

# LIFESTYLE MIGRATION BEYOND CONSUMPTION – PRODUCTION BINARIES: DUTCH MIGRANTS AND MULTIFUNCTIONAL RURAL LAND USE IN SWEDEN

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## ABSTRACT

### **Lifestyle Migration beyond Consumption – Production Binaries: Dutch Migrants and Multifunctional Rural Land Use in Sweden**

Lifestyle migration literature often focuses on lifestyle migrants as consumers. However, this paper shows how various modes of production are involved in everyday migrant lives as they seek to produce the lifestyles sought. The paper's aim is twofold: to explore issues of production in lifestyle migrants' everyday lives, and to examine these migrants' potential contributions to local rural development in lagging rural areas such as Swedish Bergslagen. This aim is addressed through two in-depth interview studies. The findings suggest that the respondents combine lifestyle-led motivations with seeking labour opportunities. Hence, studying these migrants is useful for investigating newcomers' multifunctional rural land use and examining how their engagements with local rural development increases our understanding of their post-migration lives in lagging rural areas.

**KEY WORDS:** consumption, Dutch lifestyle migrants in Sweden, multifunctional rural land use, production, lagging rural areas

## IZVLEČEK

### **Življenjsko-stilske migracije onkraj dvojice potrošnja – proizvodnja: nizozemski migranti in večnamenska uporaba kmetijskih zemljišč na Švedskem**

Literatura o življenjsko-stilskih migracijah se pogosto osredotoča na življenjsko-stilske migrante kot potrošnike, pričujoči prispevek pa prikazuje, kako se različni načini proizvodnje vključujejo v vsakdanje življenje migrantov, ko si ti prizadevajo ustvariti zeleni življenjski slog. Namen članka je tako dvojen: raziskati proizvodnjo v vsakdanjem življenju življenjsko-stilskih migrantov in njihove možne prispevke k razvoju podeželja na manj razvitih območjih, kakršen je švedski Bergslagen; teh raziskav se s poglobljenimi intervjuji loti v dveh študijah. Izsledki kažejo, da sodelujoči motivacijo glede življenjskega sloga združujejo z iskanjem priložnosti za delo. Študija o življenjsko-stilskih migrantih je zato koristna za raziskovanje, kako prišleki uporabljajo kmetijska zemljišča in kako njihova vpletenost v razvoj podeželja povečuje razumevanje njihovega post-migrantskega življenja na manj razvitem podeželju.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** potrošnja, nizozemski življenjsko-stilski migranti na Švedskem, večfunkcionalna uporaba kmetijskih zemljišč, proizvodnja, manj razvito podeželje

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## A DOUBLE FOCUS ON CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

This paper is inspired by seminal work on international counterurbanisation, 'consumption' of countryside (Buller & Hoggart 1994) and lifestyle migration to rural areas (Benson 2011). It is also motivated by previous studies of lifestyle migration and entrepreneurship in rural Southern Europe (Stone & Stubbs 2007), reflections on next rural economies (Halseth et al. 2010), rural revival through regional migration (Connell & McManus 2011) and possible future research into contested spatialities of lifestyle migration (Haas et al. 2014). Adding valuable human geographic perspectives to this expanding body of lifestyle migration literature, this paper focuses on two issues: lifestyle migrants' potential contributions to rural diversity and what the migrants' engagements with rural development tell us about consumption and production in lifestyle migrant lives.

Such a double focus is motivated by two initiatives. First, O'Reilly (2014) initiated an e-mail discussion on local social and economic impacts of lifestyle migration, studied previously by Fountain and Hall (2002) and indicated later by Benson and Osbaldiston as relevant in lifestyle migration research (2014: 14). Second, Kordel and Weidinger (2014) raised issues concerning regional development during the London workshop on the future of lifestyle migration research. Thus, this study examines how various modes of production are involved in everyday migrant lives as they seek to produce the lifestyles sought. As such, it extends the field of lifestyle migration by investigating the potential social and economic impacts of incoming lifestyle migrants on rural localities.

This paper draws on experiences of Dutch lifestyle migrants in rural Bergslagen, a lagging Swedish area. One point of departure is that the study area has experienced more difficulties in responding to economic stagnation and depopulation, although it can be debated to what extent such lagging destinations generally differ from amenity-rich lifestyle migration destinations (Benson & Osbaldiston 2014; Moss & Glorioso 2015). Nonetheless, these areas often lack employment opportunities and the amenities that are commonly required to attract amenity migrants. Hence, incoming lifestyle migrants can provide welcome socio-economic impulses to increase lagging rural areas' economic, demographic and cultural diversity.

This paper sees multifunctional rural land use as a potential for increasing socio-economic diversity in lagging rural areas, helping them to avoid single-industry dependence and suffering from declining primary industries. As the studied destinations in Swedish Bergslagen have traditionally been characterised by industrial production, forestry and to a lesser extent agriculture (Åkesson 1998), the question is whether they now transform into places of consumption mainly for urban dwellers (Lundmark 2010). Moreover, with some notable exceptions (e.g. Stone & Stubbs 2007), the majority of lifestyle migration studies have focused on migrants consuming assets of their destinations rather than on post-migration issues of production related to economic activities.

