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RESEARCH ARTICLE



Personal crisis as a catalyser in a Movement Continuum of tourism lifestyle mobilities

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ABSTRACT

Various professional, economic, and personal reasons underpin current migration flows. This article integrated the concepts of lifestyle travelling and lifestyle migration by bringing the tourism-migration nexus to the fore to analyse lifestyle issues of individuals that impact their decisions to be mobile. Sixteen in-depth semi-structured interviews with young Russian migrants, a 'modern' population with different perspectives about opportunities to travel and migrate than their USSR predecessors, were conducted with a focus on their life experiences, mobility 'careers' and starting points of migration. Thematic analysis and iterative engagement with data led to the creation of the Movement Continuum. This Movement Continuum connects different stages of movement ranging from the first trip, long-term travelling, permanent migration, and the final decision to settle down. The paper suggests the continued need for a better understanding of the importance of lifestyle in mobility and migration journeys. It identifies those moments of crisis in the mobility and migration journey that affect an individual's intentions to stay on the move and/or to migrate. The findings complement discourses around the role of personal crisis in migration, mobilities, and tourism and highlight the necessity for further research regarding the better exploration of the relationship between lifestyle travel and lifestyle migration in tourism geographies.

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Introduction

The role of lifestyle in migration and its relation to human mobility, in general, has only been recognised in the literature relatively recently. Benson and O'Reilly (2016) might be considered some of the first researchers to highlight lifestyle issues, expanding research to include ideas around social imaginaries and personal aspirations. Lifestyle is becoming the cornerstone to help understand pre- and post-migration lives, allowing a deeper understanding of the complexity of individual motivations,

lifestyle choices (Benson & O'Reilly, 2016; Croucher, 2015; Torkington, 2010), and non-economic relatively 'privileged' reasons for migration (Hayes, 2021; Mancinelli, 2021).

This paper combines different stages of geographical movement by analysing the lifestyle concept in tourism, travel, and migration. It introduces a framework, the Movement Continuum (see Figure 1 below), by examining sixteen Russian individuals' mobility paths, who started to perceive 'moving' in a different way from the (previous) USSR generation (Zuev, 2008). By integrating knowledge from migration, mobilities, and tourism, this framework helps lead to a deeper understanding of the personal decisions that drive individuals to choose to be mobile and eventually migrate. The study also illustrates the importance of a lifestyle approach to analyse one's mobility.

In looking specifically at lifestyle migration and lifestyle mobility, the Movement Continuum explores an individual's trajectory from the first travel moments to what could trigger the starting decision to migrate, linking stages of tourism, travel, temporary mobilities, and migration together in one Continuum. This framework complements and builds on previous research regarding the concept of lifestyle in tourism, travel, and migration by suggesting that the cross-border dynamics of migrants might be driven by previous positive mobility experiences derived from tourism. The paper also emphasises the aspect of personal crisis through one's mobility. It highlights those moments of personal crisis, often considered as an initial trigger for migration, that might be seen as a 'pull' factor to stay 'on the move' and finally change residence.

This paper examines previous academic research on the tourism-migration nexus within the mobilities paradigm (Sheller & Urry, 2006) and the role of lifestyle in tourism and mobilities. The paper then discusses the methods used and outlines the sixteen in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted in person and online with Russian migrants who moved to live abroad because of lifestyle-based choices and previous successful tourism experiences. Choosing a Russian population as a case study also helps to present more than a Eurocentric perspective (Tribe et al., 2012). It underlines the importance of hearing the voices of a new mobile generation of young individuals different from the previous USSR epoch (Zuev, 2008). At the time of writing, in 2022–2023, most Russians' mobility was severely curtailed due to the ongoing conflict with Ukraine. However, many Russians remain mobile outside the Russian Federation, and this population needs more attention in tourism, mobilities, and lifestyle migration literature.

The findings introduce the Movement Continuum framework as the main contribution of this paper (see Figure 1), which helps to reconsider the idea of personal crisis in lifestyle migration and mobilities. By explaining this framework, the paper advocates for more research on lifestyle migration and individual mobility patterns. The paper argues that contemporary lifestyles (including post-COVID-19) offer new challenges to existing constructions of lifestyle in migration and mobility and questions how lifestyle migration and lifestyle mobility intersect. The paper concludes by suggesting that moments of crisis generate a necessity to continue a mobile journey and impact the final decision to migrate, unlike previous research which sees these moments as a trigger to return to the country of origin or 'give up'. Such ideas on the role of crisis in mobilities lead again to the importance of lifestyle in the tourism-migration nexus, which should be explored more in the context of intersections between travel and migration. The paper also concludes by highlighting the

Russian context and suggesting that considering current global uncertainty, it is increasingly important to look at the new 'realities' groups, such as those in this study are facing both now and into the future.

Literature review

The complexity of human mobility in space combines various stages, including tourism, travel, and migration (Schuster, 2005). Academics have explored such movements by analysing tourists, workers, students, and nomads from different countries, often with similar purposes of improving themselves by academic, professional, financial, or personal means (e.g. Bartolini et al., 2017; Cohen, 2011; Eimermann, 2015; King, 2018; Nowicka, 2007). Here, lifestyle is foundational to better understanding the purposes and decisions of becoming mobile (Cohen et al., 2016). The following sections present the context for the paper, specifically regarding the role of lifestyle in travel, mobilities, and migration.

