

GERMAN SPA TOWNS AS RETIREMENT DESTINATIONS: HOW (PRE)RETIRES NEGOTIATE RELOCATION AND LOCALS ASSESS IN-MIGRATION

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ABSTRACT

German Spa Towns as Retirement Destinations: How (Pre)Retirees Negotiate Relocation and Locals Assess In-migration

The current generation of senior citizens strives for a self-determined way of life and frequently materialises this through relocation to tourist destinations. Based on this premise, this paper analyses German (pre)retirees who are planning or have realised inter-regional lifestyle migration to Bad Fuessing, a spa town in Southern Germany. While recent studies have focused on lifestyle migrants' perspectives in pre- and post-migration lives, this article adds local stakeholders' assessments of age-selective in-migration. It is proposed that locals view the latter ambivalently against the backdrop of demographic change and transformations in health tourism. The article opens up lifestyle migration research to applied questions by considering the economic and social implications for destinations, i.e. it takes into account the structures that frame migration. **KEYWORDS:** tourism, lifestyle migration, ageing, regional development, Germany

IZVLEČEK

Nemška zdraviliška mesta kot zeleni kraji upokojitve: kako se (pred)upokojnenci soočajo s preselitvijo in kako jo ocenjuje lokalno prebivalstvo

Trenutna generacija starejših prizadevanja za samostojen način življenja pogosto izraža s selitvijo na turistične destinacije. Na teh premisah članek analizira nemške (pred)upokojnence, ki načrtujejo ali pa so že uresničili medregionalno življenjsko-stilsko migracijo v Bad Fuessing, zdraviliško mesto v južni Nemčiji. Medtem ko so se nedavne študije osredotočale na perspektive življenjsko-stilskih migrantov in njihova življenja pred migracijo in po njej, pričujoči članek dodaja ocene lokalnih prebivalcev, ki nanj gledajo ambivalentno, skozi optiko demografskih sprememb in transformacij zdravstvenega turizma. Članek pri raziskovanju življenjsko-stilskih migracij upošteva ekonomske in družbene implikacije posameznih destinacij, kar pomeni, da upošteva strukture, ki uokvirjajo migracijo.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: turizem, življenjsko-stilske migracije, staranje, regionalni razvoj, Nemčija

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INTRODUCTION

Structural conditions and individual desires at a specific stage of life often result in a change of residence. While younger people relocate in search of better educational opportunities or child-friendly neighbourhoods, (pre)retirees aged 50+ often migrate in order to fulfil a self-determined way of ageing. Accordingly, they plan or even have realised relocation to places considered to be better and thereby follow what Polèse (2009) calls the hedonic imperative, encompassing, for instance, happiness, comfort or beautiful environments (*ibid.* 153).

Research on lifestyle migration discusses extensively the individual's quest for a better way of life in various spatial contexts and with regard to different socio-demographic groups (Benson, O'Reilly 2009; Janoschka, Haas 2014). While research focuses thereby on individual perspectives of the migrants themselves, the insights of the receiving community, i.e. the local inhabitants' views, are rarely considered (except for Balkir, Kirkulak 2009). At destinations, however, various stakeholders create specific structural conditions and (local) political discourses that subsequently may encourage or inhibit migration processes. Furthermore, local inhabitants interact with newcomers to a certain extent and thus co-construct the better way of life (*cf.* Benson 2011). Giving a voice to local inhabitants could thus enrich lifestyle migration research on the implications for destinations.

Lifestyle migration in Europe initially focused on favourable regions affected by mass tourism, e.g. Spain (O'Reilly 2003; Huete 2009; Janoschka 2009a; Kordel 2014a), while recently more peripheral areas, e.g. rural France, have come into play (Benson 2011). Central Europe, however, has not been at the core of interest to date. In Germany, for instance, preferences for tourism-informed regions among lifestyle movers in general and the growing cohort of (pre)retirees in particular are significant. This article discusses inter-regional migration of pre(retirees) to spa towns, i.e. mostly small towns in a rural setting. Spa towns are considered firstly as places where the nexus of tourism and in-migration is observable, because mainly former regular guests decide to relocate (Kordel 2014b). Secondly, socially constructed place-related characteristics such as leisure and health are structural preconditions underpinning migration decisions. Thirdly, these towns show a population gain, which is in marked contrast to an overall trend of rural to urban migration and age-selective out-migration. Besides well-known patterns that frame lifestyle migration, spa towns can be considered as laboratories for both the socio-demographic composition of a population that is projected for large parts of Central Europe in the future, and for processes for coping with the implications of demographic change.

This paper aims to integrate migrants' and locals' perspectives on lifestyle migration and therefore asks how (pre)retirees plan and realise relocation to the German spa town of Bad Fuessing, how they reproduce or alter tourist experiences in their post-migration lives, and finally, how local stakeholders view and react to the in-migration of the elderly.

The article is organised in five parts. Following this introduction, the second part explains the need for integrating local inhabitants' perspectives in order to understand structures and discourses affecting migration, and provides an overview of research on tourism-informed lifestyle migration with special emphasis on health tourism. General implications of demographic change and particular consequences of migration of the elderly are also discussed. The third part focuses on the site of the study, the spa town of Bad Fuessing, considering especially its significance with regard to inter-regional migration patterns, and explains the research methods applied. Fourthly, empirical results are presented from both migrants' and local inhabitants' perspectives, i.e. discussing planning efforts to relocate, post-migration lives and issues of the governance of migration. Finally, implications for future research prospects on applied questions of lifestyle migration are discussed.

