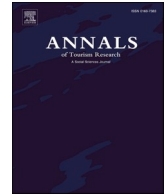




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## Annals of Tourism Research

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Full length article

A review of research into lifestyle mobilities and digital nomadism<sup>☆</sup>Scott Cohen<sup>a,b,c,\*</sup>, Olga Hannonen<sup>d</sup><sup>a</sup> Research Centre in Tourism, Sustainability and Well-being (CinTurs), Universidade do Algarve, Portugal<sup>b</sup> Canadian University Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates<sup>c</sup> School of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa<sup>d</sup> Business School, University of Eastern Finland, Finland

## ARTICLE INFO

Handling Editor: Scott McCabe

## Keywords:

Digital nomadism  
Infrastructure  
Geopolitics  
Geoarbitrage  
Gentrification  
Research agenda

## ABSTRACT

Lifestyle mobilities refers to ways of life oriented around ongoing geographic mobility. This article first provides a history of lifestyle mobilities and how it is analytically distinct. We turn to the state-of-the-art in lifestyle mobilities research through a focus on digital nomadism. Our emphasis is on lifestyle mobilities' relevance for tourism, its infrastructure and politicisation – via geopolitics, geoarbitrage and gentrification, and the need for greater research diversity. We map a future research agenda centred on tensions of transitioning out, precarity and emplacement. The article also launches the *Annals of Tourism Research* Curated Collection on lifestyle mobilities. The Collection contains all past articles published in *Annals of Tourism Research* on the topic, and continues to grow as new articles are added.

## Introduction

A decade ago lifestyle mobilities emerged as a theoretical approach for understanding lifestyles that blur the borders of tourism, work and migration (c.f. Cohen, Duncan, & Thulemark, 2015). Theorisation of lifestyle mobilities was inspired by the broader mobilities turn in the social sciences (Hannam et al., 2006). The mobilities turn offered a post-disciplinary approach that moved social science research from a focus on the sedentary to concern for “the diverse mobilities of peoples, objects, images, information and wastes” (Urry, 2000, p. 185). Proponents of the mobilities turn sought to recast the social sciences and provide greater theoretical and methodological purchase on urgent and complex contemporary issues (Sheller & Urry, 2016).

The mobilities turn offered a stark contrast to predominant understandings of tourism, which in the early 2000s remained modernist, siloed and predicated on binaries. Williams and Hall (2000, p. 20) hence argued that the “grey zone of the complex forms of mobility which lie on a continuum between permanent migration and tourism” had been neglected. The mobilities turn urged tourism research to consider tourism's interrelations with other mobility flows, such as migration, diasporas and transnationalism (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). In doing so, tourism was drawn from the margins to “the centre of social and cultural life” (Hannam, Butler, & Paris, 2014, p. 172).

Mobilities thinking tends towards a post-structural ontology, which rejects binaries (Merriman, 2023). It was this rejection of

<sup>☆</sup> Launching the Annals of Tourism Research Curated Collection on Lifestyle Mobilities

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2025.104067>

Received 14 July 2025; Received in revised form 10 November 2025; Accepted 11 November 2025

Available online 19 November 2025

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binaries that upended many comfortable divisions in tourism knowledge, such as home/away, host/guest and work/leisure (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). Post-binary thinking has allowed for a wider grasp of the fluidity between tourism, travel, leisure, work and migration.

In using the term ‘lifestyle’, we do not seek here to rehearse the evolution of the concept, as advanced by thinkers such as Adler (1964), Weber (1978), Bourdieu (1984) and Giddens (1991). Instead we depart from a view of lifestyle as a “relatively stable pattern of organising everyday life...taking [into] account available resources” (Bögenhold, 2001, p. 833). It is the blurring of tourism within lifestyles of *sustained* corporeal mobility – sitting between temporary mobility and permanent migration – that is the focus of this *Annals of Tourism Research* Curated Collection on lifestyle mobilities. Ongoing and voluntary geographic (i.e. corporeal, embodied) mobility has become central to many privileged lifestyles (Cohen et al., 2015). Some example phenomena that can be considered within a lifestyle mobilities framing include: Vanlife, long-term ocean cruising, grey nomadism, world schooling, lifestyle travel, lifestyle climbing, global nomadism and digital nomadism. These terms will be discussed in more detail in the next section, though it is important to note now that these categories are not always mutually exclusive – e.g. Vanlife is often combined with digital nomad work.

While the scope of forms of lifestyle mobility are broad, adherents of these lifestyles are often overlooked as tourists, residents or migrants. Transient populations tend not to be captured by censuses and often the public and industry have a narrow view of who ‘counts’ as a tourist. The people who undertake these lifestyles may strategize to be seen as a resident, ‘expat’ or tourist to derive benefits in places. Lifestyle mobilities thus deserve attention: at a theoretical level they can for instance be examples par excellence of a collapse in host/guest and production/consumption divides, contributing to and illustrating the continuing dedifferentiation of previously largely distinct domains of social life (Edensor, 2007; Uriely, 2005). At a practical level, lifestyle mobilities can for example impact destinations: one need only consider the impact of digital nomads on housing inflation in Lisbon to recognise real-world relevance.

This Curated Collection contains past articles published in *Annals of Tourism Research* that can be fruitfully viewed through a lifestyle mobilities lens and continues to grow as new articles are added. The present article launches this collection and is structured chronologically by past, present and future – as such, we aim to (1) provide an historical perspective on past research on lifestyle mobilities; (2) assess the current state-of-the-art in the field with a particular emphasis on the meteoric and recent rise of one form of lifestyle mobility – digital nomadism; and (3) map a future research agenda for the study of lifestyle mobilities. We believe this Curated Collection, focused on a topic that sits at the intersections of multiple fields of study, will at a minimum be of potential interest to scholars of tourism, mobilities, migration, human geography, sociology and social anthropology; it thus reflects the post-disciplinary spirit that is central to mobilities research.

## Historical lifestyle mobilities

In his influential paper on the politics of mobility, Cresswell (2010), p.28 alleged that much mobilities research has a “love of the new about it”, often showing a lack of awareness of “the mobilities of the past”. Forms of lifestyle mobility undoubtedly have a varied history, yet a commonality is their rootedness in shifts in self-identities in late modernity (Giddens, 1991). This is perhaps best summarised by Featherstone (2007), who explains that in the post-Fordist era, characterised by a transition from mass to specialised production, self-identities became less based on production (i.e. work) and instead increasingly fashioned around consumption practices. Lifestyles, ever more constructed out of consumption choices, became a means of expressing self-identity for those with the resources to do so. Assemblages of for instance clothing, appearances, music, activities, experiences, mobility and/or other commodified consumption practices were thus woven and designed together into lifestyles (Featherstone, 2007).