Lifestyle, migration, and travel

Lifestyle can represent patterns of humans' everyday practices (Cohen et al., 2016). Ethnographers have long used the concept to draw attention to people's values and behaviour (Stebbins, 1997). Early research reflected the idea of lifestyle being a collective phenomenon expressed through leisure activities (Sobel, 1981), where complex behaviour under certain conditions may lead to common social identities among different lifestyles (Stebbins, 1997). Meanwhile, Cohen (2011) argued that lifestyle practices can offer an alternative vision of personal identity.

More recently, research has examined the concept of lifestyle through the mobilities paradigm (Sheller & Urry, 2006), when the decision to be on the move means a particular way of life for many individuals (Cohen et al., 2016, pp. 3–4). As such, life choices become more dynamic and lead to an intersection of various fields, such as travel, migration, and leisure (Cohen et al., 2015). In the context of these intersections, academics look at the concept of lifestyle through the quest for self by using examples of backpacker-travellers (Cohen, 2011), gap year tourists (O'Reilly, 2006), or global nomads (Richards & Wilson, 2004). The concept of lifestyle justifies escaping for the good life and for self-realisation projects in migration (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009). An evolving sense of 'self' is a common link between lifestyle travel, mobilities, and migration.

The literature points out that finding oneself might be the primary reason to travel to escape personal problems (Croucher, 2015). Travelling provides a mental space to avoid interpersonal difficulties and generate positive experiences (Cohen, 2010). One of the first attempts to analyse the independent traveller was by Cohen (1972), who suggested the concept of the 'drifter', meaning someone 'living with the people, sharing their habits, eating their food and often taking odd jobs to keep himself going' (Cohen, 1972, p. 168). More recently, terms including 'backpacker', 'gap year tourist', or 'lifestyle traveller' have made their way into the literature to identify long-term individual travel by (often) European young people who travel to escape responsibility or as a 'gap' between school, university, or work (Cohen, 2010). New categories of travellers relate to ideas of transformative travel, where physical mobility

impacts mobile individuals' preferences for changing lifestyles and locations (Lean, 2012). Leisure-related motives might drive a group of backpackers and lifestyle travellers (Cohen, 2011), representing opportunities for adventure, self-positioning, independence, risk-taking, and the desire to find a better life (O'Reilly, 2006). Moreover, individuals in these categories often re-evaluate their lifestyle and start rejecting the identity of tourists (Welk, 2004), moving on to 'another identity' of mobile actors, including lifestyle travellers or lifestyle migrants.

Bowen et al. (2009, p. 51) also connected tourists and migrants by mentioning the importance of 'a tourist experience, and especially tourist satisfaction, as a major factor in migratory movement and settlement to an identifiable destination'. Tourism and migration link transnational movements of international workers, with some authors connecting tourism, migration, and lifestyle through a social lens (i.e. Mancinelli, 2021; Thulemark, 2015). Therefore, it can be suggested that tourism can contribute to the creation of labour migration (Williams & Hall, 2002) because migrants who have previously visited the area decide to move and work in the destination due to cultural and natural amenities, climate, self-growth, or education opportunities (Thulemark, 2015). Moreover, migrants make tourism destinations culturally rich and diverse: they are labour resources and influence local values, norms, and lifestyles that enhance broader tourism products (Marcher et al., 2022). Mancinelli (2021) underlines that these features make migrants less superficial than tourists and 'force' local populations to accept 'new people' who come to live, study, or work in the destination (Choe & Lugosi, 2022).

Migration literature has also explored the importance of lifestyle (O'Reilly & Benson, 2009; Torkington, 2010) as a motivation to improve life quality through escaping negative experiences and circumstances (Hoey, 2005). Lifestyle migrants are 'relatively affluent individuals of all ages, moving either part-time or full-time to places that, for various reasons, signify, for the migrant, a better quality of life' (Benson, 2015, p. 11). Changing circumstances to find an alternative way of life represents a better balance in life and work after the migration (O'Reilly & Benson, 2009; Cohen et al., 2016). As lifestyle as a concept includes many aspects, lifestyle migrants can be characterised in many ways as they do not all look for the same lifestyle (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Hayes, 2021). They may move to find a simpler life, discover spiritual features, be involved in the local community through work, or continuously search for self, a dream, or an idyllic home (Eimermann, 2015).

Williams and Hall (2002) suggest that lifestyle migration is a case of tourism-informed mobility. Through the touristic movement, migrants may develop new ideas about alternative ways of living (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009). However, lifestyle migrants might have different goals from tourists (O'Reilly, 2006), as they might, for instance, combine leisure objectives with work goals. Nevertheless, the search for a better life remains similar to that of lifestyle travellers, where there is a desire to experience the authenticity of a destination, its leisure practice, or communication more closely with the local community (O'Reilly, 2006). Therefore, tourism, lifestyle migration, and mobilities may differ (Cohen et al., 2015).

Lifestyle migration: escape and ideas of home

Benson and O'Reilly (2016) argue that lifestyle migration is about escaping from something to discover a new life and the personal potential in oneself. Other scholars

build on this idea by highlighting the importance of non-economic reasons, certain 'privileges' (derived from economic, social, and symbolic capital), and factors, such as ethnicity, citizenship, and education (Mancinelli, 2021) that lead to lifestyle mobility. For others, whilst relative privilege might be intrinsic in their ability to be mobile, they intend to reach balanced well-being in terms of work and leisure. Migrants look for a destination different from the one they left behind. Fresh starts represent an escape from divorce, crime, life uncertainty, anxiety, economic problems, and past mistakes (O'Reilly, 2006).

