# Lifestyle Migration in Place: Notes from the Field.

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## Abstract

In this paper we seek to examine the quest for a better way of life through migration, known as lifestyle migration, by positioning place as the apriori condition through which this experience happens. Following the work of Malpas (2018), we argue that lifestyle migration literature has often positioned place in the background, failing to notice how individual's style of life is enacted through place and because of it. In order to understand the lifestyle in these migrations, place must be taken seriously as a grounding theoretical and empirical topic for investigation. Using a topographical approach, we propose using the metaphorical concept of "survey marks" which are designed to understand the different components of place which make up the whole. We set out three of these in our interrogation of empirical research of lifestyle migrants in Tasmania and the Sunshine Coast in Australia to illustrate the importance of place in this research.

## Keywords

Place; Lifestyle Migration; Jeff Malpas; Australia; Philosophical Topography

## Introduction

On a crisp wintery morning on the East Coast of Tasmania in 2019, Nick sits quietly in a brilliant naturally lit room overlooking a beach conservation area. The purpose of the visit is to talk with the owner, Belinda[1], about her experiences of migrating to the island state from her former home in a busy metropolitan city on the mainland. Though her experience of migration has not fulfilled all her expectations, Belinda expresses her newfound love for the natural environment. She describes her 'picturesque, clean, pristine' surrounds in loving language. In particular, the feeling of being so close to things she is not used to, connects her to nature in a way that feels comforting despite past trials and troubles.

As an interviewer, but also a lover of landscapes, it is hard not to appreciate the picturesque position of Belinda's house. She overlooks the water, with clear site of the tourist hotspot of the Freycinet National Park where the imposing looking Hazards are on display. Her place is

[1] All names have been changed for purpose of anonymity

one of calm, quiet and peace. It is difficult not to romanticise it all. Logic on the other hand discolours the experience. Part of Nick's thoughts track to issues of coastal hazards. Belinda's place is potentially too close to the water, and the interviewer wonders at times about the impact of king tides on the property, and the future problems of coastal inundation due to sea level rise. Nevertheless, Belinda's connection to this place, is intrinsic now to her identity, despite deep social disconnection to the community around her (see later).

This experience, along with others, motivates us in this paper to consider the role of place within the lifestyle migration experience. As noted by Benson and Osbaldiston (2014: 9), 'the attractions of particular destinations, the amenities, the weather, and the physical environment' all contribute to the style of life that people shifting to mostly rural/coastal places both desire and experience (Benson and O'Reilly, 2009). Despite this acknowledgment, place as a concept within lifestyle migration research remains undervalued. As Lynnebakke (2021:760) recently argues, migration literature tends to, 'not explicitly link the ways in which the spatial intersects with migrants' integration in their new place'. She argues that social science in general, is uneasy 'with addressing place' theoretically and empirically (Lynnebakke, 2021:760).

In this paper, we follow this premise by arguing that lifestyle migration research understates the role of place in facilitating this experience. Following Jeff Malpas' (2018) philosophical topography of place, we introduce the concept of "survey marks" to highlight the power of place in lifestyle migration. Indeed, our argument is that the transformations in the style of living that appears in this phenomenon, is only possible because of place. "Survey marks" as a metaphor, is the process upon which we can identify the different points of place that individually contribute to a whole or unity (Malpas, 2018). Each component of place, though temporal, influences the whole and subsequently, facilitates the everyday experiences of lifestyle migrants. We propose below that three specific "survey marks" are applicable to understand the power of place in lifestyles: the natural world, the built environment and sociality. While there are potentially limitless "marks" to survey, we contend that these three, when analysing empirical data, allow a unique perspective into how place underpins lifestyle migration.

## Lifestyle Migration: a brief overview

Developed through the work of Benson and O'Reilly (2009), lifestyle migration[2] has become a growing area of research worldwide. Identifying seemingly disparate stories of migration throughout the world, Benson and O'Reilly (2009) found a common pursuit of the good life that united different narratives. Generically, this is described as the manner through which migrants imagine new ways of living, and then shift to find these (Benson and O'Reilly, 2009). Migration is seen as an act of self-realisation, where former lives, predominantly in large urban cities, are cast aside to embrace new, fresh lifestyles in places distinct from before (Benson, 2011; Oliver and O'Reilly, 2010). Much of the literature describes participants feeling that lifestyle is increasingly stressful, polluted, disappointing, full of risk and mundane (Benson, 2011; Osbaldiston, 2012). Usually an event occurs, such as divorce, redundancy or perhaps a pandemic, which provides mental space and time to undertake a migration to places of high cultural or natural value (Benson and O'Reilly, 2009). These idylls are presented in their minds already through broader cultural narratives around non-urban places, and within potentially life biographies (Buckle, 2021; O'Reilly, 2014).