An active process of lifestyle construction became linked to mobility – offering the promise of social mobility, perceived personal transformation and the freedom and capacity to harness physical mobility in search of employment, leisure or new connections (Featherstone, 2007). Early views on lifestyles and mobility emerged in the Global North, endowing associated knowledge with Western-centrism. Among lifestyles where tourism mobilities play a prominent role, some have a relatively long post-World War II history, such as long-term ocean cruising (Macbeth, 1992), extended caravanning/campervanning (Jobs, 1984; Patterson, Pegg, & Litster, 2011) or the seasonal lifestyle sport mobilities of skilled snow sport workers or recreational surfers who seek ‘endless winters’ or summers respectively (e.g. Thorpe, 2017).

While such lifestyles have been fruitfully explained in past literature as alternative, as constituting a sub-culture (Macbeth, 1992) or as representing neotribes (Maffesoli, 1996), we argue that approaching these phenomena through a lens of lifestyle mobilities provides a promising post-structural approach to understanding how ways of life oriented around geographic mobility have important implications for adherents’ senses of identity, belonging and home. These themes are salient for readers of *Annals of Tourism Research*, which continues to give voice to studies, for example, of self-identity construction (Sweeney & Helkkula, 2025, this collection; Zhang & Xiao, 2021), the intertwinement of moorings and dwelling (Light & Brown, 2020) and related home/away debates (Leposa, 2018).

Lifestyle mobility’s early roots in popular culture are found partly in literary fiction, which reflected emerging countercultural values. “On the Road”, a novel by Jack Kerouac published in 1957, was one of the earliest romanticised cultural expressions of how freedom, opportunity and escape can be pursued through travel. It introduced a countercultural lifestyle associated with the Beat Generation – a literary movement that rejected conventional values and celebrated non-conformity, spontaneity and spiritual exploration. Sal Paradise, the novel’s narrator, reflects on the monotony of the settled life of his peers: “I thought of all of my friends from one end of the country to the other and how they were really all in the same vast backyard doing something so frantic and rushing-about” (Kerouac, 1957, p. 13) – a monotony he is eager to escape. The characters who are on the road embody various utopian mobile lifestyles that later matured into distinct mobility patterns and travel modes. One of the travellers, Gene, a ‘Mississippi boy’, keeps “crossing and recrossing the country every year, south in the winter and north in the summer, and only because he had no place he

could stay in without getting tired of it and because there was nowhere to go but everywhere, keep rolling under the stars...” (Kerouac, 1957, p. 25). Gene exemplifies a blend of what we might now recognise as seasonal migration and global nomadism.

Lifestyles constructed around mobility are historically linked to nomadism. Nomadism has long been romanticised as an ideal form of travel through which a nomad can perceive “liberation from the constraints of modern society” (Richards & Wilson, 2004, p. 5). The starting point for academic discussions of nomadism oriented around ongoing leisure travel was Cohen’s (1973) exposition of the ‘drifter’. Linked to 1960s counterculture, drifters were conceived as nomads of affluence, or young middle-class adults on a prolonged break from responsibility. While the drifter concept played an important role in the development and commodification of contemporary backpacker tourism, the linking of travel lifestyles to nomadism persisted in the literature. Neologisms such as global nomads (Kannisto, 2016) and neonomadism (D’Andrea, 2007) emerged as expressions for sustained mobile lifestyles.

Gaining analytical purchase

By mapping temporary mobilities across space and time, Hall (2005) helped clarify the interrelations between tourism and extended forms of temporary mobility, such as seasonal travel and extended working holidays. However the focus remained on individual trips, which are episodic. A conceptual basis for understanding how the episodic nature of tourism can tip into a ‘way of life’ was provided by Cohen (2011), which spotlighted the concept of lifestyle in tourism research. Contemporary drifters, or individuals who backpack for years on end, were conceptualised as ‘lifestyle travellers’ (ibid).

Lifestyle travellers are emblematic of the grey zone between tourism, work and migration. Shortly after lifestyle travel’s entry into the tourism vernacular, Duncan, Cohen, and Thulemark’s (2013) edited book on *Lifestyle Mobilities* offered a treatise comparing lifestyle mobility to temporary mobility and permanent migration, defining lifestyle mobility as ongoing semi-permanent moves of

**Table 1**  
Comparison of Lifestyle Mobility to Temporary Mobility and Permanent Migration (Source: Duncan et al., 2013).

	Temporary Mobility	Lifestyle Mobility	Permanent Migration
<b>Definition</b>			
	Non-permanent move of varying duration	Ongoing semi-permanent moves of varying durations	Permanent change of usual residence
<b>Key Concepts</b>			
<b>Usual residence</b>	Less centrality	Multiple moorings	Integral concept
<b>Return</b>	May involve a return ‘home’	May involve a return (to) ‘home(s)’	No intention to return
<b>Belonging</b>	Generally fixed to one location	Not fixed to any one (or more) location	Fixed to one or two locations
<b>Key Dimensions</b>			
<b>Duration</b>	Varying duration of stay	Varying durations of stay	Lasting relocation
<b>Frequency</b>	Generally a repetitive event	Multi-transitional and ongoing	Single transition
<b>Seasonality</b>	Large seasonal variation	Some seasonal variation	Minor seasonal variation
<b>Temporality</b>	Occurs at a specific point during the life-course	Ongoing throughout the life-course	Occurs at a specific point during the life-course; a one-off event

varying durations (Table 1).

A persistent challenge within lifestyle mobilities research has been sustaining its analytical distinction from related concepts, the most relevant being lifestyle migration (c.f. Benson & O'Reilly, 2009). This is slightly ironic given a key strength of a lifestyle mobilities approach is its critique of discrete analytical categories and hence embrace of porosity between conventional concepts. Nonetheless, given our observation that lifestyle mobilities and lifestyle migration have often been used as interchangeable terms in the literature, it seems necessary to distinguish them again here. Both concepts share a normative basis in that geographic mobility is at least partly motivated by collective imaginations of a 'better' way of life. In its earliest elaboration, lifestyle mobilities was differentiated from lifestyle migration as the former is "generally more fluid, ongoing and multitransitional", while lifestyle migration is "typically associated with a one-off lifestyle-led transition" (Cohen et al., 2015, p.160–161). Or as Green (2020) nicely summarises, lifestyle migration normally involves studying national subjects (e.g. 'the' British) in national spaces (e.g. Spain), i.e. an A to B migration.

Another useful perspective is offered by Bednorz (2024, this collection), which uses a space-time lens to contrast tourism, lifestyle mobility and lifestyle migration. Tourism is viewed as mobility from and back to a 'homebase', lifestyle mobility is characterised by 'moving on rather than back' and lifestyle migration is seen as a 'relocation'. This perspective, which Bednorz (2024) uses to locate digital nomadism within lifestyle mobilities, suggests that greater location independence is a key distinction of lifestyle mobility from lifestyle migration.

