Tasmania's environment and society are engaged with more, over time the 'ought' of the individual lifestyle migrant shifts and they feel somewhat affirmed in their new life. Many in this sample refuse to entertain the idea of returning back to the mainland, especially the urban. This is not to suggest that all lifestyle migration is successful however. As noted earlier, the congruence between ought and actuality of everyday life can be severely disrupted to the point that some individuals will seek relief by migrating again. However, for the most part, at least in this sample, lifestyle migrants report positive changes and deeper alignment with the style of life they live and their own personal ethics.

Thus, this chapter argues for investment of time and energy into the relational when we study lifestyle migration. A host of other areas, such as infrastructure, cultural artefacts, advertising, political rhetoric and discourse, no doubt are important to study. However, if we are to make lifestyle a priority to understand in research in this space, we must appreciate the deeper psycho-social tenets that underpin migration. Where we get our ideas of the good life from, how we reflect on those, how we perhaps reject some ideas over others, who we listen to closely and how we embrace values into everyday life are critical keys to unlocking this phenomenon. However, as a departing comment and reflection, one area this chapter has not

considered upon is how the style of life we undertake is girded by perceptions of time. In short, and as Simmel ([1918]2010) argues, death is an ever-present actuality in our lives. We live, perhaps, with the mindset of how much time we have before our eventual demise. Thus, can we see the need to consider whether these migrants frame their move, even unconsciously, in relation to death? From that perspective, maybe lifestyle migration is not a quest for a better way of life in the immediate as Benson and O'Reilly (2009a) posed initially, but a quest for a better life till death.

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