CURRENT SITUATION

Lifestyle migration research in need of locals' perspectives

In considering relatively affluent individuals moving to places that signify a better quality of life (Benson, O'Reilly 2009), lifestyle migration research has recently focused on representations of a better life and how such images have been altered or reproduced in post-migration lives in manifold ways. With regard to the decision to move, Benson (2012) suggests that it "is reached through a combination of individualised biographies, trajectories and actions, as well as wider cultural contexts and structural conditions" (ibid., 1681). While cultural contexts have been the focus of interest in lifestyle migration research, political framings and discourses have barely been taken into account. Greater focus on the latter may result in establishing certain representations and images of receiving destinations, which subsequently may encourage or prevent further in-migration. This is especially important for regions which do not project a marketable image, but are considered to be peripheral and in need of support, such as Central European rural areas.

Specific structural conditions, both at sites of origin and destinations, affect migration processes. The right to free movement and settlement is a peculiarity of the European Union (Ackers, Dwyer 2004), while structures framing the tourism-migration nexus have been discussed in various spatial contexts (for Spain cf. Rodríguez 2001; Huete 2009; for Latin America cf. Janoschka 2009b). Real estate properties initially planned for recreation purposes have been adapted as permanent dwellings, and leisure infrastructures are extensively used in post-migration lives in order to reproduce a leisure-oriented way of life (Kordel 2014a).

Political discourses about in-migration and specific structures on site not only affect the migration decision, but also shape how local people think about newcomers. It is assumed that political framings and structural conditions are reflected in local inhabitants' opinions about the existence and practices of lifestyle migrants (Janoschka, Haas 2014: 7). While some studies have focused on how local inhabitants resist newcomers and discussed gentrification processes as a consequence of lifestyle migration / residential tourism (Janoschka 2009a; Janoschka 2009b; Bastos 2014), this contribution takes into account the planning process of migrants and local authorities as well as the implications of lifestyle migration for destinations. The assessment of existing and possible newcomers is central to this contribution. For this purpose, the article firstly considers overall political discourses on demographic change as well as its concrete political implementation in a spa town in Central Europe. Secondly, transformations in key local industries, e.g. health tourism, are of focal interest when analysing local responses to in-migration of a specific socio-demographic group, e.g. (pre)retirees.

Encountering lifestyle migration through health tourism

In Western societies, good health and wellbeing are now considered as core values (Pforr et al. 2014: 100). So it is not surprising that places labelled as "healthy" are discovered by lifestyle migrants. An impressive example of the search for a life considered better or in contrast to the life left behind (Benson, O'Reilly 2009) is the mountain village of Vilcabamba in the Andes of South Ecuador, which maintains the myth of being located in the "Valley of Longevity". Here, lifestyle migrants pursue practices associated with a physically and mentally healthy way of life, e.g. cultivating organic food or doing yoga (Kordel, Pohle 2013). Certain structures of health tourism that commodify the increasing consciousness and demand for health proliferate.

Health tourism becomes impressively manifest in spa towns, which have a long-standing history throughout Europe. Based on water-induced treatments, the Romans built sophisticated baths and travelled to spas for therapeutic purposes; balneotherapy as a medical treatment was promoted during

the Renaissance, and the town of Spa, in Belgium, developed as a popular place for European aristocracy in the 18th century (Smith, Puczkó 2013). Amidst the saline baths of Bad Reichenhall, Germany, for instance, a spa culture was developed which combined “the pleasant and the useful, a unique blend of modern medicine, urbane entertainment, and Alpine views that catered to both middle-class and elite tastes” (Rosenbaum 2014: 41).

To date, there are more than 250 officially registered spas and health resorts in Germany. Based on the (natural) source of their curative effects, e.g. climate, water, therapeutic philosophy, they are classified in six categories (Deutscher Heilbäderverband 2011).¹ *Kur*² treatments encompass tourist stays of three or more weeks’ duration and represent an important pillar for tourism. Yet, from the 1990s on, a structural crisis based on cutbacks in social security for cures formerly financed by health insurance companies was recognised in spa towns (Pforr, Locher 2012). As a consequence, tourists had to pay for their stays mostly from their own pockets. Regressive durations of stay result in a need for attracting more visitors in order to maintain the existing infrastructure.

While there are no adequate studies of German spa towns, Michalkó and Rátz (2010) discussed tourism-induced migration for spa towns in Hungary: “Tourists, who wish to regularly benefit from the medical qualities of the waters and the associated medical treatments, may decrease their costs of stay [...] by buying their own property” (ibid., 131). Already existing in the socialist era, spa towns were considered as favourable sites for purchasing second homes and subsequent retirement retreats (ibid., 139). Even nowadays, the latter contribute to a more sustainable development, as their use is less seasonal.