### Advancing the field

Studies on lifestyle mobilities have been growing. To map the growth of research and disciplinary interest in the phenomenon, we performed a bibliometric analysis of cross-references for the seminal paper on lifestyle mobilities: Cohen et al. (2015) "Lifestyle mobilities: The crossroads of travel, leisure and migration" – that has firmly established the concept in academic discourse. Additionally, we conducted a bibliometric analysis of keywords: "lifestyle mobility" and "lifestyle mobilities" for the period of 2015–2025 in Google Scholar. The timeframe for both searches was limited to October 2025. The search criteria included scientific articles, book chapters and books written in English. The search result for cross-references generated 566 articles, and after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria (exclusion = no access, no relevance, language other than English, or other type of publication than article/book chapter/book), 236 sources were included in the review. The keyword search generated 1180 sources for "lifestyle mobility" and 1320 sources for "lifestyle mobilities". After applying the same exclusion criteria and excluding overlaps with the cross-reference search, an additional 146 sources were included.

Fig. 1 demonstrates the publications per year, in which the overlaps with the cross-reference search are excluded from the keyword search results. The findings show that there have been 382 publications on lifestyle mobilities in the 10-year period with an overall year-on-year growth trend.

The disciplinary distribution of the publications has been dominated by the fields of tourism, mobilities and geography (see Fig. 2). Though it is notable that more than 40 % of the publications have been in disciplines outside these areas, including 28 publications in migration studies, which suggests that lifestyle mobilities has had strong inter-disciplinary appeal.

Contributions over the last decade have deepened the conceptual and empirical basis of lifestyle mobilities. For instance, Rickly (2016) connected transient lifestyle rock climbers to Cresswell's (2010) mesotheoretical politics of mobility framework and Thorpe (2017) brought the sport migration literature into dialogue with lifestyle mobilities through the lens of the seasonal migrations of snow sport workers. Choi, Iaquinto, and Wong (2020) explored how sojourners working in Macau, as neither workers nor tourists themselves, negotiate 'home' and blur work with leisure tourism.

Lifestyle mobility scholarship's predominant focus on individuals was disrupted by Mancinelli's (2018) study of 'location-independent families', a theme expanded upon through the extreme notion of 'worldschooling'. Molz (2021) provides a comprehensive account of family life on the move through worldschooling, where education and parenting are embedded in an ongoing travel lifestyle. The individualistic focus in lifestyle mobilities research was furthermore challenged by Green (2020, p. 256):

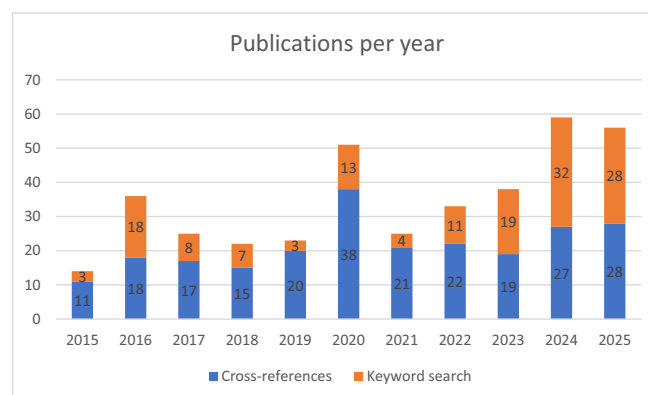


Fig. 1. Publications on lifestyle mobilities per year.

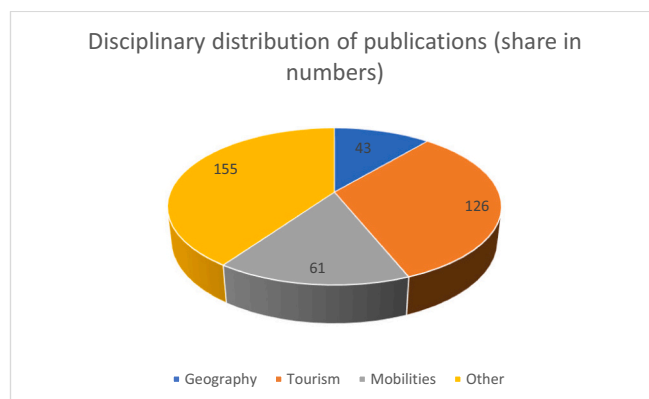


Fig. 2. Distribution of publications on lifestyle mobilities by discipline.

“the concept of lifestyle mobilities is built around an underlying assumption that mobility practices, and their role in shaping identity and attachments to place, are driven by the moving subjects at the definitional heart...” denying “the extent to which life and mobility histories are relationally shaped by those that tend or have to stay in place...travel as much as we do...or those we have left behind”.

This comment was made in the context of Green’s (ibid) examination of the mobility practices and histories of later-life foreigners residing in Bali, which also draws attention to the relevance of the life course. Early lifestyle mobilities literature was skewed towards analyses of younger people, despite clear overlaps with previous work on the long-term travels of older people (c.f. White & White, 2004). Older long-term tourists have been coined ‘grey nomads’, such as in Patterson et al.’s (2011) study of older people’s extended travels around Australia in recreational vehicles. Sweeney and Helkkula (2025, this collection) use grey nomadism to defy negative ageing stereotypes and show the potential value of balancing dwelling with mobility for wellbeing in retirement.

For those with the resources to engage in lifestyle mobility, like for the rest of the world, travel was disrupted by restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Impacts of the pandemic on lifestyle mobility ranged from closed ports trapping some long-term ocean cruisers afloat, global nomads with powerful passports waiting out the pandemic in tourism destinations, only to settle there as migrants themselves, to the normalisation of location-independent working in some sectors. Now is therefore a timely opportunity to reflect on the changing nature and societal implications of forms of lifestyle mobility as lifestyles characterised by sustained corporeal mobility are once again ‘on the move’.

## Into the present

### *Digital nomadism as lifestyle mobility*

One of the most notable actions by some destinations in the direct aftermath of the pandemic was the launching of digital nomad visas in an attempt to reignite tourism. Digital nomadism was thus sought as a substitute for mass tourism. Facilitated by the broader digital transformation of societies and the Covid-induced rise of location-independent working, digital nomadism has shot into prominence post-pandemic as arguably the most salient and visible form of contemporary lifestyle mobility (Hannonen, 2020). Woldoff and Litchfield (2021) define digital nomads as knowledge workers who seek a freer lifestyle, enabled by technology that allows remote work while travelling far and wide.

Work, as an essential component of a digital nomadic lifestyle, has been gaining increasing research attention (Hannonen, 2020). Miao, Yang, Im, and Zhang (2024, this collection) view digital nomadism as an exemplar of a wider trend of ‘flexwork-flextravel’. This perspective reveals how some people leverage flexible working arrangements so that work/productivity and travel/vacation meld together in a continuous state of intertwinement.