Migration covers various groups of mobile individuals which might relate not only to escape from negative emotional experiences (Osbaldiston et al., 2020), failed careers or relationships (Kılınç & King, 2017), or access to amenities, leisure, work, or educational opportunities. Sometimes, lifestyle migrants may represent a privileged segment of society (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009). So, their skills, assets, and resources might benefit the destination (Korpela, 2010). However, privilege is not always related to the economy: privileged migrants tend to give more importance to their lifestyle choices, travel more, look for a better job, or enhance their self-education levels (Benson & O'Reilly, 2016). Research on lifestyle migration also takes into consideration other essential mobility issues: social imaginaries (Benson, 2011), the changing identity of migrants (Benson, 2015), and the question of home and place attachment (Germann Molz, 2008; Ralph & Staeheli, 2011).

Social imagination, which can expand understanding of lifestyle phenomena (McIntyre, 2016), impacts how people move and perceive new destinations and homes. According to Gaonkar (2002), the social imagination aims to understand different cultural and historical contexts that influence how humans might behave in a particular place at a particular moment (Taylor, 2004). Migrants imagine a life and project ideas of where they might live (Benson & O'Reilly, 2016). These images strongly link migrants' aspirations and motivations (Schuster, 2005). Nevertheless, the plurality of imaginaries of any culture or place is usually idealised and converted to utopia (Wallis, 2017), leading to leisure activities and tourism to explore new cultures and destinations. However, frequently broken fantasies cause depression or self-crisis during other post-transnational movement phases (O'Reilly, 2006).

The idea of home plays a vital role in settling people in a particular location, particularly if a previous destination is associated with a negative experience before migration (O'Reilly & Benson, 2009). A sense of home relates to a particular place representing a solid connection between self, culture, and identity politics (Rose, 1995). Leaving one's past home, searching for different homes in the present, and having hope for a better home in the future can shape a migrant's reality (Boccagni, 2014). The desire for a home has a material and emotional presence in narratives about travel and mobility (Duval, 2004; Germann Molz, 2008). For example, lifestyle travellers feel attachment and involvement in the host community (Iaquinto, 2020). They feel at home with emotional ties to several local places and people. It becomes about finding a way of feeling at home wherever they are (Germann Molz, 2008).

Cross-border movements from one place to another can shape one's identity by strengthening ties to one or multiple places (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011). Thus, the movement between tourist, traveller, and migrant is linked not only to a search for a different and potentially 'better' lifestyle but also to psychological experiences of

security and identity (Easthope, 2004) and even a sense of belonging in a new home or country (Brah, 1996). However, this link between lifestyle and mobility might connect to multiple places. As Nowicka (2007) argues, individuals construct a sense of home through relationships, people, and objects. So, research about lifestyle mobility and lifestyle migration can illustrate how understanding migrants' multiple senses of place attachment might be viewed as specific types of mobility (Iaquinto, 2020).

A Russian context

Cohen and Cohen (2015) acknowledge that tourism as a research area blurs with human mobilities studies through the international flows of travellers and migrants. However, much of the previous research considers Western populations, a Eurocentric approach (Tribe et al., 2012), which seems outdated when the number of people on the move with diverse origins is increasing. As Cohen and Cohen (2015) demonstrate, there is growing research on 'non-Western' populations, including Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, sub-African regions, and the Caribbean and Pacific. The diversity of such populations and those who move to and from new economies in transition offers knowledge that can extend the mobilities paradigm beyond its perceived 'Eurocentric' origins.

Russian populations need more representation in tourism geographies, lifestyle mobility, and migration research (Istomin, 2021; Lipkina, 2013). It might relate to the idea that Russia as a country is only 'partially' associated with Europe due to different political regimes and cultural and historical contexts (Paparella, 2012). Nevertheless, a small body of research considers some of the issues related to mobilities and focuses on Russian second home ownership in Finland, which has received attention in Finnish media (Lipkina, 2013). For Russians, purchasing summer property is essential as it offers a sense of safety and privilege, even though such ownership has been perceived as a 'Russian invasion' in Finland (Hannonen, 2019).

Such mobility often depends on economic, political and personal positions, visa policies, and border-crossing points (Hannonen, 2019; Mancinelli, 2021). Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, Russian mobility has significantly increased, and with the borders eased, a 'new generation' of young Russian individuals have gained an opportunity to 'imagine' and 'plan' going abroad for work, study, and leisure (Zuev, 2008). Before the collapse of the USSR, people were quite limited in such mobilities: the idea of travelling was criminalised by the ruling party and had an image of 'vagrancy', 'cowardice', and 'desertion'. Moving from USSR was even satirically defined by Soviet writers as the 'myth of the beyond' since 'those who had gone there would never come back' (Ilf & Petrov, 1966, p. 292).

Young people often become a subject for academic studies (Jensen, 2006). This paper highlights the importance of analysing the experiences of the chosen sample of young Russians due to their contradiction with the previous generations, their parents and grandparents, and people from the same country but with entirely different values (Zuev, 2008). Young Russians perceive tourism and travel as an instrument to explore the world, overcome personal difficulties, and gain power. Over thirty years ago, citizens of the USSR, Russia today, did not have such a perception. Moreover, young individuals form their mobility model differently from the previous generations (Zuev, 2008).

Through going abroad, young Russians gain access to foreign spaces previous inaccessible, utilising mobility to find their path, identity and gain independence.