Sociological investigations into this movement often describe it as a middle-class phenomenon (Benson, 2011; Benson and O'Reilly, 2009; Hayes, 2018). While some have disagreed with this approach (Osbaldiston, 2012), Benson and O'Reilly (2009) through a Bourdieusian framework highlight the role of social imagination of middle-class culture and illustrate the impact of that on new lifestyles in new places. For instance, through her ethnography of British people living in the rural place of Lot, France, Benson (2011:153) summarises middle-class experience in migration in the following way:

> The discourse surrounding migration, and the particular characteristics of the better way of life sought by my respondents, reveal the migrant's tastes […] to denote cultural preferences and aesthetic judgment. The aesthetic dimension of these consumption practices indicates that individuals aspired not only to a particular sense of identity but also to a lifestyle.

The choices her participants made, including property selection and 'resulting lifestyles', were 'part of wider cultural practices of consumption associated with the British middle classes' (Benson, 2011:153).

[2] Important here is also the term amenity migration which emerges through human geography and which focusses on the question of 'amenity' and 'disamenity' when examining people's movement from one place to another (Gosnell and Abrams, 2011). However, sociologically, lifestyle migration offers an alternative approach wherein the sociological conditions and the social experience itself is unpacked, to examine how people embrace new lifestyles in their journey, not just new environments. Thus in this paper, we focus exclusively on the lifestyle migration concept.

Middle-class movement for lifestyle reasons in transnational and internal migrations is examined in mostly Europe, but extends to North America (2010, 2014); South America (Benson and O'Reilly, 2018; Croucher, 2015; Hayes, 2018; Rainer, 2019), Asia (Ono, 2015; Stones et al., 2019), Australia and New Zealand (Buckle 2017, 2021; Higgins, 2017; Osbaldiston, 2012). Empirically, the research cuts across lines of class, ethnicity, gender and other sociological variables.

It is, however, important to consider the development of the adjective *lifestyle* in lifestyle migration. As a definition, the 'quest for a better way of life' is an awkward phrasing. Benson and O'Reilly (2016:25) acknowledge this arguing that the term is a 'lens rather than a box'. In other words, the approach to this migratory phenomenon is to unpack the term 'lifestyle' in relation to the participant's narratives and practices. They write:

> At face value, lifestyle migration indicates that there are forms of migration where considerations over lifestyle – deliberately intended in its sociological rendering, framed around consumption, and inferring existential and moral dimensions – are prioritised in migration decisions […] Crucially, however, the concept of lifestyle migration pivots around the common narrative through which these migrants render their lives meaningful (Benson and O'Reilly, 2016:24).

Such an approach therefore requires the researcher to examine what 'lifestyle' is to the migrant, with the commonality being that migration involves some broader meaning-making process. In short, *lifestyle* needs to be unpacked by asking what style of life the participant is adopting, practicing, and embracing. Lifestyle migration requires an inductive approach recognising it will change according to context.

Lifestyles however do not exist in isolation from place. As Seamon (2019:21) writes, 'human beings both shape and are shaped by the world of places in which they find themselves'. Place itself is the precondition for a lifestyle. The material/immaterial worlds that are embedded in places that lifestyle migrants shift into, shape newcomer's experiences. As Benson (2011:106) shows, environments, cultures and social values brush up transform 'practices' as migrants seek for belonging in their new communities. Recently, Osbaldiston (2022) concludes that this gradual transformation could be read as a reshaping and reconstitution of an ethics of life through the Simmelian paradigm. However, intrinsic to this is the question of place. Lifestyle migration literature tends to focus on the attraction to place, as a marker for several comments on western consumerism or raise important points on race, colonialism, gender or other socio-economic factors (Benson, 2011; Hayes, 2018). Yet, place ought to be an independent variable of sorts, not just preceding migration, but thereafter

(Halfacree, 2014; Hoey, 2010; Lynnebakke, 2021). As we note in our work, migrants envisage lifestyle as an entwined experience involving both movement and place. The move is not simply an attempt to adopt a new lifestyle, but the place itself (along with migration) facilitates new lifestyles.

**Developing the place in Lifestyle Migration.**

Place is therefore an important and necessary element to understand. As Lynnebakke (2021:761) argues, unpacking how people interpret place prior will only reveal the motivations, but 'attention to migrants' place attachment processes and staying aspirations can provide detailed insights into lifestyles in migration.