This intertwinement reflects a post-structural blurring that is productively captured by the distinctive lens of lifestyle mobilities, i.e. the fusion of consumption and production through mobility. Featherstone’s (2007) description of the post-Fordist shift to fashioning self-identities from lifestyle consumption practices has reached a new level of complexity, especially in the case of digital nomadism. Molz (2021) introduces the concept of ‘lifestyle as livelihood’ to explain this amalgamation of production and consumption in digital nomad lifestyles. These lifestyles depend on working online, yet often that work involves content creation that reports on the lifestyle itself or teaches other aspiring digital nomads how to live that lifestyle (ibid). The blurring of economic activities of production and consumption has emerged as a key aspect of some lifestyle mobilities, which was not captured in its earliest conceptualisation (Table 1; see also Cook & Hannonen, 2025, this collection). Digital nomads themselves are active online actors, who often capitalise on their personal brands (Mancinelli, 2020). As lifestyle promoters they act as inspirators, teachers, community managers and/or influencers (Bonneau, Aroles, & Estagnasié, 2023).

It has been argued that digital nomadic work “has distinct temporal, material and performative dimensions” due to its mobile nature (Toivanen, 2025a, n.p.). In such a manner, meanings and spatial configurations of digital nomadic work differ from traditional

nine-to-five office-based work. Studies show that digital nomadic work requires self-discipline and metawork (the planning of actual work) as well as spatial-temporal arrangements, availability and professionalism (Aroles, Bonneau, & Bhankaraully, 2023; Cook, 2020; Toivanen, 2025a). Rainoldi, Ladkin, and Buhalis (2025, this collection) delve into the ways digital nomads integrate and differentiate work and leisure activities through a set of specific work-leisure management practices. Accordingly, they define five broader management practices – temporal, spatial, material, human and social, which point to “the need to reevaluate tourism theories to account for the increasingly fluid and interconnected nature of work and leisure” (ibid, p. 9). An important distinction is between company-employed and freelancer/contractor nomads, whose work and travel practices may be shaped by differing geographical and time constraints (Toivanen, 2025a). There is hence a mounting argument that digital nomadic work deserves further analysis in its own right.

While there is little doubt that the internal complexities of digital nomadism require attention, there are also analytical advantages in considering digital nomadism as a form of work-related lifestyle mobility (Hannonen, 2022; Mancinelli, 2020; Mancinelli & Molz, 2024; Toivanen, 2025b). We view digital nomadism as a multi-faceted mobility mode that extends the conceptual and empirical boundaries of lifestyle mobilities research. To this end, Hannonen (2022) critiques the original conceptualisation of lifestyle mobilities (see Table 1) in light of digital nomadism. She argues that life course plays an important role in the question of an eventual return to ‘home’ and that structural factors have been insufficiently addressed, including issues of power geometries, inequalities of mobility and mobility regimes that are inherent in the production of digital nomadism.

The increasing importance of infrastructure in shaping mobility patterns points to the main precondition for the rise of digital nomadism, namely, technologization. Makimoto and Manners (1997), authors of the first “Digital Nomad” book, anticipated how digital technology would reshape work, identity, and mobility – predicting the rise of digital nomadism well before it became a global phenomenon. According to them, mobile computing and mobile communication tools would redefine both work and location, fostering the development of modern nomadism: “technology can provide people with the same degree of contact, communication and control as they have at their offices or homes” (Makimoto & Manners, 1997, p. 72). This shift, they argued, would trigger broader cultural and economic transformations, making some businesses and employers adapt to a mobile and location independent workforce. Little did Makimoto and Manners (ibid) anticipate the speed at which certain professions would be forced to digitalise in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite its ideals of location independence, digital nomadism, like other forms of lifestyle mobility, is tied to collective imaginations that a place, and its branding, can provide a more fulfilling or ‘better’ way of life. Media and advertising have played a significant role in shaping consumption patterns and lifestyle imagery (Featherstone, 2007). In a similar vein, digital nomadism has become a focal point in business and lifestyle magazines, contributing to the construction of aspirational images around constant travel and work on the move (Hannonen, 2020). Presently, many destinations brand themselves as digital nomad-friendly (Hannonen, Quintana, & Lehto, 2023). Bulgaria’s municipality of Belia serves as an example here: in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism, it officially renamed a street in the Semkovo ski resort as “Nomad Place” to enhance the area’s visibility as a nomad hub (Desku, 2024).

Social media, in particular, has been at the forefront of popularising and romanticising digital nomad lifestyles. Social media has evolved beyond a mere communication platform to become a workspace and promotional tool, portraying digital nomads as successful mobile professionals (Bonneau et al., 2023). These mediated representations not only influence public perceptions but also reinforce ideals of mobility and autonomy, while shaping professional identities associated with digital nomadism. As Cook and Hannonen (2025, this collection) demonstrate, social media is at the forefront of gazing at destinations, forming a distinct ‘digital nomad gaze’ that is saturated with productivity and work-friendly infrastructure ‘with an exotic local as a background’. Digital nomads’ online representations have been noted to reproduce ‘staged’ images, capturing other like-minded lifestyle travellers rather than local community voices, raising questions of staged authenticity (Miguel, Lutz, Majetić, & Perez-Vega, 2023; Thompson, 2019; Willment, 2020).

The visibility of mobile lifestyles are increasingly amplified by social media, where for instance Instagram posts have played a considerable role in the popularisation of full-time ‘Vanlife’, a ‘life on the road’ that can sit at the nexus of digital nomadism and RVing/camping (Gretzel & Hardy, 2019). Vanlife has been defined more widely as “individuals travelling (solo or with others) [and sleeping in] in a rented, borrowed, or owned self-propelled van or camper with limited sanitary equipment and amenities” (Muhs, Agapito, & Nobre, 2024, p.2380). Media such as the 2020 film *Nomadland*, which won Best Picture at the 93rd Academy Awards for its portrayal of a widow who is compelled to travel around the United States living full-time in her van, have drawn further societal attention to the flows and turbulence of such lifestyles oriented around mobility. *Nomadland* shows that the decision to live in a van can be a mixture of economic necessity and freedom of choice.

Although popular media depicting countercultural lifestyles arose from the sociocultural landscape of 1950s America, the desire for fluid, less location-dependent lifestyles has remained and evolved. Today, decades since “On the Road” (Kerouac, 1957) was published, diverse forms of nomadism have emerged. These include monikers such as global and neonomads, budget-conscious backpackers, technologically savvy flashpackers and digital nomads (Hannonen, 2020). A common feature of these lifestyles is a degree of search and engagement in countercultural values through patterns of mobility. However, they differ in their duration and rhythms of movement (see Table 1), online/virtual connectivity, employment relationships and the nature of work in travel (location independence/dependence) (ibid). While presently these lifestyles may co-exist independently, their boundaries are flexible, even blurring, allowing the transition from one mode to another.