Individuals who purchase holiday homes “with an eye on retirement” (Polèse 2009: 170) show planning efforts to relocate at an early stage. Accordingly, lifestyle migration to spa towns confirms the widespread assumption that migration cannot be separated from tourism (Rodríguez 2001).³

Ageing in Central Europe: coping with demographic change, consequences for migration patterns and political discourses

Since the late 1990s, debates about demographic change and implications on various spatial scales have come to the fore in Central Europe (Steinführer et al. 2014). Addressed as a quantitative shift of the age structure of a population, i.e. ageing and population decline, structurally weak areas are particularly affected by this process. Peripheral rural municipalities subsequently face a downward spiral (ibid., 347f.). Shrinking populations result in lower tax revenue, and the provision of public services and infrastructure is thus endangered as costs of maintaining infrastructure increase. Accordingly, the provision of medical facilities, for instance, is challenged, firstly when public hospitals can no longer be maintained, or secondly when doctors are unwilling to settle in rural areas (Swiaczny 2010: 200). Demographic decline and ageing result in the loss of various forms of capital that is proved necessary for successful coping and adaptation (Steinführer et al. 2014: 346). Commonly, “an increase in population is in a way seen as an indicator of success, where the media designate ‘winner’ and ‘loser’ municipalities and the politicians are cheered or blamed, respectively” (Niedomyśl 2004: 1992).

1 Mineral, thermal and mud spa resorts; healing climate health resorts; seaside spas and resorts; health resorts with healing caves and radon therapy; aerotherapy health resorts; Kneipp spas and health resorts (Deutscher Heilbäderverband 2011).

2 *Kur* treatments are considered as “specific medical prevention, convalescence and rehabilitation program or treatment for particular chronic diseases” (Pforr et al. 2014: 105). They have been funded by the various German health insurance funds when recommended and prescribed by a general practitioner (ibid.).

3 Considering interdependencies of tourism and retirement migration with regard to structural preconditions, the concept of tourism area evolution suggests that amenities foster the development of leisure infrastructure (Butler 2006). Brown et al. (2001) argued that retirees are already attracted in the development stage and “retirement grows alongside tourism” (ibid., 51), as visitors form various links to the destination.

As a consequence, the need for political intervention was recently raised among political leaders. Measures that enable people to age in place, for instance mobility solutions, the provision of age-appropriate infrastructure in terms of local supply and health, were initiated for the elderly (Wytrzens et al. 2014). Other fields of action encompass attraction policies for enterprises and repopulation initiatives (Schmied 2005; Eimermann 2014). The latter, for instance, comprise financial incentives for young families, e.g. reduced real estate costs (Steinführer et al. 2014: 357). Since initiatives for repopulation were undertaken as strategies to cope with the implications of demographic change, it has to be noted that in-migration of the elderly is discussed controversially, as both a boon and a burden (Haas 1990). Various studies, mainly carried out in the United States, have highlighted the implications of retired migrants on destinations (Skelley 2004), stressing positive impacts on the real estate market and in the construction sector (Vollet et al. 2005: 56). Retirement migrants spend money (which was earned elsewhere) in the community – on real estate, food, entertainment and health services (ibid.; Polèse 2009: 163f.). However, in-migration of (pre)retirees may result in rising real estate prices, which can displace young families (Brown et al. 2011: 70). Subsequently, land use conflicts may arise between retirees and economic activities at destinations, e.g. farming and industry (Vollet et al. 2005: 66).

Migrants can also be an important social resource for communities as they are mostly considered to be relatively better educated and skilled. Moreover, they are more likely to be involved in civic engagement. As a consequence, various stakeholders, for instance civic organisations or local governments, can benefit from the knowledge of newcomers (Skelley 2004: 213). Newcomers may also stimulate the arts and cultural scene (Brown et al. 2011: 70). However, senior citizens “who become active in civic and cultural affairs can be insensitive to the needs and preferences of longer-term residents” (ibid.).

PAVING THE WAY – SITE OF STUDY AND METHODS

Spatial patterns of inter-regional retirement migration in Germany

Friedrich (2008) pointed out that ageing in place predominates in Germany (ibid., 192). Those (pre)retirees who actually decide to relocate within Germany,⁴ crossing borders of municipalities, mostly move within the same *Bundesland* (state) at a short distance. About 30% cross state borders, while some are “short-distance moves in urbanised regions” (Friedrich, Warnes 2000: 110), e.g. between federal city states of Hamburg or Berlin and the surrounding states.⁵