> Lifestyle migration researchers have often analysed lifestyle migration as a component of wider identity projects, often discussed with reference to middle-class migrants. Relatedly, researchers have framed lifestyle migration as a form of consumption. According to this theoretical framework, the aim of lifestyle migrants is not only to improve their lives – as arguably is the case of all migrants but to find (re)create themselves, often in the aftermath of particular life events (Lynnebakke, 2021:776).

In addition to this, she contends that social imaginaries and 'quests for certain lifestyles driven by identity projects' are not the sole feature of lifestyle migration (Lynnebakke, 2021:776). Rather, 'embodied local lifestyle experiences and the lifestyle a certain place enables' produces a sense of attachment or detachment from place that the influences the styles of life after migration (777).

Lynnebakke (2021) makes use of the environmental social psychological concept of place attachment following Lewicka (2010, 2011). Through a variety of quantitative, qualitative and experimental research, Lewicka's (2011) approach focusses on attachment/detachment processes that occur between individuals and place. However, she also criticises this canon of research by arguing that 'little empirical progress has been made compared to what was known 30 or 40 years ago' (Lewicka, 2011:226). While the application and development of instrumental models of place attachment are numerous, progress in theory in the area is slow.

Nevertheless despite Lynnebakke's (2021) work, it is noticeable that in lifestyle migration scholarship, there is a relative lack of theoretical understanding of place. As noted earlier, place is identified as a trend in the consumer market of the western middle-class who through their existential quest for better lives, look for coastal, rural or regional idylls (Benson, 2011; Torkington, 2012). Often in these discussions, place is the background to social practice,

simply taken for granted and/or ignored in analysis. For us, lifestyles are not encountered in places, but places themselves shape and even determine lifestyles (Malpas, 2018). While instrumentalising place through place attachment may help identify this, we argue that place is temporal and dynamic involving several pieces that form together to create a 'whole' (Seamon, 2019). However, place is also highly complex, and 'no single way of grasping place can exhaust its complexity or entirely ignore that complexity' (Malpas, 2018:176). Thus while we suggest one approach below in our empirical work, we acknowledge that multiple approaches can be taken to place. Nevertheless, place we argue is intrinsic to lifestyle migration, for without it, lifestyles do not exist.

The lack of place theorising in lifestyle migration scholarship follows an aversion to humanistic or essentialist approaches and a focus on social structures that underpin phenomena. In particular, those approaches that are 'associated with variously supposedly discredited forms of metaphysics' or founded in 'universalist pretensions' are 'no longer theoretically or politically acceptable' (Malpas, 2012:231). Consequently, place fell into the background overtaken by questions of space, the place of the agent in the network, and more recently the metaphorical work of mobilities. The latter has increasing input into the discussion around lifestyle migration positioning migrants as highly mobile individuals attempting to moor themselves in an ever changing world (Benson and Osbaldiston, 2016).

Thus the intellectual trajectory broadly of social science left a topic like lifestyle migration unlikely to ever take place seriously as a deeper ontological question. As Malpas (2012:231) argues, place no longer holds a position of importance in analysis. Rather, it is a sidenote for understanding power differentials and the culturally constructed world of the west (see for instance Hayes, 2018). This is of course important. Nevertheless, place in lifestyle migration, we argue, facilitates, shapes and binds people to new styles of life that position place as the most important variable.

Within lifestyle migration literature though, there are examples of taking place seriously. Osbaldiston (2012) for instance utilises a theoretical framework upon the work of Smith's (1999:15) neo-Durkheimian model of place where the 'action/setting dialectic can be understood as mediated by overarching, place identifying cultural structures' which 'inform the actions of the ego'. In other words, a place which is heavy in cultural value, such as a cemetery, will impact on how an individual behaves, socially and individually. However, the agency of people can potentially transform even the most sacred locales into mere mundane spaces.

In the case of lifestyle migration (which Osbaldiston (2012) describes as 'seachange') the themes of place built through history firmly implanted into culture create binaries between say the urban and coastal. People are drawn to the quasi-sacred place, and once there, behave accordingly. However, people's actions change places, and sometimes once lifestyle havens turn into mundane or even profane locales that individuals seek escape again from (Osbaldiston, 2012).