Cook and Hannonen (2025, this collection) use the example of Chiang Mai to illustrate how the city has undergone successive waves of lifestyle travellers over time. Initially known as a backpackers’ mecca as a part of the Banana Pancake Trail, Chiang Mai later attracted flashpackers and eventually emerged as the ‘digital nomad capital of the world’. This progression highlights how mobile lifestyles have evolved and matured in response to social, technological and travel-related developments. Backpackers often followed

distinctive trails, seeking out destinations with affordable infrastructure and services tailored to their needs (Cohen, 2011; see also Cook & Hannonen, this collection; Jiwassiddi et al., 2024). A similar pattern can be observed among digital nomads, who are also drawn to tourism destinations with well-developed infrastructure, stable bandwidth, coworking spaces and affordable accommodation. Toivanen (2023) argues that digital nomadism has evolved beyond being an alternative or counter-cultural lifestyle, as it has adapted to the modern nation-state system at the level of everyday practices.

Digital nomadism has therefore been commodified (Aroles, Granter, & de Vaujany, 2020; Toivanen, 2023) to the extent that the phenomenon can now be viewed as a mainstream segment of the tourism and hospitality industries. Many major hotel chains now have coworking/remote work spaces, and “there is an ever-increasing number of services, infrastructures and events tailored to digital nomads” (Hannonen et al., 2023; Jiwassiddi et al., 2024; Toivanen, 2023, p.71).

But perhaps the most telling structural factor shaping digital nomadism’s mainstreaming and formalisation has been the rise of digital nomad visas (Bednorz, 2024; Koskela & Beckers, 2024; KC & Triandafyllidou, 2025; Sánchez-Vergara, Orel, & Capdevila, 2023; Mancinelli & Molz, 2024). Bednorz’s (2024, this collection) comprehensive analysis of government policies targeting digital nomads provides an important supply-side perspective that had been largely overlooked in the digital nomad literature, and in lifestyle mobilities literature more widely. His work shows how post-Covid flexible working patterns can be leveraged by destinations to diversify tourism offerings and attract new segments. Other research has revealed policy rationales and strategies behind digital nomad visas that serve diverse economic and societal goals; thus, in addition to tourism diversification they include wealth accumulation, talent acquisition, and immigration rationales (KC & Triandafyllidou, 2025; Koskela & Beckers, 2024). Yet question marks remain as to what extent digital nomad visas are actually used by digital nomads. Initial evidence suggests low adoption rates due to governments failing to understand the diverse spectrum of remote working mobilities, and the continued use of tourist visas by most digital nomads (c.f. Koskela & Szabo, 2024). Digital nomad visas are one facet of how lifestyle mobilities are increasingly governed and drawn into the political realm.

### *Politicising lifestyle mobilities*

As with other forms of lifestyle mobility, the literature on digital nomadism suffers from an over-emphasis on the adherents’ practices and meanings attached to these lifestyles. As Korpela (2020, p.3353) argues – “more attention has been paid to the individual agency of mobile subjects than to the empirical realities and structures within which those people act”. Above we have pointed to the importance of moving analytical lenses beyond individuals, such as to wider family units, friends and family left behind and to the structural factors shaping forms of lifestyle mobility. A crucial aspect of addressing structural elements is consideration of the broader impacts of lifestyle mobilities on destinations and communities. To do so requires reflection on the ways in which lifestyle mobilities are politicised. We do so here by reflecting on ‘3Gs’ we identify as shaping, or partly shaped by, lifestyle mobilities: *geopolitics*, *geo-arbitrage* and *gentrification*.

The politicisation of lifestyle mobilities is not entirely new, as the ‘counter’ in countercultural values has always connoted resistance. Just as some young Westerners in the 1960s mobilised anti-war sentiment by following the so-called overland ‘Hippie Trail’ from Europe to Nepal or India, *geopolitics* has driven some Russian digital nomads, who sought to escape inscription and/or complicity in the Russian-Ukrainian War (Baranova & Podolsky, 2023). The extent to which political conflicts and polarisation may be imbricated with a rise in outbound international lifestyle mobilities, and the complex intertwining of these mobilities with migration decisions, remains an open question. Such mobility decisions simultaneously reflect the power and freedom to leave one’s country and that some lifestyle mobilities are as at least partly ‘compelled’.

Lifestyle mobilities must be viewed as tied to processes of (de)globalisation and environmental crisis. While the climate crisis may be a push factor, engendering new patterns of mobility and dwelling, it is equally important to consider how the affluence associated with most forms of lifestyle mobility enable carbon-intensive lifestyles that raise questions of mobility justice (Sheller, 2018). Muhs et al. (2024) view phenomena such as digital nomadism, lifestyle travel and Vanlife as constituting hypermobile lifestyles. The connections between hypermobility and climate change, with many hypermobile lifestyles enabled by carbon-intensive aviation, are well established in the literature (Cohen & Kantebacher, 2020).

*Geoarbitrage*, or geographic arbitrage, is a key concept to understanding how lifestyle mobilities can be viewed as problematic in terms of access, fairness and justice. In its simplest sense, geoarbitrage involves moving to live in another place, i.e. from the Global North to the Global South, to take advantage of a lower cost of living. Hayes (2014) developed the concept of geographic arbitrage as a way to reveal the mobility tactics used by privileged individuals to leverage historical structural inequalities between geographic areas. While Hayes (ibid) focused on North American lifestyle migrants, who are often retirees, his argument that economic factors play an underappreciated role in lifestyle migration decisions seems to also have resonance for lifestyle mobilities. Groups of Chinese urban seniors, by way of example, have been shown to move through multiple long-stays in rural tourism destinations as a way of making their pensions go farther (Huang & Cohen, 2024).

When multiple nation-states are involved, geoarbitrage often goes beyond simply leveraging geographic cost-of-living disparities. Mancinelli and Molz (2024, p.195) use the term ‘border artistry’ to describe the adaptive techniques digital nomads use to “fuel their transnational agency”. One tactic outlined to ‘skirt the law’ is to obtain multiple strong passports, whether by marriage, ancestry or residency, which enable visa-free stays and employment. Further forms of geoarbitrage include earning a strong salary working for a company in the Global North, often while living in the Global South, and minimising or sidestepping exposure to tax obligations through strategic mobility (Mancinelli & Molz, 2024). This may include the use of geographic mobility to temporarily reside under favourable tax regimes for new residents, often relying on lenient taxation of passive income. These ‘life hacks’, besides normally only being available to individuals from the Global North, point to a shift in lifestyle mobilities from romanticisation to extractivism. At

least for much digital nomadism, which shares a porous border with the problematic notion of the ‘digital expat’ (Bednorz, 2024), the lifestyle has increasingly become about maximising affluence, overcoming vulnerability and precarity at work and extracting as much as possible from host nations, which are viewed through the one-sided optic of ‘destination’.

While geoarbitrage is often perceived primarily as an economic approach, Cojocaru and Gaspar, forthcoming argue that it also serves as a lifestyle strategy – a way for individuals to position themselves in alignment with their personal goals, economic interests or preferred way of life. Indeed, although digital nomads move between economically divergent regions, they do not always achieve financial gains. On the contrary, many engage in downshifting and may experience underemployment (Hannonen, 2020; Thompson, 2018).