Against this background, the aim of this paper is to explore issues of production in lifestyle migrants' everyday lives, and to examine the migrants' potential contributions to local rural development in Swedish Bergslagen. This aim is addressed through in-depth interviews with Dutch migrants in three Swedish municipalities in 2011 and 2014. They are analysed within the framework of local rural development, identifying vulnerabilities and possibilities for integration of rural areas into wider debates on problems in sparsely populated nations like Sweden (Lundmark 2010). Thus, the paper aspires to establish Nordic rural areas within the wider consideration of lifestyle migration destinations, as political, socio-economic and natural climates in northern Europe differ from those elsewhere.

The next section describes the methods used, before perspectives on production and consumption are related to rural development and lifestyle migration in the following section. Previous studies indirectly addressing lifestyle migrants' potential contributions to rural development in Sweden are then presented as a bridge to the empirical section. This empirical section relates Dutch lifestyle migrants' experiences in Swedish Bergslagen to issues of consumption and production. As such, it explores lifestyle migrants' potential role for local rural development in sparsely populated areas in

developed countries. The conclusion more concretely indicates how issues of production can contribute to lifestyle migration research, suggesting issues for further research in this field.

## METHODOLOGY

Figure 1: The current geographic shape of the Swedish Bergslagen area (Source: Adapted from Intresseföreningen Bergslaget, 2015)



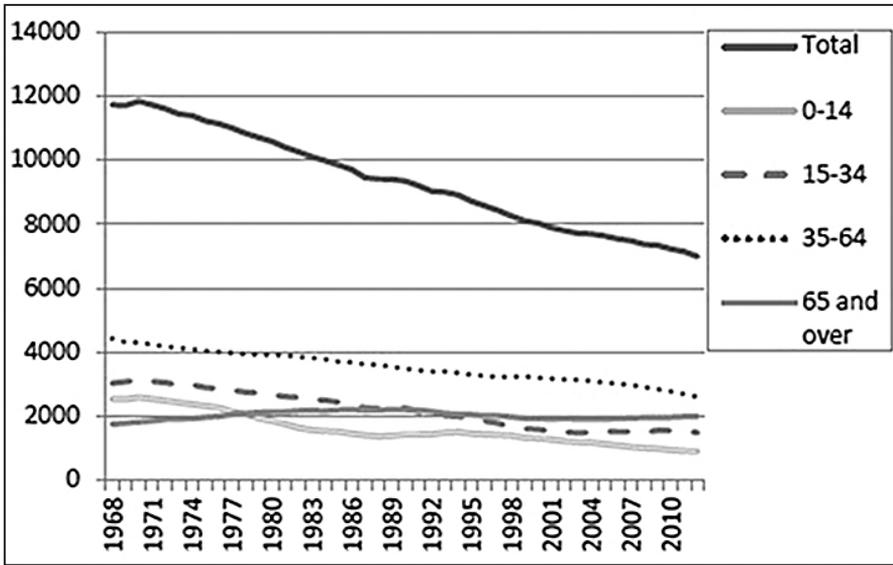
This paper is based on two in-depth interview studies in Sweden: one conducted in 2011 in the county of Örebro and the other conducted in 2014 in the county of Värmland (Figure 1). The residential towns of Karlstad (Värmland county) and Örebro (Örebro county) are indicated with black squares. The borders of Bergslagen are based on cultural views rather than administrative divisions. The Bergslagen area stretches over five counties (Swedish: *län*), mainly consisting of depopulating post-industrial municipalities.

The one to two hours' journey by car or bus between these municipalities and employers or secondary schools in the residential towns of Örebro (pop. 141,382) and Karlstad (pop. 87,797) is too long for daily commuting (Statistics Sweden 2014b). Similar circumstances are found in a third of Europe's regions, which struggle with declining economically active populations (Klingholz 2009).

For example, Hällefors in Örebro county has experienced the fifth largest municipal population decline in Sweden since 1970 (Swedish Television 2013). Figure 2 illustrates how Hällefors' population decreased steadily from 11,723 in 1968 to 6,888 in 2014, and how the relative share of the elderly (aged

65+) has increased over time (Statistics Sweden 2014b). Similar trends can be observed in the municipalities of Hagfors (pop. 11,987) and Munkfors (pop. 3,651) in Värmland (ibid.). Once thriving with mining and forestry, these municipalities are now suffering from rising levels of unemployment and younger generations leaving the area, shrinking public and private service sectors, falling housing values, and growing concerns about who is going to care for the elderly (Niedomysl & Amcoff 2011: 276). The area’s traditional patriarchal society with a hierarchical production structure hampers adaptation to post-industrial conditions where innovative entrepreneurship is desired (Eimermann 2015: 69).