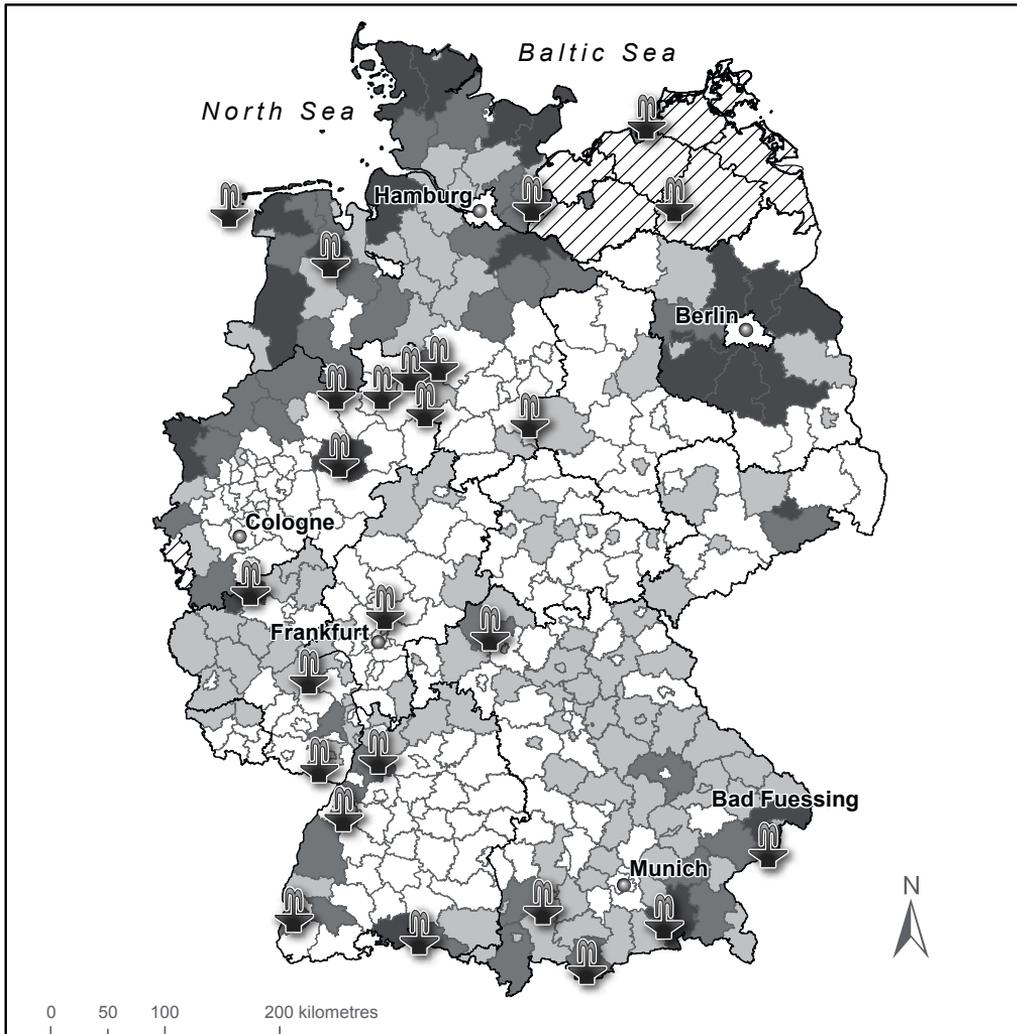
To date, the general spatial pattern of inter-regional retirement migration in Germany is characterised by net shifts of people towards less populated areas, i.e. down the metropolitan hierarchy. An exception is East Germany, where urbanisation tendencies predominate (Friedrich, Warnes 2000: 110). As indicated on the map (Map 1), positive cumulative 5-year age-selective net migration of (pre)retirees aged 50+ predominates in tourism informed regions (North Sea Region, Baltic Sea Region, Alpine Region) and the surrounds of Berlin and Hamburg. Accordingly, spa towns represent a significant proportion of municipalities facing age-selective in-migration. With regard to the 25 most attractive spa towns in Germany among people aged 50+ (cf. Map 1), net migration influx ranges between 310 (Bad Rothenfelde) and 800 (Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler) in a 5-year period.

4 In 2012, only two percent of German population aged 50+ relocated intra- or inter-regionally (Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder 2015; cf. Austria 1.4%, Statistik Austria 2015).

5 An international dimension of German retirement migration has come to the fore since the 1970s (Goltz, Born 2005; see case studies carried out by Casado-Díaz et al. 2004; Janoschka 2009a; Kordel 2014a).

Inter-regional net migration in Germany

5-years cumulation 2008-2012, age cohorts 50+, NUTS 3 level



Legend

Cumulative age-selective net migration 2008 - 2012 (50+)

- < 0
- 0 - 500
- 501-1000
- > 1000
- no data available
- Spa town

Concept: Stefan Kordel
 Data treatment: Tobias Weidinger
 Cartography: Florian Dworzak
 Data source: Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, dl-de/by-2-0

Map 1: Age-selective net-migration in Germany

The spa town of Bad Fuessing as a retirement destination

The spa town of Bad Fuessing, a popular destination for health and spa tourism, is located in south-eastern Germany in the district of Passau, close to the German-Austrian border (see Map 1). Situated on the river Inn, the area is characterised by a flat relief and is subsequently easily accessible to people with physical constraints. The thermal spring was discovered during oil prospecting in 1938, while the thermal bath was established after World War II. Since 1971 Bad Fuessing has been assigned the label “Bad” (Pietrusky, Wisbauer 1977). Together with the neighbouring spa towns of Bad Griesbach and Bad Birnbach, the area is known as the “Lower Bavarian thermal bath triangle”.

Apart from large metropolitan areas such as Munich, Berlin or Hamburg, Bad Fuessing is the most important tourist destination in Germany and the most frequented spa in Europe (Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder 2015). In the course of structural transformations in health tourism, durations of stay decreased from 13.0 days in 2000 to 8.7 days in 2012. In 2012, the number of registered guest arrivals was 273,326, i.e. 2,372,152 overnight stays, respectively (considering accommodations of more than 9 beds, Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik und Datenverarbeitung 2014: 15).

Alongside its tourist development, the population of Bad Fuessing has increased (1970: 3,848 inhabitants; 2012: 6,702 inhabitants; see Table 1). As death rates have surpassed birth rates since 1985, only an influx of population can explain this growth. The latter is increasingly age-selective, i.e. (pre) retirees aged 50+ predominate (214 individuals, 44.9% of total influx in 2012).