Geoarbitrage is not without its consequences, as it plays an important role in processes of *gentrification* and the latter’s concomitant negative impacts on host communities. Gentrification can be understood as “a generalised middle-class restructuring of space, encompassing the entire transformation from low-status neighbourhoods to upper-middle-class playgrounds” (Shaw, 2008, p.1698). While there are arguments that gentrification is not all bad, in that it may be construed as revitalisation, there is a broad consensus that the displacement or exclusion of residents is a serious harm (Kohn, 2013).

Residing internationally as a digital nomad or long-stay tourist puts pressure on the rental sector, with amplified demand for rentals that offer a middle-ground between short- and long-term (Sciuva, 2025). These medium-term rentals, along with demand for second homes, reduce the housing stock available to existing residents, thereby contributing to rising prices and exacerbating housing scarcity. Thus to some extent, the housing geoarbitrage associated with lifestyle mobilities can be two-fold: escaping an overheated housing market in their last ‘home’, only to contribute to overheating the market in another country (c.f. Cocola-Grant & Gago, 2021).

The negative effects of gentrification from lifestyle mobilities are not limited to housing. Gentrification’s “defining feature is conspicuous cultural consumption”, hence it also can include the cafes, restaurants, bars, shops and art galleries of retail and commercial precincts (Shaw, 2008, p. 1698). The popularity of digital nomadism has led to an infrastructure of coworking and hospitality spaces that are changing urban landscapes while blurring leisure/work and consumption/production. Often these businesses are established by migrants, or lifestyle-driven ‘returnees’ (Kilinc, Williams, & Hanna, 2022), with hybridised cafes, coworking spaces, accommodation, restaurants and shops providing places for social connection between digital nomads and other affluent mobile subjects. These spaces have been viewed as ‘mobility infrastructures’ for their roles in “sustaining mobile forms of life” (Jung & Buhr, 2022, p.120). While Jung and Buhr (ibid) show how some cafes in Lisbon have become spaces of convergence for digital nomads, ‘expats’, tourists and international students, Cook and Hannonen (2025, this collection) draw our attention to how entire streets and areas are undergoing gentrification largely due to the creation of digital nomad (mobility) infrastructure.

With these infrastructure changes comes rising prices that may exclude less affluent working-class residents. Not only do rent and property values inflate; a key indicator of gentrification in some cities is the opening of newer more expensive specialty coffee shops (Bidstrup, 2022), where cafes may for instance serve flat whites and Americanos as opposed to traditional local coffees, at prices too expensive for previous clientele (c.f. Woldoff & Litchfield, 2021). While there is an emerging academic discussion around digital nomads’ roles in gentrification (e.g. Hannonen, 2024; Sciuva, 2025), the extent to which other forms of lifestyle mobility are implicated in gentrification remains largely ignored. For instance, long-term ocean cruising appears implicated in the gentrification of some marinas and working waterfront areas.

A political outcome of these processes of geoarbitrage and gentrification attached to practices of lifestyle mobilities is that, at least for digital nomads, they are being drawn into debates relating to overcrowding, strain on local services, overtourism and ‘excessive’ migration. For instance in Portugal, a leading ‘destination’ for digital nomads, the higher salaries of most digital nomads are alleged to have ‘pushed up prices’, excluding local Portuguese, whose salaries are typically threefold less (Askew, 2023). Yet, as these remote working mobilities remain small-scale compared to mass tourism and permanent migration, social and political backlash against lifestyle mobilities remains nascent. Deconcentrating digital nomads from enclavic urban areas may be one solution – already there are grassroots initiatives in Italy to try to revitalise regions with population decline due to youth outmigration by attracting digital nomads (Nomadland, 2023).

Questions of justice in lifestyle mobilities extend past geopolitics, geoarbitrage and gentrification. The wider literature on gentrification has moved beyond the physical displacement of working-class residents to also consider its racial and colonial dimensions (c.f. Kent-Stoll, 2020). There remains however a largely unspoken of ‘whiteness’ to much lifestyle mobilities research, accompanied by a relative neglect of its gendered dimensions.

### *Diversifying the field*

As it arose out of post-Fordism, lifestyle consumption in its initial manifestations was Western-centric, endowed with occidental baggage. Likewise, lifestyle mobilities research has rarely addressed the structural characteristics of its mobile subjects, with it seemingly implicit that they are most often white, male, abled and from the affluent Global North. Much of the literature on digital nomadism in particular seems to further assume nomads are mostly solitary travellers, often from the younger generational cohorts of Millennials and Gen Z who are digital natives and/or prioritise work-life balance (Hannonen, 2024; Mancinelli & Molz, 2024). Empirical evidence shows that increasingly diverse demographic groups started practicing a digital nomad lifestyle, including families with children, corporate professionals and traditional office employees or so-called ‘salaried nomads’ (Cook, 2023; Hannonen et al., 2023).

Nonetheless, these implicit structural biases, even if unspoken, leave gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age and disability mostly neglected in relation to access to lifestyle mobilities and its embedded power relations. There are two notable exceptions to this. The first is Khoo, Thakur, Yang, Pung, and Ting’s (2025) analysis of solo female Vanlifers, which provides a dedicated

study of gendered dimensions. The second is [Linao, Heimtun, and Morgan's \(2024\)](#), this collection) study of Asian female nomads, which offers a much-needed intersectional understanding of the power dynamics of gender and race in shaping nomads' lived experiences.

These two examples aside, the main source of diversity in lifestyle mobilities research has come from decentring its European and Anglo-American centrism. Yet this decentring has only been partial, in that it has been almost entirely focused on the lifestyle mobilities of mobile subjects from East Asia, predominantly China (c.f. [Xu & Wu, 2016](#)). Salient examples in this context include the multiple dwellings of Chinese 'seasonal tourism-retirement migrants' ([Wu, Hannam, & Xu, 2018](#)), the 'therapeutic mobilities' of young affluent Chinese lifestyle skiers ([Wu & Yang, 2022](#)) and the long-stay group mobilities of Chinese senior tourists in rural destinations ([Huang et al., 2025](#)). The latter's group-oriented approach is a notable divergence from the solitary traveller perspective of most lifestyle mobilities studies. Rurality is also salient in [Yamagishi and Doering's \(2025\)](#) unification of lifestyle mobility with fashion studies in Japan, which provides further diversification to the field by investigating how rural tourism destinations in Japan are made fashionable by urban-to-rural lifestyle mobility practices.

These contributions have begun to diversify lifestyle mobilities research in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and nationality, helping to redress the field's occidental origins and implicit biases. A key remaining injustice, however, is that the majority of lifestyle mobilities research, including the large quantity of recent studies on digital nomadism, is focused on the experiences and practices of those engaging in mobile lifestyles. There is thus a lack of attention given to the wide cast of local actors, whether they be cleaners, bartenders or Uber drivers, whose labour decisions enable others' ongoing mobilities.

