

## EDITORIAL

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This thematic section is focused on lifestyle migration, a social phenomenon that foregrounds the role of lifestyle considerations within migration (Benson and O'Reilly 2009; Knowles and Harper 2009). For the large part, this theoretical and conceptual framework has been used to explain the migration of the relatively affluent and is part of a more general shift within migration studies to increase the visibility of the migration of the more privileged, a population flow that, as Amit (2007) has argued, is poorly understood and collectively conceptualized. It has precursors—international retirement migration, leisure migration, counterurbanization, second-home ownership, amenity migration—within migration research, but these rarely captured the full complexity of this phenomenon, delimited around concerns such as aging, and privileging place to the exclusion of subjectivities (for an overview of this discussion see Benson and O'Reilly 2009). The development of the concept of lifestyle migration, primarily identified through rich ethnographic research (see for example Hoey 2005, 2006; Knowles and Harper 2009), sought to “examine both the similarities and differences within this growing trend as well as to begin to draw attention to its location in wider structural and historical forces and its local and global impacts” (Benson and O'Reilly 2009), with lifestyle migration defined “as a spatial mobility of relatively affluent individuals of all ages, moving either part-time or full-time to places that are meaningful because, for various reasons, they offer the potential of a better quality of life” (ibid).

The contributions to this thematic section emerged from discussions taking place at the latest meeting of scholars working on lifestyle migration, a workshop entitled “The Future of Lifestyle Migration Research”, that took place October 2014 at Goldsmiths, University of London. This event provided opportunities to reflect on the state of the art in this field of research, for people to share and discuss new empirical data, develop new research synergies between different scholars from around the globe, but also to consider the possible lacunae in this field of research and how it might develop as a field in the future. The discussions were attentive not only to the migrants themselves, but broadened to consider the wider structural contexts that facilitate migration and, in turn, the impact of such migration on both migrant lives and the destination. Crucially, the discussions highlighted the social and political circumstances of lifestyle migration for people and places. This is a theme that is particularly prominent in the papers in this section. Discussions also highlighted how the intersections of culture

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and migration that lifestyle migration inherently observes offer a specific contribution to wider studies of migration.

The six contributions to this thematic section build on these discussions, reflecting on new directions—theoretically, conceptually, and methodologically—in which the field might progress, but also considering bringing other fields of research, particularly their approaches to understanding social transformation, into discussions about lifestyle migration, how this structured within particular contexts, but also how in-migration of the relatively affluent might impact on destinations and populations. In this way, they raise important questions about the future of the field and its intersections with and value for other areas of research.

As the guest editors of this thematic section, we would like to thank everyone involved in the process: the authors of the articles, reviewers and editors, as well as the coordinators of the *Lifestyle Migration Hub*, of which most authors are members and from which the initial idea for the event in London came.