One of the difficulties of this approach is that it relies heavily on a typology which only applies to certain settings and not everyday places. Sacred places do exist clearly, but these are very specific. What Osbaldiston (2012) attempts to do is sacralise whole towns, villages, landscapes, and coastlines through the Durkheimian paradigm. Social relations, the built environment, and the natural world is framed as having such a high cultural (sacred) value that planners adapt and adopt new techniques to ensure it remains separate in aesthetic from cities (Osbaldiston, 2012). However, even a cursory glance at Durkheim's approach to the sacred makes this approach difficult. Nevertheless, the attempt to position place as a strong shaper of the lifestyle migration story is a foundation we seek for here (see also Osbaldiston, 2022).

Buckle (2021) draws a similar approach in her work but through the prism of Cresswell's (2009) three aspects of place: materiality, meaning and practice. Materiality here relates to more than just the pleasing aesthetics. It draws on the question of how place is felt physically, how life is lived through it materially and the distinctions between places that emerge as a result. For instance, Surfers Paradise in Queensland is materially distinct from, and often used as a comparison to other coastal places such as Noosa or other smaller sleepier coastal idylls (Buckle 2021; Buckle, 2018). Buckle (2021) then proceeds to examine how people attach meaning to these places and further how the style of life is practiced thereafter (Benson, 2011). Lifestyle migrants drawn by materiality, then experience that materiality of place which at times causes them some discomfort especially if that place does not hold opportunities for employment (Buckle, 2021:265). Like Osbaldiston (2012) above, Creswell's (2009) approach allows for Buckle (2021:265) to take place seriously via an 'analytical framework' which privileges it.

Place needs to be understood the primary feature of lifestyles in lifestyle migration. It shifts, alters, contours and challenges the style of life of these migrants while also being shaped by them as well. Halfacree (2014:98-99) in his discussion of the cognate term counterurbanisation, argues that we need to consider de-centering 'the social construction and cognitive realms of representation' in analysis and focus instead on the way 'rurality in the

guise of landscape and nature becomes both affective and effective'. The rural can 'scape the in-migrant' in a variety of ways including 'slowing down' to new rhythms, 'feeling life' through nature, 'connectedness' with the natural world, 'becoming and sensing embeddedness' and finally 'learning' new practices that promote a 're-focused sense of one's life'. Place itself shapes the counter-urban experience, through specifically natural landscapes, temporalities, and relations.

Such an approach appears to resonate with Malpas' (2018) theory on place:

> The idea of place encompasses both the idea of the social activities and institutions that are expressed in and through the structure of a particular place (which can be seen as particularly determinative of that place) and the idea of the physical objects and events in the world (along with associated causal processes) that constrain and are sometimes constrained by, those social activities and institutions (Malpas, 2018:34).

Place is therefore, as Casey (2018:ix) contests, an 'a priori condition of all of this experience, not just parts of aspects of it'. Experiences do not just happen within different places or parts of them, they exist entirely because of places. They are not simply names on maps, but rather place is complex requiring a holistic approach (Malpas, 2018:176). He continues:

> Place may be viewed in terms that emphasise the concrete features of the natural landscape, that give priority to certain social or cultural features, or that emphasise place as purely experienced. Indeed, much writing about place takes up place, and particular places, only through one such mode of presentation. Yet, since different ways of grasping the structure of place are grounded in the complexity of place as such, no single way of grasping place can exhaust its complexity or entirely ignore that complexity (Malpas, 2018:176).

As noted earlier, place cannot be reduced to single elements. Rather the different complex elements that make up place are 'gathered together' that 'reflects the complex unity of the world' (Malpas, 2018:176).

This approach to place leads to Malpas' (2018:39) topographical approach where 'concepts at issue must be understood through their interconnection rather than their reduction, through their complex interdependence rather than their simplification'. He writes:

> The complexity of place is mirrored in the complex process of triangulation and traverse by which the topographical surveyor builds up a map of the region being surveyed. No single sighting is sufficient to gain a view of the entire region, multiple sightings are required, and every sighting overlaps, to some extent, with some other sighting. Thus,

> the process of topographical surveying is one in which the complex structure of the region is arrived at through crossing and re-crossing the surface of the land and through sighting and re-sighting from one landmark to another (Malpas, 2018:39).

Like the surveyor, to capture place, it requires multiple overlapping angles, both physically and conceptually. The surveyor utilises the process of triangulation, where trigonometry allows the measurement via triangles of spaces. Through this, the surveyor can measure one side, to calculate the distance of another space. Malpas (2018) here argues that like the surveyor, we can utilise different survey points in our understanding of place, to 'map' place, but and how different points influence each other in the holistic picture of a place.