		2000	2008	2012
Bad Fuessing	Total Population	6,442	6,700	6,702
	Proportion of (pre)retirees (50+)	44.4%	54.3%	58.0%
	Influx of (pre)retirees (50+, absolute)	186	225	214
	Gender sensitivity of influx of (pre)retirees (50+, proportion of women)	54.8%	56.0%	55.1%
	Proportion of influx of (pre)retirees (50+) in relation to total influx	34.8%	44.1%	44.9%
Germany	Proportion of (pre)retirees (50+)	35.6%	39.3%	41.9%

Table 1: Key demographic figures for Bad Fuessing (source: Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder 2015).

METHODS

Empirical data were collected through the application of two methods. Firstly, six biographical-narrative interviews were conducted in Winter 2011 in Bad Fuessing. Secondly, ten guideline-based interviews were conducted with a variety of local stakeholders in order to determine locals' views of age-selective in-migration.

The biographical-narrative interviews were designed to encourage the integration of autobiographical experiences with wider structural framings (Rosenthal 1995), i.e. to elaborate prospects and manifestations of relocation and address evaluations of practices in post-migration lives. Interview partners were selected at public places on a weekend according to the aim to cover both groups, potential and current newcomers, who were mainly in good mental and physical health. The sample of interviewees finally consisted of mostly couples aged between 51 and 85 years (see Table 2). For ethical considerations, all names of biographical-narrative interviewees were replaced with pseudonyms.

Interview	Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Civil status	Relocation status
BI-1 (Biographical-narrative Interview 1)	Walter	51	male	single	Regular visitor, owns house at place of origin, does not plan to relocate during working life
BI-2	Herman Josephine	70 70	male female	couple	Relocated two months ago
BI-3	Otto Renate	64 57	male female	couple	Regular visitors, own house at place of origin, plan to relocate in the future
BI-4	Thomas Patricia	77 77	male female	couple	First-time visitors, do not plan to relocate in the future
BI-5	Anna Gundula	85 79	female female	single single	Relocated 11 / 15 years ago
BI-6	Klaus Barbara	82 n/a	male female	couple	Relocated three months ago

Table 2: List of interviewees

Ten guideline-based interviews with local stakeholders were conducted between December 2011 and September 2013. Interviewees include representatives of local associations and local administration as well as stakeholders in the tourist industry. The variety of interviewees enabled the researchers to obtain insights into local assessments of in-migration from various social groups affected by either demographic change or structural transformations in tourism, e.g. tourism, social life (associations) and ageing. Semi-standardised interview guidelines were used to make statements comparable.

All interviews were conducted in German. After obtaining approval from the interviewees, they were recorded and finally transcribed and translated into English. Systematic analyses were undertaken by means of qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2000).

RESULTS

Individuals' relocation processes and beyond

People who relocated to the spa town of Bad Fuessing retrospectively view the migration process as a quest for new experiences and with regard to notions of sociability over the entire year.

Gundula: There is always something going on. At other places, there is no action in November. Here, there are always people around me. My husband has always been curious about the world and liked it here. At the beginning, we were in Bad Fuessing for holidays and then decided to relocate. (BI-5)

One couple explicitly point out a contrast to previous life experiences in metropolitan areas and perceive life in Bad Fuessing as more healthy and age-appropriate. The wife accordingly states:

Josephine: We wanted to get out of the city, away from city life. So we chose this area which is great for elderly people considering their health. There are no mountains so no exhausting uphill and downhill routes and the fresh air, almost no air pollution – not to mention the health spas and the thermal baths. (BI-2)

Well some of them have come here regularly once, twice or even three times a year over the last 20 to 40 years to take a cure. They experienced the healing water actually improving their condition and saw themselves moving here after retirement. Furthermore, the landscape here is fairly flat which is very important for elderly people. (Representative of a church, male)

Even local experts such as a representative of a church affirm tourist experiences as regular guests and emphasise the curative effects of healing water. The latter is important for both rehabilitation and the prevention of constraints related to the ageing process. It became obvious that the formation of powerful links to resort communities among (pre)retirees resulted in permanent relocation (cf. Haas, Serow 1993).

When relocating, particularly in older age, specific planning efforts are undertaken "to minimise the risks related to property acquisition" (Åkerlund 2013: 638). Despite the fact that the current generation of (pre)retirees in Europe is on good pensions, the choice of a future residence is driven by the individual's financial situation and the local real estate market (Kramer, Pfaffenbach 2009: 163; Benson, O'Reilly 2009). The following quotation refers to the latter:

Herman: Before we decided to relocate, we took a trip throughout the state of Bavaria. We visited the lakes south of Munich, Lake Starnberg, Lake Ammer, Lake Chiem. And you have to recognise: apartments in Bad Fuessing are up to half the price compared to the Munich surroundings. [...] It is cheaper and it is easier to find accommodation. (BI-2)

Planning efforts regarding property also include considerations about whether it makes sense to buy or rent. A couple staying in Bad Fuessing for tourism purposes several times per year decided not to move to Bad Fuessing for the present due to economic considerations. While tourism mobilities and multi-local living arrangements, respectively, go along with an opportunity to enjoy the best of both worlds (Huete 2009: 46), a relocation to one place would diminish the benefits of the other.

Otto: We thought about getting an apartment. But after calculating everything it just isn't financially worthwhile. If you want to buy a nice apartment, you'll have to spend about EUR 50,000 to 70,000. As soon as you invest EUR 70,000 you have to come here more often. [...] Residing here, you're bound to this town but that's what we actually don't want to be; for a few months that might be okay but not for longer.