Methods

This paper is a qualitative study with an interpretative methodology focused on understanding multiple meanings and realities (Charmaz, 2015). In-depth individual interviews allowed the gathering of information and knowledge from narratives about participants' lived experiences (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). One of the researchers conducted interviews in November and December 2020. The study participants were a group of sixteen Russian migrants (ten women/six men) who moved to live abroad for reasons of tourism, work, or education (see Table 1). The participants had all been living in their particular destination for more than six months and had prior tourism/

Table 1. The social profile of respondents.

	Age	Gender	Level of education	Country of residence	The primary reason for immigration	Current occupation	Period living within the current destination
1	24	F	Undergraduate, currently doing Master's in Spain	Spain	Education	Master student	3 months
2	25	F	Undergraduate, studied in Russia	Italy	Work	Actress	10 months
3	26	F	Undergraduate, studied in Russia	USA	Seasonal job	Pastry-chef	1 year 6 months
4	27	F	Undergraduate/Master, studied in Turkey	Turkey	Family	Life coach Travel guide	4 years
5	24	M	Undergraduate/Master, studied in Germany	Austria	Education	Engineer	5 years
6	23	M	Undergraduate, currently doing a Master's in the Czech Republic	Czech Republic	Education	Master student	2 years
7	25	M	Undergraduate, currently doing a Master's in France	France	Education	Master student Freelancer	3 months
8	30	F	Undergraduate/Master, studied in Russia	Turkey	Seasonal job	Journalist	8 years
9	28	F	Undergraduate/Master, currently doing a Master's in the Czech Republic	Czech Republic	Education	Manager	9 years
10	28	F	Undergraduate, studied in Russia	Sweden	Family	Student	1 year
11	25	M	Undergraduate/Master, studied in Spain	Russia ^a	Education	Trade representative	1 year
12	31	M	Undergraduate/Master, studied in Sweden	Sweden	Family	Sales manager	16 years
13	20	M	Undergraduate, studied in Spain	Spain	Family	Unemployed	5 years
14	24	F	Undergraduate/Master, studied in Spain	Spain	Education	Translator	2 years
15	38	F	Undergraduate/Master/PhD, studied in Sweden	Sweden	Work	Teacher	8 years
16	26	F	Undergraduate, currently doing a Master's in Germany	Germany	Work	Master student Web designer	1 year

^aThis participant was gone to Russia for a short period. Due to the spread of Covid-19, international borders between Russia and countries of the EU were closed. The participant stays in Russia and plans to come back to Spain.

travelling experience before moving to their current location. Respondents were relatively young, aged from twenty to forty, with a high level of education. Eleven had a stable job with a good income. Five respondents were enrolled in Master's programmes and employed in part-time work. Of the sixteen respondents, only one participant was unemployed.

Respondents were selected through convenience sampling and 'snowball' sampling. Since the participants were not chosen through random selection, the sample is only a partial representation of Russians abroad. Participants were asked to name other potential participants with similar life situations (Sharma, 2017). As Noy (2008, p. 334) suggests, there is an interrelation between snowball sampling and in-depth interviewing where 'informants whom the researcher meets are those who supply the referrals'. One of the researchers recruited the first participant in Spain, where this participant lives and studies. This participant provided many social connections who were contacted *via* email/phone. Each new informant was able to provide the researchers with other contacts. However, participants lived in different destinations. As interviews were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was possible to collect data online through the Zoom platform, which allowed for the recruitment of participants worldwide (Oliffe et al., 2021) and created a comfortable online space for the participants to explain their stories (Dodds & Hess, 2020; Lee, 2007; Oprea & Stan, 2012). The duration of the interviews ranged from 45 to 60 min and were conducted in Russian. Interaction with the participants was fluid, with the researcher adding her identity to the relationship. By the sixteenth interview, a saturation point was reached as the informants began making the same comments (Guest et al., 2006). At this point, the researchers moved to analyse the data.

The focus of the research was on Russian migrants. One of the researchers is a Russian migrant, which allowed a more nuanced understanding of Russian culture, traditions, and humour. This helped the participants feel more comfortable and led to deeper discussions on the research topic (Jackson, 2006), where participants were asked to describe their life story that led them to the particular destinations where they had settled down. All interviews were recorded with the participants' informed consent and transcribed verbatim. In addition to the interviews, the researchers took notes which enabled a deeper understanding of the interview context (Etemaddar et al., 2015). The researchers also structured the interview process in chronological order (life back in the country of origin, tourism experience, travelling, educational/work mobility, and migration) as it became clear, through the interview process, that for the participants, there was a sequence of stages of geographical movement.

The authors analysed the data using thematic analysis to process different personal experiences and conceptually summarise and categorise segments of data (Charmaz, 2015). The data analysis was a six staged process based on Braun and Clarke (2006) and Walters (2016). Transcripts were initially read, transcribed, and translated to English. Transcribed information was re-read to find 'codes' using the theoretical literature as a guide (e.g. Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Cohen, 1972; Cohen, 2004; Germann Molz, 2008; Richards & Wilson, 2004; Sheller & Urry, 2006). The process of coding the data was performed manually. 'Codes' emerged from interpreting the answers of participants regarding their mobility experiences, such as 'peaceful life in Russia', 'boring home society', 'the need for positive experiences', or 'the sense of being a

stranger'. These codes helped to identify 'themes' to differentiate theoretically defined stages of tourism, travelling, and migration. For instance, one of the main themes identified was 'personal crisis and how it affects one's mobility'. In previous research on lifestyle mobility and migration, researchers tended to look at negative factors and experiences of mobility, however, in this study participants connected negative experiences with a period of crisis already on-going when mobile. This challenges previous findings and allowed for the creation of more 'themes' to explain each stage in the continuum, such as 'factors that affect one's movement', 'tourism effect on one's mobility', or 'migration elements for one's movement'. The 'themes' were reviewed and developed into five stages related to lifestyle: 'Pre-movement Stage', 'Tourism Stage', 'Lifestyle Traveller Stage', 'Lifestyle Mobilities Stage', and 'Lifestyle Migration Stage' (see Figure 1).