Understanding lifestyle migration through this approach to place allows insight lifestyles in unique ways. As Benson and O'Reilly (2016) argue above, to understand the lifestyle in lifestyle migration, we need to unpack the relations that exist between the migrants and their new experiences. We argue that privileging place here allows us to see the ongoing relational unfolding of lifestyle that is arguably never complete. Furthermore, this allows us to see how place components work, individually and holistically, on the migrant's everyday, and conversely, how migrant behaviour works on place itself. For both are shaped through and by each other.

We argue that there are multiple aspects of place in lifestyle migration to consider – perhaps innumerable. In our examination of this migratory phenomenon, we examine three distinct but connected areas through which lifestyle is experienced. These are what we term conceptual "survey marks" to follow on from the metaphor of surveying. Marks are material objects used to indicate key points in a physical survey (such as posts or discs used to indicate elevation, other geodetic or land surveying measures). In our consideration of lifestyle migration, we seek to utilise three conceptual "survey marks" that, when gathered together, allow us to construct an idea about how lifestyles are created through place. These markers are the natural, built, and social marks of lifestyle migration places. All of these are demonstrable of how the style of life occurs because of place.

**Natural marks – attuning to the landscapes of place**

In the work of Halfacree (2014:104), the movement of people from the city into the country unbuttons or disrupts what is considered normal in the everyday. For him, the reflexive project of self needs to come to terms with different environments especially that encourage/discourage certain activities. Osbaldiston (2022) expresses further that natural

environment actively scapes mindsets and alters ethics of living. This not simply the tourist gaze (Urry and Larsen, 2011), but rather an entanglement within place through touch, smell, feel, taste and time. Through this interaction, every day, lifestyles within the migration experience, emerge.

We caught a glimpse of this at the beginning of the paper where Belinda outlines her love for her new place. The position of her home almost frames a landscape painting daily, which changes according to seasons and natural flows. Simmel (1913(2007):21) describes this as boundary work wherein a piece of landscape is 'encompassed by a momentary or permanent field of vision' and where elements of nature are brought into unity temporarily. While this is the domain of the artist, Belinda has purposefully built her property so that each morning her windows expose the same landscape, with different elements (such as weather).

However, as Simmel (1913[2007]) and Malpas (2018) rightly point out, landscape is thoroughly temporal, and the natural world works with the individual in different capacities. Belinda emphasises this when she describes how getting out 'into nature' allows her to 'get out of my head' and has changed her mindset dramatically so she feels less inclined to let 'little things' get to her greatly. She states:

> But all the wildlife that you've got here and sometimes I wake up at night because, with the sensor lights, I can see something's out there. And so occasionally I peer out and then you've got these little potoroos. When its raining they come up on my deck and you can see where they're dragging their tail behind them and you can see their little footprints […] and the black cockatoos come and the little honeyeaters are beautiful.

Importantly for Belinda, the ongoing relationship she has with nature produces a new style of living. She has recently undertaken a new hobby of photography in order to capture the natural world's beauty. Throughout the interview, Belinda proudly shows off some of this, and continues to revel in the new activity that holds meaning for her.

Belinda's relationship to place however is always foregrounded by memories of her former urban place. As Osbaldiston (2012) describes the binary opposition between city and country/coast is amplified throughout modernity underpinning the lifestyle migration experience. However, the process of living the transition into a non-urban space is where lifestyle hits the ground, and memories of the city are positioned against the new place (Benson, 2011). For instance, Tabitha and Celina, a mother and daughter duo who shifted from metropolitan Brisbane, into the countryside of Northern Tasmania, reflect on how in their former place, you could not get outside as often due to a combination of climate, work-

stress, and traffic. Tabitha, the mother, complains that in summer in her former home you 'sit in your house and just watch TV' with the air conditioning on 'as it is too hot outside'. Celina agrees but adds later, 'everyone's in a hurry, on a hamster wheel' driving from here to there, not enjoying the surrounds.

As a result of their shift to Tasmania, they have time to immerse themselves into nature again positioning their new place against their old places:

> We've gone to the gorge, just up the road, and often there's nobody there. So you can go there and you've got the place to yourself and its beautiful […] I mean that's pretty special […] you feel its not crowded […] you can just stop and enjoy it.

It is here that both have drastically shifted their styles of life, living off the land through farming, starting co-ops, enjoying time with animals, and slowing down their pace of life. Importantly, the climate of the place has enforced them to understand seasonality. This means becoming attuned to the natural rhythms of nature, to know when to grow things, when it is time to harvest, best times to go for hikes, best times to visit the beach and so on. Seasonality, in other words, within place has produced a new style of life.

