

Benson, Michaela and Nick Osbaldiston (eds). 2014. *Understanding Lifestyle Migration. Theoretical Approaches to Migration and the Quest for a Better Way of Life (Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship Series)*. London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 237pp. Hb: £65.00. ISBN: 9781137328663.

Lifestyle migration as a theoretical and conceptual framework has been used to explain the migration of relatively affluent populations; as various scholars have noted that, despite the increasing evidence of various privileged forms of migration in general, they remain poorly understood and collectively conceptualised. The aim of the book *Understanding Lifestyle Migration* is to develop further conceptual and theoretical models for understanding this phenomenon. The eleven contributors within the book reflect on the theoretical underpinnings of the current research while also developing further understandings of the privileged forms of migration through the application of social theory. As such, the book also reflects on how lifestyle migration studies can contribute to the wider debates within migration studies, as well as how lifestyle migration research can be related to studies on consumption and identity. Furthermore, the dialectic relation between structure and agency is highlighted throughout the book, because the contributors recognise the value of the social science debate for developing further lifestyle migration research. Although the book introduces specific case studies dealing with privileged forms of migration, the volume is a rich source of references on mobility and the cultural mechanisms behind mobility and is, as such, a valuable reading for students, researchers and academics in the fields of anthropology, geography and sociology, specifically for those dealing with topics, such as migration and tourism.

The introductory chapter, by the editors of the book Michaela Benson and Nick Osbaldiston, forecasts the development of the lifestyle migration field thematically, theoretically and conceptually, while also discussing possible contributions of this field to understanding migration more generally. Lifestyle migration research, for example, deals extensively with the cultural mechanisms of migration while migration studies do not often examine the intersections of culture and migration. The introduction is followed by Mari Korpela's contribution in which she discusses individualism and lifestyle migration, using empirical examples (of various researchers as well as her own ethnographic data gathered among lifestyle migrants in India). Korpela convincingly argues that although the sociological theories of individualisation and late (or reflexive/liquid modernity) explain lifestyle migration to some extent, defining lifestyle migration as a celebration of the individualisation of reflexive modernity is, in her view, a rather uncritical analysis that does not lead far.

In the next chapter, *Negotiating Privilege in and through Lifestyle Migration*, by Michaela Benson, the author discusses at greater length the notion of privilege, observing that privilege is structural and systemic and how it is negotiated through the practice of lifestyle migration. In doing so, Benson compares two case studies: the British in rural France and North Americans in Panama.

Brian A. Hoey brings to light on the subject of American lifestyle migrants, theorising the "fifth migration" in the United States. Through the review of relevant literature on migration between rural and urban areas in the United States and drawing

on his extensive ethnographic data, Hoey suggests the need to combine macro and micro levels of analysis and orients his chapter towards the future, asking himself what might be the next (or fifth) migration to follow the suburbanisation that defined the patterns of twentieth-century residential development and cultural norms in the United States.

The chapter with the rather provocative title of *Jumping Up from the Armchair: Beyond the Idyll in Counterurbanisation*, by Keith Halfacree calls the reader's attention to the fact that there is a need to consider the longitudinal development of migrant subjectivities. In this way, Halfacree opens an important question about how, through post-migration lives, the lifestyle sought as well as the imaginaries attached to this lifestyle may be transformed.

Similarly, Noel Salazar's contribution to this volume reveals how lifestyle migration does not always come with a happy ending. On the basis of two Belgian cases, he shows how there are very real possibilities that a quest for a better life might also end in failure. Vannini and Taggart continue to develop this discussion in their contribution entitled *No Man Can Be an Island*. This title is literally the core message of the article, as the authors point to the fact that there are many contradictions between imagination and experience, one of them being the ease of separation or the separation itself. As such, the chapter does not only explain the difficulties of removing oneself from the "ills of civilisation" but it questions the whole idea of the possibility of separation as the dream of escape (from technology, consumerism, structure) is often enabled by the same structure.

Osbaldiston's article argues that an over-reliance on theories such as "reflexivity" or "individualism" tends to disable researchers from historically embedding the phenomena of lifestyle migration. Starting from that premise, in his contribution the author develops a more historically nuanced approach to lifestyle migration.

The concluding article, by Karen O'Reilly, discusses the importance of social imaginary for lifestyle migration, but she also emphasises that social imaginary is an ambitious concept that has a tendency to become imprecise. She sets out a suggestion aimed at various scholars employing this concept, which would, in her opinion, benefit from thinking through its various elements more systematically. In other words, it is useful to take into consideration external and internal structures, laws, grand ideas, discourses that pre-exist a given agent and to relate them to the practices of daily life, active agency, and the outcome of these practices. The concept of social imaginary itself, used in many of the discussions in this volume, is one that attempts to make sense of agency and structure in interaction, while imaginaries are shown both as action and structure. While her discussion is not new to the field of lifestyle migration, it opens up an important question of the precision that should be applied when dealing with social imaginaries. To achieve this, she proposes a rather concrete approach by conceptualising the structure and agency separately, while also always understanding them in interaction.

This brings us to the fundamental anthropological challenge of moving back and forth between different levels of granularity and of understanding interconnections. To achieve this, as O'Reilly together with Billig (2013) reminds us that we have to approach our case studies with precision and reflect on the 'imprecise jargon that reifies complexes of things while discounting people and actions' (2014: 211).

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