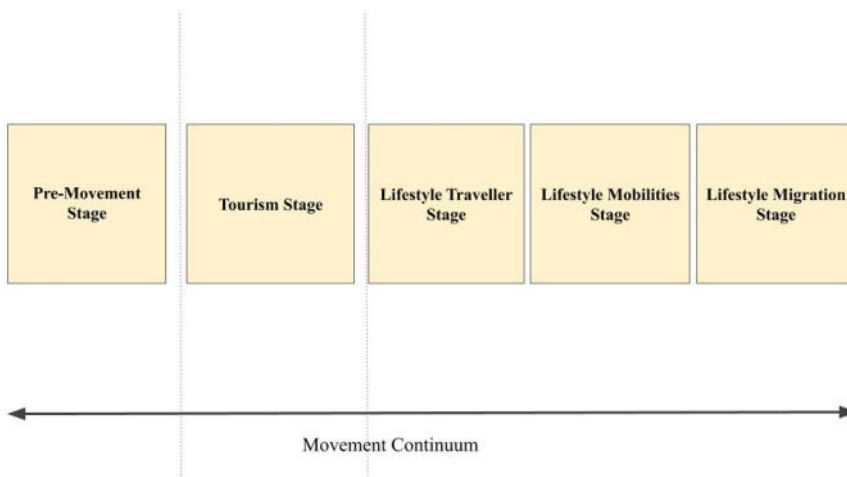


Figure 1. The Movement Continuum.

Individual 'Movement Continuums' were produced for each of the sixteen cases according to the stories of each participant. With each individual continuum, the Movement Continuum framework was refined by comparing, contrasting, discussing, and combining the sixteen individual continuums to produce the final Movement Continuum (see Figure 2 below). Developing the continuum was an iterative process (Tracy, 2019) where the information from participants was re-read multiple times to identify and reaffirm common patterns and differences.

The Movement Continuum

The Movement Continuum (see Figure 2) was developed to represent the participants' experiences of tourism, travelling, and migration, through a lifestyle lens. Visualising the findings allows for more in-depth analysis across participants and a more concrete comparison with previous research on lifestyle migration (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009) and lifestyle mobilities (Cohen et al., 2015; Sheller & Urry, 2006). The framework

presented in this study was designed through iterative understandings of the information gained from the participants and thematic analysis stages. The Movement Continuum demonstrates personal fulfilment through the mobility process, where lifestyle elements are the instrument for change. It differs from other conceptualisations of migration and mobility, such as the Migration-Mobility Continuum presented by Mahendran (2013), which focused on global integration issues of migrants and non-migrants, language acquisition, and relationships with the local community.

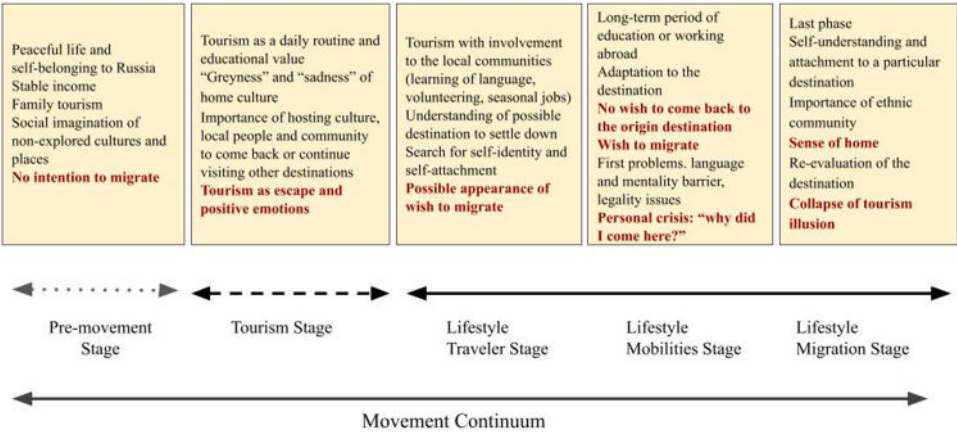


Figure 2. Framework of Movement Continuum.

The framework illustrated in Figure 2 conceptually connects five stages of geographical movement based on study participants’ personal lifestyle experiences and literature analysis on the topic. The following sections provide a detailed explanation of each stage using the participants’ experiences. The examples below highlight different issues, including a sense of belonging to the country of origin, strong impressions of successful touristic experiences, involvement with hosting cultures, times of personal crisis, and challenges of adaptation until finally there is migration and self-identification with a chosen destination. The Movement Continuum also illustrates the ongoing ‘mobility careers’ of the participants who act and transform in a mobile space generated by tourism. Through lifestyle, moments of crisis, mobility, and senses of place attachment, this Movement Continuum provides insight into decision-making processes about whether to be mobile or migrate.