## Mapping the future

Our attempt to provide a history of how lifestyle mobilities developed as a field and analysis of its current state-of-the-art through the case of digital nomadism has led to identification of a number of key knowledge gaps in lifestyle mobilities scholarship that should help structure future research. In this concluding section, we turn our attention to summarising these key insights and offering a future research agenda for the study of lifestyle mobilities that we hope will ignite further studies and help to sustain this Curated Collection.

A lifestyle mobilities perspective is post-structural in its deliberate avoidance of binaries, seeking to shed light on how lifestyle decisions fashioned around mobility can contribute for instance to a destabilisation of home and away, a blurring of the divide between work and leisure, or a breakdown of dogma that purports a neat separation between tourism and migration. Lifestyle mobilities thus provides more theoretical leverage on the intersections of contemporary work, leisure, travel and migration than is typically found for example in studies of temporary mobility or permanent migration ([Cohen et al., 2015](#)), which have traditionally been the dominant foci of tourism and migration studies, respectively.

The earliest elaboration of lifestyle mobilities defined it as ongoing semi-permanent moves of varying durations ([Duncan et al., 2013](#)). Although this initial framework (*ibid*, see [Table 1](#)) examined key issues such as residence, the question of return, belonging and rhythmic and temporal dimensions, its formulation contained three main weaknesses: (1) life courses were largely ignored, leaving it implicit that the lifestyles are indefinitely sustained; (2) lifestyle mobility decisions were viewed as almost entirely voluntary, omitting the extent to which they can also be indicative of precarity; and (3) the paradox of being mobile and untethered from place yet nonetheless concentrated in particular locations went unaddressed. These three areas of tension represent paradoxes through which we map a future research agenda for lifestyle mobilities.

### *Sustained and transitioning out*

Much of the literature on lifestyle mobilities operates with an implicit assumption that the lifestyles will be perpetually sustained. If these mobilities are not framed as 'ongoing', 'sustained' or 'full-time', they would lose their centrality in identity construction, failing to reflect [Bögenhold's \(2001\)](#) understanding of a lifestyle, i.e. a stable pattern of organising everyday life. Yet the core of lifestyle mobilities – ongoing geographic mobility – is inevitably time-limited by the life course.

How these lifestyles may change, whether that is an eventual return to 'home', settling with a higher degree of permanence in a new place or moving from one form of lifestyle mobility to another – and the role of mobility regimes, such as specific visas and eligibility criteria, that would ease or complicate these transitions – is poorly understood. This calls for both more emphasis on the life course and the use of longitudinal studies. The latter could reveal shifting meanings in relation to home and identity over time and how life courses may be characterised by more mobile or sedentary phases, including different forms of lifestyle mobility or the tipping of lifestyle mobility into lifestyle migration and vice versa. This would help to address a key question [Korpela \(2020\)](#) raises around whether lifestyle mobility is sustainable in the long run. There is furthermore a need to better understand how international crises – political, economic or health-related – and the reframing of mobility regimes and/or border closures associated with them (as was the case with Covid), may (dis)enable lifestyle mobilities.

Research is also needed on how life courses may intersect with other social structures such as gender and age. In their study of the intersections of Chinese student migration and lifestyle mobility, [Huang and Cohen \(2024\)](#) discuss how a gendered social clock pressuring woman to get married and have children can force an eventual return to 'home'. In the few instances that lifestyle mobilities and digital nomadism research has moved its attention beyond singles, and focused on couples or families (e.g. [Molz, 2021](#)), this valuable turn of focus has typically centred on families with younger children. A need remains to understand how these lifestyle practices may change as children get older.

Further attention is also necessary on transitions in lifestyle mobility from the active elderly to frail elderly stage of life and the unexpected challenges this may bring. As [Åkerlund \(2017, p.12\)](#) observes, lifestyle mobilities "in later life are faced with a more

pronounced fixed time frame because of the inevitability of the ageing process". [Botterill \(2017\)](#) provides an important intervention on this topic through a discussion of precarity and discord among British retirees in Thailand, revealing limited access to pensions and healthcare. It has been shown in the related field of lifestyle migration that the inability to run a home is an important factor in return decisions among retirees (>[Giner-Monfort et al., 2016](#)). How health issues associated with ageing are dealt with by highly mobile subjects, who are often in remote areas, such as long-term ocean cruisers or 'overlanders', needs investigation. This includes if and how lifestyle mobilities may be given up or changed due to the death of a partner, the unwillingness to navigate later life health crises in a non-native tongue or economic issues such as the inability to afford continued travel/health insurance or the expiration of favourable tax regimes on pensions. Health, not only related to ageing, is a neglected topic in lifestyle mobilities and studies of digital nomadism. A starting point could be to consider how chronic and/or infectious diseases may act as intervening factors in lifestyle mobilities.

Relatedly, a broader focus is also needed on vulnerability and employment status in lifestyle mobility, such as how pension and property insecurity may be negotiated. This links to wider questions about how lifestyle mobilities relate to social connectedness through the life course. Several works already address loneliness in digital nomad lifestyles (e.g. [Miguel, Lutz, Perez-Vega, & Majetić, 2025](#)), while more research is needed on how lifestyle mobilities impact social relationships in places left behind, including the natal home. This raises questions as to if and how aspirations for intimacy are maintained with distanced friends and family in mobility contexts ([Humbrecht, Cohen, & Williams, 2022](#)).

### *Privilege and precarity*

Lifestyle mobilities have been largely conceived as privileged, entered into and continued through access to resources, freedom of choice and self-autonomy. This predominant framing however masks the extent to which these mobilities may reflect a fine line between choice and survival. The bias in the literature towards viewing lifestyle mobilities as entirely voluntary, i.e. a lifestyle choice has explainable roots in [Featherstone's \(2007\)](#) work on lifestyle consumption, in which self-identities, and hence lifestyles, became increasingly built around consumption 'choices'. However, to view lifestyle mobility decisions as entirely voluntary is to ignore the reality that many lifestyle mobilities have an element of being forced or compelled. We are reminded by [Korpela \(2020, p.3365\)](#) that a "transnationally mobile lifestyle not only is an individual's choice but is embedded in political and economic structures that both enable and limit their actions".

As noted earlier, the film *Nomadland* poignantly showed that Vanlife can be both empowering and a tactic to cope with precarity. For example, economic vulnerability and precarity may lie quietly behind some #vanlife posts on Instagram. [Rodriguez \(2023, p.69\)](#) finds that some full-time Vanlifers thought they would be 'living the dream', only to find themselves "doing their best to survive a nightmare of economic inequalities brought on by neoliberal late-stage capitalism". Hence what may begin as a largely voluntary lifestyle choice may morph into necessity. Precarity can produce and be produced by lifestyle mobility decisions.