Memories of past places are brought to the fore in several lifestyle migration journeys. Buckle (2021:260) demonstrates how 'personal attachment' to types of places, such as beaches, provides a deeper connection to place after migration. She describes how one participant, who shifted into the coastal area of Maroochydore area in Queensland's Sunshine Coast, recaptured his relationship to the beach because of his past. He describes how his mother and father 'wanted the relaxed lifestyle' despite their horror of swimming in the ocean (Buckle, 2021:260). Thus, in his new shift back to the coast, his relationship to the beach is felt through this memory as well. He describes the beach as 'energising and soulful' capturing some of the feelings through memory (Buckle, 2021:261). Like his parents, he does not actually get into the ocean, but he uses it to 'go and sit and just speak to it' – indicative not only of changed practices but also of the moods associated with the new lifestyle. Thus, place connects with other places, not simply through reflections of lives now compared to lives in the city, but through subjective impressions that connect deeply to the person.

The beach features often in lifestyle migration narratives in Australia as this is where several migrants have flocked to in the past (Buckle, 2018; see also Burnley and Murphy, 2004). For some, beaches mean surfing, sunshine, and sunbathing. For others though, beaches are intrinsic parts to place, simply because it signifies an end to landscape. Tim, for instance who

shifted from an inland city to the coastal place of Mooloolaba in the Sunshine Coast, identifies the beach in the following:

> I like the beach, because there's an end to the world that in suburbia, that whichever way you look, there's just more world. The beach means there's an end to it. I like equally […] the desert because there's a real end to it. Because there's nothing there. And if you put me in a rainforest, no thanks. It's nice but it's to me, you've got to have an end to the, an end of the thing.

The framing of place in this way allows for us to have insight further into the unravelling of lifestyle for this participant. The beach for Tim is a world where he can have finality – a place where there is an end. Place for him is a deeper subject, one which again sits with experiences of other places. The beach finishes, suburbia does not. The stark contrast for him of endless housing on horizons to the beach which demarcates lines between land and sea, allows him a new perspective on the world. Residential suburbia in particular feels never-ending. Beaches however put a stop on human progress, allowing Tim to feel apart from that a built world.

This natural world mark in our conceptual survey of place in lifestyle migration invites us to consider on the different aspects of environment that shape new styles of living, but which are also impacted on by migrants. Osbaldiston (2012) for instance shows how the influx of newcomers to regions can shape place, including environment, in ways that are unintended. For instance, new housing alters land, creates potential problems aesthetically/environmentally and can alter the place feel. Seamon (2019:138-139) highlights how an 'inappropriate environmental ensemble contributes to increasing environmental entropy of the place'. To be clear, this does not mean that place stops existing. Rather, as environment is shaped and changed, it can lose its appeal for lifestyle migrants causing aversion, rather than pull towards the locale (see Osbaldiston, 2012) .

The point we seek to make here is that the inductive nature of 'lifestyle' means that we must take the natural world seriously as a fundamental base for lifestyles to be experienced. Repeatedly in the field, lifestyle migrants suggest that the natural beauty of the place has some significance to their shift. However, our argument is to suggest that the natural place moulds and defines lifestyles. The natural world directly and indirectly affects moods, activities, and the subject's relation to place.

**Built marks – lifestyle through infrastructure**

There is a tendency to perhaps overstate how much the natural world influences lifestyle migration. It is important to recognise that these lifestyle places also hold infrastructure that sits within it. Built worlds matter in the development of new styles of living as the unnatural material setting is through which most of our everyday is lived. Without it, we could not engage with natural worlds. The demarcation between suburbia and the emptiness of the sea described by Tim above, highlights how the two serve as binaries to create a sense of place. Nevertheless, roads, buildings, art galleries, cafes, shopping centers and important health care such as hospitals all shape and shift lifestyle experience. Though, it is the home where we experience much of our life-course and which through style of life is shaped (Buckle, 2017).

This is evident clearly in the lifestyle of Belinda, who constructed her home with the desire to capture a landscape every morning through her picture windows that face outwards to the sea. Through her newly designed living room, she is exposed daily to the natural world. However, not all embrace contemporary design. For instance, Sandy, a middle-aged woman who shifted from a mainland city into the Northern town of Deloraine in Tasmania, moved not simply for natural beauty, but for material history. She now lives in a refurbished cottage built in the mid-1800s adorned with material objects from the past. A major contributor to her desire to shift came from the heritage of Tasmania:

> The chance to have this dream that I always had, of the old cottage that I could do up, and a nice garden and all that stuff, and the simpler lifestyle, really, for retiring. That was sort of […] I'm ready to do that now. And Tassie,I could do it in. I could have the old cottage and all that as well because I love all the history.