Pre-movement stage

This stage is characterised by a peaceful life and a sense of belonging to the country of origin without any intention to migrate. Participants might experience family and mass tourism or tourism for study purposes, especially in childhood when they go abroad to practise English. Some respondents only had a chance to travel after becoming an adult. At this stage, they might be happy with their current life or represent a well-educated social segment from a wealthy family (Salazar, 2014). Interviewee 1, for example, mentioned that she ‘did not want to go abroad because

her life was pretty calm'. She planned to travel to know the world better but later return to the 'motherland'. Here, mobile actors might only think about moving temporarily. Interviewee 1 said that she had travelled to Spain several times, and it 'felt' like an excellent educational destination. Other participants, such as Interviewee 2, when asked if she ever thought of living abroad, said that she never dreamed of living in another country because she loved her country of origin, friends, and family. She was happy in Russia, had a good job and a comfortable life.

Changing one's residence might start with tourism. Imagining cultures to explore and visit places reflects one of the primary motivations for travel (Salazar, 2020). In the case of the participants, their desire to explore the world generated a social imagination (Benson, 2011) and vice versa. Interviewee 1 explained that 'Spanish culture was attractive to her'. She always imagined dancing flamenco as a little girl and wanted to visit Spain, especially Barcelona. So, the idea to move beyond the borders of their country of origin began in childhood, such as in the case of Interviewee 7, who said that since childhood, he wanted to visit France, and he was picturing himself eating croissants and macaroons all the time. In particular cases, the social imaginary led respondents to be tourists in the destinations they most imagined. In later stages, this type of movement helped migrants to reimagine the place(s) to which they belonged (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011).

Tourism stage

In most cases, continuous movement started with tourism. Participants commented on various emotional experiences. For example, Interviewee 14 would remember people—when she went to Spain, she was surprised at how sunny the country was, and how kind Spanish people were. She said this was a 'bright impression' for her first trip that differed from her normal working and home environment. Strong impressions and experiences characterise this stage of the Movement Continuum. After these typically short 'escape periods' (vacations with friends or families or school excursions), they started to realise the 'greyness' and 'sadness' of Russian society. These strong memories stayed with the respondents. Interviewee 8 remembered the smell of jasmine as one of the significant features of her tourism experience in Turkey. She also remembered traffic, streets full of cars and buses, but jasmine 'was in her head': 'I even called my mother to explain this!'. She also compared streets in Russia and Turkey: '...the roads were clean. I never can wear white Converse in Russia because it is always dirty in my city, but here [Turkey] I can and all year around....'

Tourism gives participants a chance to escape and feel positive emotions. Overall, the participants are people with rich tourism experiences who consider it an everyday practice (Cohen, 2011) with educational value. Visiting cultural attractions, seeing architecture different from their usual environment, and consuming products offered by tourist destinations allowed for an illusion of romanticism without noticing any negatives of the destination. They would talk about feeling like they were in a fairy-tale or crazy and happy people, as Interviewee 10 said when she compared Swedish houses to gingerbread houses'. The imaginaries of participants often matched their expectations of a particular place. All respondents shared similar stories when participating in tourism experiences for the first time. It may relate to

their previous static and 'robotic', always 'the same' life in the home destination. Nevertheless, the analysis revealed that the motivation and wish to continue moving and exploring more destinations appeared after this stage. That leads mobile actors to the next stage.

Lifestyle travelling stage

Sudden opportunities and world exploration led the participants to look for ways to live abroad for more time—they were driven to take another trip to the same destination due to the first satisfactory experience. Participants partially considered this stage as tourism. However, they are more involved in the local culture and traditions and start identifying the importance of the hosting culture, mentality, people, and language.

During this stage, participants start learning the local language and look for seasonal jobs or education opportunities while travelling. Here, there is an understanding of the type of place mobile people could choose to migrate to and settle down. It also connects to identifying the self with a particular destination and wishing to find a home among all the visited destinations. Interviewee 15 'could not even remember how many countries she visited'. She explained a 'desire' to be a part of each culture to understand local people better. Travelling became the valuable factor for participants, even though they only sometimes had the economic means to travel. However, by being inspired and motivated through previous travel experiences, they started searching for opportunities, such as short volunteer programs (from 3 to 6 months), as Interviewee 15 mentioned in her interview.

As mentioned above, participants were often well-educated individuals. So, for them, this stage represented the process of understanding themselves and an opportunity to discover more about the world by being involved in the local community. Interviewee 12 described that being attached to one place was complicated for him. He wanted to see more 'things' and to meet interesting people. So, he was travelling around, studying from months to years in different destinations, but in the end, he decided to return to the place where he felt 'more needed'. This stage allowed participants to have unconscious discussions with themselves about where was an 'ideal' place and, perhaps, home. Interviewee 3 highlighted that she needed to know which country to live in and which language to speak. She liked different things in different places and decided to travel more to look for 'something'.

Nevertheless, the process of searching for self-identity and self-attachments has an end. It is an emotional process with an unconscious link to the desire to find a home (Duval, 2004; Germann Molz, 2008). The transition to the following stage starts to bring ideas of home, where participants feel calm and comfortable. It only sometimes means an immediate decision to migrate. However, the sense of home might make the participants stay longer at a particular location. Involvement in the local community leads to constructing emotional ties and relationships (Benson, 2015). So, interaction with people and objects in a particular destination helped participants gain an idea or sense of home (Nowicka, 2007) or, in some cases, multiple homes (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011).

Lifestyle mobilities stage

This stage is the most extended period of living abroad for education or work. Participants choose a specific destination to stay for more than three months, considering previous tourism experiences, previous learning of the language or culture of the hosting country, and receiving a job offer or study opportunity, such as a grant or award. Beyond that, at this stage, participants realised that they did not want to go back to Russia. Interviewee 1 initially did not want to move abroad. However, her 'lifestyle journey' made her realise she 'would not like to build her life in Russia'. She mentioned having strange and hard feelings back in Spain, but she enjoyed everything, so she felt she did not need to return to Russia. Such 'dilemmas' also led participants to a phase of loneliness. They all described facing personal adaptation problems before settling down for an extended period. From another perspective, the lifestyle mobilities stage can be considered as a moment to rethink the nomadic or backpacker life.