Renate: We alternate locations to enjoy the respective benefits. We don't want to do without the cultural scene of Munich and the shopping facilities. (BI-3)

Once the decision to live in Bad Fuessing is made, the search for an appropriate dwelling begins. The latter is characterised as a self-determined process, without having to rely on real estate agents.

Barbara: We were in contact with an estate agent. I can't recall her name but she told us: 'You won't get anything in Bad Fuessing.' Then we stayed at Schweizer Hof [a hotel in Bad Fuessing, author's remark] for the Christmas holidays and I previously subscribed to the Passau newspaper so I could check the housing market at home. I told my husband that I had brought some interesting newspaper ads with me and that we should have a look at them. And among them was our apartment. [...] The estate agent just wanted to flog us an apartment and showed us one after the other. But we didn't want to be exposed to more stress so we would be able to go into a retirement home if necessary. (BI-6)

In contrast to multi-step migration in older age (Litwak, Longino 1987), individuals include the anticipation of future care needs in the first move (Oehmke et al. 2007: 97) and take into account the availability of structures of care on site, e.g. retirement homes, when deciding to relocate. The local perspective on the

availability of real estate according to the specific demands stated above is ambivalent. A representative of the department of spatial planning recognises patterns that reflect the tourism-migration nexus:

Some guests who will retire soon are already looking for properties and apartments, primarily apartments of high quality. [...] It can be observed in apartment construction that those small apartments with one or two rooms are no longer constructed, but apartments with a living space of 90 to 100m² or even larger. (Representative of the department of spatial planning, male)

Contrary to the widespread assumption of downsizing living space in older age (Angelini, Laferrere 2012), age-appropriate small-size apartments are rare. The construction industry does not respond to that specific demand, but provides larger flats.

Post-migration lives: leisure practices, attachments to place and contestations

Practices in post-migration lives are reproduced with regard to both specific structures and individual desires that formerly fostered migration. The following quotation exemplifies everyday life in Bad Fuesing, individually addressed as leisure-oriented and associated to specific cultural offerings on site.

Anna: I never regret having moved here. I think it is very comfortable for senior citizens. [...] Pedicure, manicure, practising gymnastics for elderly people once a week. Yes, that's what we do, well. And going to the older people's club for games night and stuff like that. [...] Eichberger [coach service, author's remark] hosts one-day trips which we take part in from time to time or even two to three-day trips that we like to join. [...] Well, once a week we go to the cinema. [...] It's just around the corner, we're able to, well, in a manner of speaking, we can go to the movies wearing our slippers. (BI-5)

Leisure practices are facilitated by appropriate infrastructure in the vicinity. Shorter distances between facilities is viewed as positive among many interviewees, acknowledging that they can now do everything on foot and do not need a car. The flat relief enables further leisure activities such as cycling or walking. The specific tourist infrastructure of thermal baths, however, does not seem to have meaning in everyday life at present.

Anna: I don't want to say it aloud, but I have never been in the thermal baths. I don't need it at the moment. (BI-5)

Herman: Never. Up to now, never. We did not have time to. It was quite crowded. A further problem is that it is too expensive for locals. (BI-2)

Interviewees stress health and economic considerations for not visiting thermal baths. In the case of age-related constraints however, (pre)retirees may remember the curative effects of healing water experienced during previous stays, and seek out the thermal baths. The motivation to relocate to Bad Fuesing, initially associated with health-related issues, is not reproduced at present, i.e. it can be marked as inactive. Another negatively-viewed aspect refers to crowding in thermal baths. Both interviewees thereby dissociate themselves passively or actively from ordinary tourists and construct identities of belonging (O'Reilly 2003, cf. "We live where others spend their vacation or go for a cure" (Herman, BI-2)). Newcomers in Bad Fuesing frequently stick to themselves in everyday life, but do not live in a bubble as stated elsewhere (Fechter 2007). An attitude of reserve towards approaching locals is depicted in the following statement:

The newcomers often don't have the courage to approach the locals. I tell them to try and join the conversation and so on [...]. And the locals on the other hand want to keep to themselves, they are reserved with the North Germans and standard German speakers [...]. But there are people who breach that wall, they just come here without any further information, they like to discover and experience everything by themselves and therefore are integrated somehow. But that only applies to a few newcomers. (Representative of a church, male)

The desire to interact with local residents was recognised, for instance, by a representative of a social organisation, who initially came to Bad Fuessing to retire. Having experienced obstacles upon arriving four years before, she decided to organise a regular encounter:

We host a social get-together every month by the Caritas [German Catholic charitable organisation, author's remark]. It takes place at our parish hall. Everybody is invited: locals, spa guests and newcomers. It's primarily meant for newcomers to socialise and for spa guests who maybe would like to move here someday. It's just a casual get-together for about two hours in the afternoon with singing, having coffee, making conversation and sharing some gossip. It's fun. (Representative of social association, female)

What becomes obvious in the quotation above is the aim to assemble tourists, newcomers and locals at one specific place. The purpose is to establish attachment to place and provide assistance for potential newcomers. The latter supports the assumption of a systemic continuum of tourism and lifestyle migration. Contestations arise when individual circumstances, such as the death of a spouse, challenge autobiographical insideness (Rowles 1983). When it comes to the decision to move back, social organisations once again undertake efforts to help those people moving back to their hometown. In sum, the nexus of tourism and migration provides a setting for interactions and could be viewed as a tool for integration.