A further example of this tension between choice and compulsion is found in the nascent trend of retirees deciding to live for the foreseeable future on cruise ships, or who book numerous back-to-back cruises instead ([Wills, 2024](#)). This may appear to be the peak of indulgence, but it is also a reaction to the rising price of care homes in places such as the United Kingdom. Research will thus be needed that better understands how freedom and necessity are narrated and co-constituted in lifestyle mobility decisions and structured by nation-states, mobility regimes and social identities.

Access to lifestyle mobilities are only partly shaped by nationality, gender and age. We discussed earlier how other social structures such as 'race' and ethnicity may also condition access to and/or continued participation in lifestyle mobility, and as a consequence we recommend the further use of intersectional approaches. A consequence of these unequal power dimensions is that more emphasis is needed in lifestyle mobilities research on access and justice, while concomitantly unmasking the privilege and precarity that may lurk behind digital nomadism and other contemporary modes of lifestyle mobility. Much has been done on describing the practices and meanings associated with the demand side of lifestyle mobilities, while the politics and structural factors that enable and constrain lifestyle mobilities are underserved.

We wrote earlier of the need to overcome the field's occidental origins. This must involve studies of lifestyle mobility practices from the Global South to the Global North, which is crucial in decentering the Global North as the main source of lifestyle mobilities knowledge (c.f. [Cohen & Cohen, 2015](#)).

This returns us to the need to better understand the economic and political structures that shape lifestyle mobilities. Geoarbitrage raises justice concerns, yet at the same time it may be a way of coping with structural inequalities. At first glance, geoarbitrage speaks to the Global North simply taking advantage of global economic inequalities. The extent to which geoarbitrage is employed to escape economic vulnerability so as to live modestly or to a moderate standard 'on the road' remains poorly understood.

Ideological differences appear to play an increasing role in lifestyle mobility decisions. The escape from geopolitics and political crises, even war, point to some lifestyle mobility decisions as political acts. For instance, do digital nomad visas provide a legal route in for some people who feel compelled to escape conflicts? Evidence from Bali suggests yes, as via Indonesia's digital nomad visa Bali became 'home' to a substantial wave of Russian digital nomads as a result of the Russian-Ukrainian War. This lifestyle mobility flow created 'Russian enclaves' that restructured the local economy, including significantly driving up housing prices ([Astuti, Virginiya, Sanjiwani, & Bagiastuti, 2025](#)).

### *Mobile and emplaced*

The final paradox we turn to is the concentration or emplacement of lifestyle mobilities in particular locations. Geographies of lifestyle mobilities have been relatively neglected (see [Hannonen, 2024, 2025](#) as exceptions), which is at least partly explained by its

roots in nomadism and the concomitant assumption that such mobile subjects are deterritorialised. A ‘myth of placelessness’ predominates in representations of nomadic ways of life (Kabachnik, 2012). Dunn (2010, p.1) warns of the “dangers of exaggerating mobility and footloosedness”, and argues for a view of transnationals as “simultaneously mobile and emplaced”. Adherents of lifestyle mobilities are mobile and desire to be location independent, yet are paradoxically emplaced much of the time. Emplacement often takes the form of being funnelled into popular locales, constructed out of collective imaginations that a certain place will provide a ‘better’ way of life. Digital nomad itineraries, for instance, may be organised to return to a small number of set places repeatedly, not unlike backpacker enclaves on the so-called ‘Banana Pancake Trail’ that has been a popular route through South-east Asia. At the time of writing, the website [nomads.com](https://nomads.com) for instance lists Bangkok, Chang Mai, Bali and Tokyo as the top four digital nomad destinations globally.

Mobility and place must be viewed as mutually constitutive (Salazar, 2023). Not only are mobile lifestyles shaped by the places they visit, but these places are also shaped by them (Hannonen, 2024; Slape, Zittoun, Pedersen, Dahinden, & Charmillot, 2023). The concentration of lifestyle mobilities in particular places is a driver of gentrification’s negative impacts on host communities. Future research will be needed on how adherents of lifestyle mobilities become imbricated as political actors associated with social problems (e.g. gentrification, housing scarcity, overtourism) in the localities in which they visit/reside.

Greater attention must also be given to the roles of geoarbitrage in processes of gentrification. This includes how those who undertake lifestyle mobilities may employ tactics to be seen as tourists, residents or migrants. These identities of mobility and emplacement can unlock benefits, whether that be preferential treatment due to perceived spending power, access to social services or beneficial tax conditions. Future research should also consider how power asymmetries are further exacerbated by mobile subjects with a powerful/desirable passport, or even dual ‘first-world citizenships’, who accumulate forms of capital often not available to others who remain more situated. Temporal capital – the increased freedom to determine how and where to spend one’s leisure time and structure days, weeks and months – and legal capital – the ability to play multiple tax systems and state-based fiscal policies against each other for benefits – are two key aspects often at play in lifestyle mobilities that need further unveiling. The latter points to the need for more nuanced understandings of justice issues surrounding geoarbitrage strategies, especially in digital nomadism where the affordances of digital nomad visas may create conflicts with the socio-economic objectives of municipalities.

Place fundamentally shapes complexity in many of the issues discussed here. Is an American passport still desirable or powerful in international lifestyle mobilities when the United States is one of just a handful of countries to tax citizens on worldwide income regardless of where they reside? Where is digital nomadism more a catalyst for innovation than a contributor to social problems? For instance, Lopes (2024) suggests that for some Small Island Developing States, such as in the case of Cabo Verde, digital nomadism’s potential to catalyse economic and social growth outweighs its potential adverse effects on the housing market. In this case, the latter can reportedly be managed through regulation and new construction. We thus agree with Salazar, (2023, p.90) and Hannonen’s (2024) calls for mobility scholars to “engage more squarely with the complexities of the concept of place in their analyses”.

Finally, lifestyle mobilities research must also turn its focus to a broader range of actors. It will be especially important to give voice to those whose employment decisions enable lifestyle mobilities through their place-based work, yet who at the same time may be paradoxically priced out of places, at least in part, by the gentrifying effects of lifestyle mobility. Post-colonial and anti-colonial lenses, which are already being brought to bear on lifestyle migration research (e.g. Emard & Nelson, 2020), will play an important role in the analysis of colonial legacies of inequality in digital nomadism and other lifestyle mobility contexts.

It is our hope that these types of questions will help guide future research on lifestyle mobilities and that further researchers across the social sciences will take interest in the grey zone that lies at the intersection of contemporary work, tourism and migration.

### **CRedit authorship contribution statement**

**Scott Cohen:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Conceptualization. **Olga Hannonen:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Conceptualization.

### **Source of funding**

This paper is financed by National Funds provided by FCT- Foundation for Science and Technology through project UIDB/04020/2020 and with DOI [10.54499/UIDB/04020/2020](https://doi.org/10.54499/UIDB/04020/2020) (<https://doi.org/10.54499/UIDB/04020/2020>).

### **Declaration of competing interest**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

### **Data availability**

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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