Interviewee 2 decided to try living in Italy for a year as she realised, she did not want to return to Russia. After a couple of months, being in Italy made her feel lonely and 'different' from the Italians. She explained her first 'love' with the destination and her 'attempts' to continue 'loving this place' as she wanted to try to build her life there. She needed help to adapt. Having been highly mobile, she found it challenging to become more static. A feeling of being a stranger and alone was also faced by Interviewee 3. Perhaps, among all the participants, she described it most vividly. She said she was so afraid because differences in culture and people's behaviour made her feel a bit depressed: 'I was sitting in my old flat and thinking what I should do next. I had problems with my visa...I had no friends...I was alone and destroyed'. During this stage, respondents start to miss family and friends, and they see many differences with the destination. They might even pivot and think about 'running away' to Russia.

The respondents started to question themselves: 'Why did I come here? Was it the right decision?' Positive issues from previous stages, such as 'falling in love with the destination' (Interviewee 11) and 'beautiful people are around' (Interviewee 9), are combined with negative senses of 'being trapped' (Interviewee 13). This stage can be characterised by the breakdown of the illusions created by positive tourism experiences. Participants started facing language barriers; they needed to understand the cultural issues of the host environment and adapt to new customs and traditions. Participants also had other difficulties to overcome, such as with legal documents, looking for local friends, or a similar community. As a result, identity reshaping takes place here as they try to find a 'self' again in the chosen destination. Through their struggles and uncertainty, the sense of home is first challenged and then strengthened in the new location (Germann Molz, 2008).

Lifestyle migration stage

Lifestyle Migration is the last stage in the transition and reflects self-understanding and attachment to a particular destination. Migrants start to feel at home after personal crises and adaptation processes. They do not wish to change locations (at that

moment) nor go back to Russia. They start to re-evaluate the destination from other perspectives.

Any sense of a tourism illusion might collapse during this stage. It correlates to research on the personal crisis by Benson and O'Reilly (2016), who point to ideas of negative experiences that often lead to a return to the country of origin. However, the personal crises discussed in the previous stage do not (entirely) relate to negative experiences from the past. Searching for self in this final stage is an attempt to explain the personal choice of a particular destination. Participants want to integrate their sense of belonging and home into their chosen destination (Brah, 1996). At this stage, participants commonly began to speak the language and find friends and jobs. Participants also highlighted that the feelings of loneliness had passed and been replaced by feelings of being proud to be able to create a home.

Dealing with personal crises related to self-identity, language, legal, or other issues helped participants to complete the transition to becoming a migrant in the context of the Movement Continuum. They began to feel at home, although ethnicity, integration, and assimilation issues remained important (Crul & Schneider, 2010). Whilst respondents changed their country of residence, they often kept their attachment to the Russian community. Sometimes they did not look for the links with fellow Russians. However, what became obvious was the importance for some participants of retaining their (cultural and identity) differences in their 'new' home.

Nevertheless, all study participants became attached to both the host and local Russian communities. Some participants, such as Interviewee 11, mentioned that having a Russian community in the destination was one reason to migrate. He explained it made him feel 'not so far away from the motherland'. Some respondents did not look for Russian friends on purpose, but in the end, they all confirmed that they felt 'safety' in having local, Russian connections. For Interviewee 3, having friends, especially female friends, from Russia was crucial: 'American girls will never understand me!'. However, she did also have American friends. Some respondents strongly emphasised a sense of being 'proud' to be different, such as in the case of Interviewee 5. He enjoyed meeting different people, but meeting people with the same cultural experiences and background strengthened his friendships. He also mentioned that being with Russians in Austria made him closer to Russian traditions. So, whilst this stage was about reconciling moments of crisis with a sense of belonging, it was also a stage that was characterised by (re)creating bonds with their Russian roots and communities.

Beyond the Movement Continuum

The whole idea of being mobile, for these young Russian individuals, is not about them seeing mobility as a way to feel 'less stressed' in their standard day-to-day routine or that mobility is an escape from existing senses of crisis (Benson & O'Reilly, 2016), especially when for many young Western/European individuals such escape is not complicated by legal or visa issues. Instead, the mobilities of the participants are more specifically associated with leisure and work opportunities. Recent Russian society, influenced by USSR history and culture, does not often perceive travel, or a

'mobile career' and living abroad as a 'normal' (Zuev, 2008). It remains a luxury and privilege, although in reality, this is now the myth.

The participant's stories allowed for a mapping of all the stages of movement from tourism to migration which illustrates the relationships between lifestyle migration and tourism in each individual continuum and the final Movement Continuum framework (see Figure 2). As such, the Movement Continuum reflects elements derived from positive tourism experiences that triggered the wish to start being mobile, which differs a little from Benson and O'Reilly (2016). It also demonstrates elements of migration, such as the relationship to new local communities or Russian communities, and a sense of home or place attachment that made participants finally stay within a destination. However, it also shows the 'blurred' elements related to travel, such as 'identity crises' that lead to phases of self-reflection and re-identifying with the self, and to the lifestyle mobilities stage where personal crises lead to the outcomes of one's 'mobile project' i.e., choosing to 'stay'. The Movement Continuum challenges Benson and O'Reilly (2016) thoughts on escape being about getting away from 'home'. Instead, the framework suggests that individuals might use crises to experience and 'run towards' mobility (e.g. tourism or travelling) and that these crises can, in the long run affect their decisions to stay, settle down, and migrate.