Issues of governance in light of demographic change

The implications of lifestyle migration for destinations must consider the assessment of age-selective in-migration from the local inhabitants' perspective. There are stakeholders in persons or respective legislations, promoted by interest groups, e.g. the tourist industry, which indirectly or directly provide structures which foster or limit migration. The following quotations indicate that Bad Fuessing wants to provide an age-appropriate setting for the elderly on the one hand, but economically relies on the young generation on the other:

While many other townships only see the drawbacks of the demographic ageing of their citizens, we want to create an environment comfortable for the elderly. Bad Fuessing wants to rely on the older generation in the future. [...] We want to be a town where the interests of the elderly are considered and taken seriously. (Mayor, cit. after Gemeinde Bad Fuessing 2010: 10)

This ageing has long-term and serious consequences for communal life. The young generation will soon be lacking everywhere. But neither politicians nor scientists nor other experts could work out how to compensate for the attraction of the big cities and make the rural life more attractive to the young. Do we have to accept this trend of ageing? (Mayor, cit. after Gemeinde Bad Fuessing 2013: 1–2)

These statements, made by a local politician, reflect current attitudes towards senior in-migration in Central Europe, which reinforces the implications of demographic change. Particularly in rural areas with selective out-migration of the young, stakeholders view the proliferation of ageing municipalities through in-migration sceptically.

Moreover, selective out-migration and depopulation can affect social cohesion, for instance, when local associations lack members (Swiacny 2010: 200). Newcomers may become members of existing local associations and sometimes guarantee their continuity. The board of the Catholic Women's Association of Bad Fuessing could only be formed because three newcomers volunteered for positions among the six board members:

Two of them are Protestants but we don't mind. We're happy when they participate. They like to play an active part even though women's associations are not common among the Protestants. (Representative of a church, male)

As previously noted, in a study on Russian second home owners in Finland, "involvement may encourage social and economic investment in the community" (Lipkina, Hall 2014: 162) in the long run. With regard to the real estate market, transformations in the tourist sector shape structures that are reflected in local politics. Despite the fact that many tourist accommodations dropped out of the market in the course of transformations in health tourism, in most cases they cannot be rededicated to permanent dwellings because of existing land development plans favouring tourism. When exceptions are made, in some cases, age-selective in-migration to vacant tourist accommodations is assessed positively with regard to maintaining local supply:

Basically, we believe that we have to prevent vacancies and decaying buildings, and therefore have to rebuild apartments here, which will be willingly accepted by the age group. Especially because the infrastructure in these districts will be maintained in this way. (Representative of the department of spatial planning, male)

With respect to the transformations in health tourism, the local administration recognises the need to change land development plans according to changing demands:

Changes of use should be undertaken, especially considering residential development. [...] We're right in the middle of it. And there's the question: What are we doing? How far will we go? (Representative of the department of spatial planning, male)

Political stakeholders seem to be quite indecisive when they have to acknowledge decaying accommodations but rising demand for housing space. Similar conflictive scenarios between tourism purposes, local opinions and demands from newcomers, recently discussed in Spain and Latin America, and which led to political mobilisation to a certain extent (Janoschka 2009a; Janoschka 2009b), were not observable in the case of Bad Fuessing. In the context of the overall challenges of demographic change, municipalities find context-specific solutions with which to cope. Currently, there are competing opinions among stakeholders, especially among tourism entrepreneurs. They have strong political influence in the spa town and are sceptical about in-migration because they fear losing guests. Also, the representative from the local building department anticipates a possible negative image of a community with a large number of retirees (cf. Vollet et al. 2005). Moreover, "it is more 'politically correct' to aim at attracting families" (Niedomysl 2004). The latter becomes obvious, for instance, when local authorities limit purchasing building sites to local families. To date, no marketing efforts to encourage (pre)retired in-migration are indicated in the case of Bad Fuessing:

Advertising to the elderly? No, we do not encourage this. The local council is split. This is why we have hired a consulting agency to analyse the opportunities. This would be interesting, what should we actually do? (Representative of the department of spatial planning, male)

CONCLUSION

This paper aims to analyse inter-regional lifestyle migration to the German spa town of Bad Fuesing and highlighted individuals' planning efforts to effect relocation, as well as practices in post-migration lives. Relocation efforts are mainly based on economic considerations, while individuals also address representations encompassing opportunities for living a leisure-oriented and healthy way of life that were experienced during previous tourist stays.

The article highlights the tourism-migration nexus in various dimensions. While former experiences and real estate structures have been highlighted elsewhere (Huete 2009; Åkerlund 2013), several stages of transition between tourism and migration became obvious. Within the planning process of relocation, (potential) newcomers reflect on their duration of stay and the economic benefits regarding purchasing or renting real estate. What has not been a focal point of interest so far at this stage of the migration process is that social organisations recognise newcomers' needs and have an influence on relocation. This strategy of providing assistance includes tourists, newcomers and local people and targets both the relocation process itself and subsequent daily life at the new site of living. As previously noted in lifestyle migration research (Benson, O'Reilly 2009), migrants alter the initial motivation to move in post-migration lives. Newcomers abandon practices perceived as touristic, e.g. visits to thermal baths, but maintain others, e.g. excursions. Nonetheless, (pre)retirees migrating to spa towns anticipate future care needs and ageing constraints and subsequently view relocation to such towns as permanent, in contrast to other lifestyle-oriented moves viewed as temporary life projects.