Tasmania is replete with buildings reminiscent of the colonial past. In Sandy's street alone, there are four of these old cottages in a row, now broken up by one house that is newly constructed which she feels looks like a 'brick monstrosity'. When asked about where her love for heritage comes from, she responds that literature, such as Agatha Christie, imbued with her a desire for cottage life. In addition to this, she has adorned her home with 'old stuff' which she has grown to adore as it is 'all part of that feel'.

As she takes the interviewer around her house, she proudly shows off all her refurbishment work, demonstrating a lifestyle shift in practice. A former public servant, Sandy is now a renovator taking her time to construct a home that appeals to her sense of history. She feels responsible to the heritage of her place. For her, Deloraine (and Tasmania) is a place steeped in history – and her every day needs to align carefully with that. She describes it as a 'more grounded existence'.

Of course, the home is an important site for consideration of migration/mobility. Personal experiences, histories, memories, and ideals/values over home are central to how people experience new places. However, outside of the home, other infrastructures, the mundane through to the extravagant, are also integral to the contouring of lifestyles. Buckle (2021:262) for instance, discusses at length how in the Sunshine Coast, lifestyle migrants' everyday experience of place is shared with tourists. As such, built environments often include opportunities for entertaining, fun and social activities. Alex, a migrant into the suburb of Mooloolaba on the Sunshine Coast, comments that being exposed to this changes, 'your mindset's, we need to have fun, we need to have a good time'. This is indicative of a transforming of lifestyle into one that focus on leisure.

Place dynamics then, alter the relational experiences of lifestyles in lifestyle migration. Smaller towns in country and coastal regions have limited resources and infrastructure, and this alters the everyday life of the lifestyle migrant differently to those who move to more service and infrastructure-rich regions such as the Sunshine Coast. It can also lead to change in values (Osbaldiston, 2022). We see this at times in the attitudes of migrants as they negotiate a different place that has only minimal consumerism. In particular, the lack of large-scale shopping centres is noticed by lifestyle migrants in smaller places. Over time however this tends to be appreciated. Cassie, a middle-aged woman who shifted from a major capital city on the mainland of Australia to a small community in North-West Tasmania, tells of how she noted initially the lack of shopping facilities, but now she hates 'shopping centres' and comments 'I'd do my best never to go into one'. She proceeds further by declaring, 'advertising is everywhere […] everyone wants your money and your business […] I subconsciously stopped watching TV and never read papers/magazines'.

However the lack of amenity can produce difficulties for migrants (Buckle, 2021). This is clear especially in places where easy access to employment is not as forthcoming. However, in addition to this, the location of the place in relation to other places means that the styling of life is at times dependent on access. Several participants we have interviewed comment on the location of their place to the nearest major capital city. Burnley and Murphy (2004) highlight in their earlier work how places that are located close by capitals (such as the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, Wollongong, Geelong, Ballarat) are popular migrant locations. Connection to capital cities via fast interlinked transportation services (such as highways, rail, and airports) means that the lack of opportunities to pursue certain lifestyles, such as connecting to the arts, is less an issue. From that perspective, we cannot discount the built worlds that connect our places with other places, and lifestyles in migration do not simply

emerge in one place, or places within those places, but with other places around (Malpas, 2018; Seamon, 2019). An examination of the built marks outside of these lifestyle locations could allow for a greater understanding of the relationship of these destinations to other places.

**Social marks – people in place.**

Cassie adds to her story cited above in ways that relate to our final mark: social marks or people in place. She states:

> I want to simplify my life, cut out the BS […] I just went around the corner to the local IGA (local store) to buy milk. The guy serving me asked if I was using a (former city) permanent debit card. I replied yes, we got to talking […] Another wonderful encounter that happens daily.

Relations between people in place are another facet to lifestyle migration. Here, we refer mostly to the interactions between people that occur in place. As Malpas (2018) reminds us, the relations we have with others is only made possible because of place. Place offers up the chances for social exchanges wherein the styling of life is cobbled together further. For Cassie, the move to Tasmania has led to her becoming part of a sharing economy, that develops into friendships, and made her 'happy and proud to live [t]here'.