Conclusions

This paper has examined the lifestyle-based experiences and personal decisions underpinning the mobility of sixteen Russian migrants and introduced the Movement Continuum framework. The findings shed light on the trajectories of well-educated young individuals who 'escaped' from a culturally outdated, 'USSR' way of thinking and took the opportunity to travel and become mobile. Changing lifestyles and senses of self, belonging, and home connect the different participants across the Movement Continuum. The ongoing movement of participants is driven by new opportunities offered by the attractiveness of a destination, previous social imaginaries, or the wish to generate positive emotions.

Several elements became apparent during the research. Firstly, and perhaps not surprisingly, those that might be defined as tourists, drifters, travellers, backpackers, gap year tourists, and migrants, had similar reasons to stay on the move (this is what led to the creation of the Movement Continuum). This led to the participants trying to discover an 'ideal' home or lifestyle, which played a crucial role in moving through the stages of the Movement Continuum. It is also clear, due to the possibility of doing interviews with people from a wide range of countries, that people might experience remarkably similar life situations in a diverse range of locations. It is different from other studies that have tended to focus on migrants in one location. At the same time, designing the Movement Continuum with knowledge from a small group of Russian migrants might limit its broader applicability as the focus has been mainly on personal identities and their transformations instead of analysing, for instance, geographical aspects, such as choosing to migrate specifically to urban or rural areas. Future research, therefore, should explore larger cohorts across different locations to uncover motivations and moments of personal crises, which could allow

for the adaption of the Movement Continuum beyond the sample of Russian migrants. Moreover, future research could better analyse the relationship between lifestyle travel and lifestyle migration in relation to those who define themselves as remaining 'on the move'.

The Movement Continuum complements and builds upon earlier research on lifestyle migration (Benson & O'Reilly, 2016). Specifically, it answers earlier calls highlighting how an individual's mobility patterns might change. In particular, the findings of this study suggest that moments of personal crisis, often seen as a trigger to 'escape' (Benson & O'Reilly, 2016), instead illustrate that a critical 'breakdown' can culminate in a (permanent) change in place of residence. The Movement Continuum also combines components of tourism at the beginning of one's mobility and finishes with components of migration that help individuals to decide to 'stay'. Nevertheless, the impacts of personal crisis can profoundly influence decisions to stay or move throughout every stage of the Movement Continuum, extending previous research on lifestyle migration. Instead of ideas of 'running from' or 'returning', the suggestion is that crises help participants 'run to' opportunities, experiences, and new locations and can bring a new perspective to current conceptualisations of lifestyle, mobility, and migration (see also Cohen et al., 2015). We argue that moments of personal crises can trigger a (new) 'search for self', leading to a wish to stay on the move or the opportunity to find oneself and develop a sense of belonging, leading to more permanent forms of migration.

When this research was conducted in 2020, it was generally a complex process to migrate from Russia due to legal/visa policies, different income levels, and cultural patterns of the population. It is even more relevant considering the Russia-Ukraine conflict of 2022. In going back to Cohen and Cohen's (2015) call to move beyond Eurocentric research and by complementing it with Zuev's (2008) study of the mobility of young Russians, this paper discusses a group of migrants whose mobilities are similar, yet different, from previous (more Eurocentric) studies. This is more so as contemporary Russian mobility (for those living outside of Russia) is increasingly complex, fraught, and difficult. Moreover, the results of this study complement previous research on lifestyle mobilities and lifestyle migration with new perspectives about how lifestyle and mobility are intertwined and broaden understandings of the reality, performance, and conflicts inherent in moving for lifestyle.

At the same time, global challenges, such as the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the political and military confrontation between Russia and Ukraine have undoubtedly impacted tourism and migration flow from Russia, the sense of place, and mobile journeys of the participants. When undertaking fieldwork, COVID-19 was the biggest crisis on the horizon. For most of the participants, restrictions generally did not affect their identity in terms of their mobility and sense of attachment to destinations. However, the events of 2022 will have had an impact on these participants' mobile identities and lifestyles. It would be valuable to go back and interview the same participants to explore how they have adapted to the 'new realities' and how these realities affect their current and future mobility patterns in terms of navigating lifestyles, tourism, and migration.

Finally, although the Movement Continuum suggests moving from one stage to the next, it illustrates an ongoing lifestyle project or mobility career. The Movement Continuum does not represent a complete(d) picture of the participant's mobile lives,

lifestyles, or anyone else's. Instead, it is a representation of mobility's stages in chronological order. Stages may blur into one another (in terms of characteristics), or individuals might jump over an entire stage or go back to their country of origin or a previous destination to start a particular stage or the whole Movement Continuum again, according to their lifestyle experiences. It is not simply a linear progression. Add to this, the value of recognising how mobile actors 'transform' negative experiences into positives, perhaps leading to successful migration, integration, and assimilation. Therefore, the framework illustrates the personal journeys and identity transitions of young individuals who learn through travel, lifestyle, and mobility challenges and crises. To conclude, through the development of the Movement Continuum, this paper has attempted to illustrate the ongoing complexity of lifestyle, mobility, tourism, and migration faced by those who choose to move and the necessity of re-examining how these concepts fit together in an increasingly changing and uncertain world.

Disclosure statement

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