Local assessments of age-selective in-migration respond to individual representations and practices of a better way of life on the one hand, but have to be addressed in the light of specific initial situations on site on the other. In the case study at hand, the real estate market is characterised by structures which only permit tourist use and which do not acknowledge the specific demands of elderly newcomers. Thus, vacant properties arising in the course of transformations in health tourism could not be converted to permanent dwellings. Moreover, limited availability in housing supply compels the municipality to subsidise a specific socio-demographic and socio-economic group, e.g. families. To sum up, age-selective in-migration of (pre)retirees to spa towns faces challenges. It is evaluated positively, particularly when newcomers could use vacant property and, subsequently, maintain a demand for infrastructure and services (tourist infrastructure, local supply and medical care). To date, however, in-migration is not considered as a coping and adaptation strategy for the implications of demographic change in hegemonic political discourses. As shown for spa towns, (pre)retirees could diminish the consequences of demographic change, but are viewed sceptically by local stakeholders. Due to ambivalent perceptions, the municipality is seeking advice from a consulting agency in order to get recommendations for future action.

As suggested in this article, lifestyle migration research should focus more specifically on the implications of heterogenisation processes, thereby opening up lifestyle migration research to applied questions in the future. Therefore, it is necessary to better understand both the perspectives of the migrants themselves as well as local responses and views. The latter, in particular, should receive more attention under the umbrella of lifestyle migration. Further research questions should address the realm of social cohesion, i.e. analyses of cooperation and conflict between newcomers and local inhabitants. Matching the demands or needs of migrants with policies reflecting discourses and structures at destinations could result in recommendations for certain stakeholders as to what is lacking. Moreover, research prospects should take into account the implications of relatively affluent newcomers on local economies and evaluate whether specific attraction policies could be applied.

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POVZETEK

NEMŠKA ZDRAVILIŠKA MESTA KOT ŽELENI KRAJI UPOKOJITVE: KAKO SE (PRED)UPOKOJENCI SOOČAJO S PRESELITVIJO IN KAKO JO OCENJUJE LOKALNO PREBIVALSTVO

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Sedanja generacija starejših prizadevanja za samostojen način življenja pogosto izraža s selitvijo na že znano turistično destinacijo. Strukturni pogoji, ki podpirajo migrantske odločitve, so družbeno skonstruirane značilnosti, povezane s prostorom – denimo zdravje in prosti čas. Zato zdraviliška, večinoma majhna mesta v podeželskem okolju, ki nudijo številne priložnosti za prostočasne dejavnosti in imajo odlično zdravstveno infrastrukturo, prikazujejo prirast prebivalstva, kar je v nasprotju s splošnim trendom migracij s podeželja v mesto in starostno povzročeni izseljevanjem. Kot taka so mala mesta lahko laboratoriji tako za opazovanje socialnodemografske sestave populacije, kakršno v prihodnosti predvidevamo za velik del Srednje Evrope, kot tudi spopadanja z implikacijami demografskih sprememb. Na teh premisah članek analizira nemške (pred)upokojence, ki načrtujejo ali pa so že uresničili medregionalno življenjsko-stilsko migracijo v Bad Fuessing, zdraviliško mesto v južni Nemčiji.

Medtem ko so se donedavne študije osredotočale na perspektive življenjsko-stilskih migrantov in njihova življenja pred migracijo in po njej, pričujoči članek upošteva proces načrtovanja migrantov in lokalnih oblasti na eni strani, na drugi pa tudi vpliv življenjsko-stilskih migracij na destinacije. Skladno s tem se prispevek osredotoča na mnenja lokalnih deležnikov o priseljevanju posameznih starostnih skupin. Empirični podatki obsegajo biografsko-narativne intervjuje s (pred)upokojenci in vodene intervjuje z različnimi lokalnimi deležniki. Rezultati kažejo, da lokalni nepremičninski trgi poudarjajo strukture, namenjene izključno turistični rabi in ne upoštevajo specifičnih zahtev starejših prišlekov, medtem ko družbene organizacije prepoznava njihove potrebe in s tem vplivajo na preselitev. Ta strategija zagotavljanja pomoči je namenjena turistom, prišlekom in lokalnemu prebivalstvu ter cilja tako na sam proces selitve kakor tudi na nadaljnje vsakdanje življenje v novem kraju bivanja.

Po migraciji prišleki opustijo t. i. turistične prakse, npr. obiskovanje termalnih kopeli, ohranijo pa druge, npr. izlete. Ne glede na to pa (pred)upokojenci, ki migrirajo v zdraviliška mesta, predvidevajo prihodnjo potrebo po negi in omejitve, ki jih prinaša staranje. V nasprotju z drugimi življenjsko-stilskimi selitvami, kot so začasni življenjski projekti, se starejši preselijo za stalno. Lokalno prebivalstvo priseljevanje ocenjuje kot pozitivno, še zlasti, kadar se migranti vselijo v stavbe, ki so se izpraznile zaradi strukturnih sprememb v zdravstvenem turizmu, in tako posledično vzdržujejo potrebo po infrastrukturi in storitvah (turistična infrastruktura, lokalna dobava in zdravstvena oskrba). Vse do zdaj se priseljevanja ni razumelo kot strategije spopadanja s posledicami demografskih sprememb in prilagajanja nanje v hegemoničnih političnih diskurzih.