Not all social relations within these places are positive, however. Benson (2016:491) makes this clear in her work on British people in France,

> Moving between localities these migrants feel the absence and pull of social relations, struggling to establish social relations on the ground within the distinction and maintain those with friends and family back in Britain. Lifestyle migrants make social and emotional investments in the destination, a site that is often highly localized, but this does not negate the possibility of maintaining such investments elsewhere.

In transnational migration, emotions such as loneliness can be far more significant than internal migration. However, in lifestyle migration within a country like Australia, moving into a new place can still disrupt social relations creating difficulties for people in their places of choice.

As noted earlier, Belinda whose lifestyle shifted through the natural world, found her social relations within place difficult. She describes how when she first arrived at her new place, her neighbour approached her to ask about some boulders that had been moved rudely claiming

that she had no right. Belinda suggests she told her neighbour she can do as she pleases and instantly felt uneasy about her place. However, it did not stop here. The positioning of her home and the construction of it was 'the talk of the town' and she soon overheard people talking about her in local shops and community buildings. She suggests that these interactions left her feeling isolated and unwelcome. Consequently, Belinda tried to 'move out of (her) comfort zone' by volunteering in local community organisations. However, her social experiences have been largely negative, shifting her experience of place, and the development of her lifestyle into something else. She tells us:

> I've tried to change my mindset and believe I did change my mindset. Okay, make the best of the worst situation, because it's not the worst situation I've been in. You know, look at it (she gestures to her view of the ocean), look at it, it's glorious.

Yet despite this, Belinda lost her connection to her place, and is now seeking to rent out her property to pursue a life elsewhere, where she can live and practice her new hobby of nature photography. While Belinda's experience is not unheard of (see Buckle 2021), the point we would like to entertain here is that her lifestyle migration is ongoing (see above). Places are complex and produce complex experiences that may not produce or shape the intended or desired lifestyle – and so the quest for a better way of life may continue with a further decision to migrate (see Benson, 2016).

In most cases however, people will describe how their place, built and natural environments, engender opportunities for social relations that they are not used to in the city. Walking especially, allows for them to encounter others where even mere pleasantries being exchanged appear to add to a sense of belonging to place. While living in Brisbane, Tabitha admits 'we only ever really spoke to one of our neighbours', however Tabitha and Celina express that their current place encourages social relations:

> 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, 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 we share with out neighbours, so we have to talk to each other and work together […] Often people just stop at the front gate if they see us just to chat because they knew the previous owners.

Lifestyle migrants are at times guilty of overstating the inauthenticity of the city in contrast to their new authentic life (see also Benson, 2011, Osbaldiston, 2012). Nevertheless, this is not our point. Rather than get overly caught up with the social constructive elements producing this mindset, our argument is that we cannot understand lifestyle without this social mark. For

Tabitha and Celina, social relations were encouraged because of a place, with the use of a shearing shed leading to a style of life that is far more communal, neighbourly and, at least in their minds, authentic. They live in a less hurried fashion, more willing to talk with people and, importantly, in a way they feel contributes back to the community. The style of their lives now is altered through sociality.

## Conclusion

The importance of place to the lifestyle migration journey cannot be understated, as this paper attempts to demonstrate. We have argued four main points. Firstly, place is largely missing from the canon of lifestyle migration scholarship in a meaningful manner. In some ways, place has been integrated into research, however this is often done by the application of place models or typologies that treat it as a side note, or something to measure how attached people are to a locale (Lewicka, 2011). The argument here we have attempted to put forward, secondly, is that the 'lifestyle' in this migration experience needs to be unpacked inductively (as Benson and O'Reilly (2016) argue), but that place needs to be centered in this. Following Malpas (2018), we argue that lifestyles do not happen in isolation to place. The quest for a better way of life does not exist solely in a vacuum within socio-economic indicators and imaginations but is experienced within place and often undertaken because of place.

Lastly, and again following Malpas (2018), we have proposed "survey marks" as a way of developing a place informed conceptual and empirical observation of these lifestyles in migration experiences. For us, and through our research in Tasmania and the Sunshine Coast, this informing needs to include natural, built and social world marks. These are not isolated. The point of the survey mark metaphor is that place is 'complex' but these marks brought together create a 'unity' of place (Malpas, 2018:176). For lifestyle migration, the styling of a new way of life happens in unity with these marks, which all work together on the individual to construct different ways of knowing, feeling, acting and valuing. We suggest that through this approach, lifestyles can be truly unpacked and place, which is intrinsic to the lifestyle experience, will be more fully embraced in scholarship.

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