Figure 2: Population of Hällefors; total and age groups (years) (Source: Eimermann, 2013a: 18)



Hällefors was the first Swedish municipality attempting to attract new residents from abroad through a three-year “Holland project” starting in 2004 in cooperation with the privately-owned migration consultancy agency Placement. Värmland has engaged in similar efforts as a county council representing a group of municipalities (Eimermann 2013b). Resulting either directly or indirectly from these place marketing efforts, the Dutch families interviewed for this paper settled in these lagging destinations during the first decade of the third millennium.

A total of 23 interviews was conducted, the majority at the respondents’ homes or work environments. Dutch families in Hällefors were selected in 2011 regardless of their mode of employment as part of fieldwork for a doctoral thesis (Eimermann 2013a). Data gathering in 2014 focused specifically on Dutch rural tourism entrepreneurs in Hagfors and Munkfors. This most recent interview study is conducted as a sequel to a study by Lundmark et al. (2014) who point at international migrants’ potential contributions to rural development in lagging Swedish areas. Subsequent updates were obtained through e-mail contact and social media (e.g. on the respondents’ employment status).

The interviewees were found through contacts with other Dutch migrants in the area, browsing the internet and reading tourism brochures. The interview guidelines of both studies were similar and consisted of four parts: the first part on backgrounds and socio-economic characteristics was followed by questions on visiting Sweden prior to moving (part 2), motivations for moving (part 3), and post-migration experiences in the final part. The interviews were 100-180 minutes in length and transcribed verbatim. The migrants’ local social and economic impacts are identified through analysis of the transcripts. They are discussed in relation to economic, socio-cultural and demographic rural change in this paper.

## EX-URBAN MIGRANTS AND MULTIFUNCTIONAL RURAL LAND USE

This section further explores the double focus on production and consumption. It first addresses how lifestyle migration has mostly been presented as a consumption-driven trend. It then looks at recent rural transformations related to increased consumption and provision of rural products and services in response to demands mainly coming from urban areas (Lundmark 2010: 2). This section thus provides a point of departure for studying how lifestyle migrants produce their preferred lifestyles and how this can contribute to local rural development.

Regarding the first focus, Hall and Williams (2002) suggest that motives for urban-rural moves can be production-led, consumption-led or a combination of both. They propose that tourism entrepreneurial migration is production-led, although this type of mobility implies a combination of lifestyle-seeking migration and labour migration where the migrants' motivations could be identified as either predominantly economic or quality of life-related (Hall & Williams 2002: 31). Motivations for consumption-led mobility can be plotted on a similar continuum, "where consumption and production motives may blur and be combined" (*ibid.*, 34). This intersection of consumption- and production-related motives forms the background for the present study of Dutch migrant's post-migration everyday lives.

However, the field of lifestyle migration widely presents the studied migrants' motives as consumption-driven. The studies collected by Benson and O'Reilly (2009) demonstrate how various respondents across the globe and over time share fundamental features in their search for different lifestyles: they are looking for the 'good' or 'simple' life and the opportunity for self-realization, while escaping from individual and community histories (O'Reilly & Benson 2009). These and subsequent texts (e.g. Benson 2010; Torkington et al. 2015) emphasise lifestyle migration as a consumption-driven trend.

British family migrants, retirement migrants and mid-life migrants in the rural French department of the Lot relate residential choice to consumption criteria (Benson 2010). Although mid-life migrants often lived more remotely in "small hamlets with no local amenities" (*ibid.*, 53), what they consume has been conceptualised as rural amenities or a rural idyll (Gaspar 2015). Amenities are "non-traded goods that cannot be consumed without moving to the area where these are available" (Graves & Linneman 1979: 384), such as favourable climatic conditions and scenic qualities. As migrants can value some amenities over others, the decision to migrate to a particular area is based on perceptions of more suitable local amenities there compared to other areas.

Boyle and Halfacree (1998: 9-10) describe the rural idyll as "physically consisting of small villages joined by narrow lanes and nestling amongst a patchwork of small fields [...]. Socially, this is a tranquil landscape of timeless stability and community, where people know not just their next door neighbours but everyone else in the village". This perception of the rural idyll often contrasts with rural realities experienced in post-migration everyday lives. Yet, it persists among the majority of British and other lifestyle migrants to rural areas.

This leads us to the second focus of this section: local rural development and related concepts of post-productivism and multifunctionality. Governments on various geographical levels have attempted to respond to processes of rural restructuring by developing deprived and sparsely populated rural areas. These attempts are often termed rural development. They include the "repacking of the countryside for the new consumption-based economy" (Woods 2009: 129). The rationales behind rural development are summarised as "welfarist" (the state supporting basic social well-being and equity among its citizens) or "economic" (the state supporting business in the accumulation of capital) (*ibid.*, 145). Another rationale is spatial control over population distribution in order to mitigate instability, demanding a reevaluation of public services (*ibid.*).

These rationales relate to the debated and contested concept of post-productivism (Evans et al. 2002: 325; Mather et al. 2006: 454; Woods 2009: 47-57). Although debated, the concept is nevertheless useful for studies of rural change in agricultural heartlands. This is illustrated by a recent conceptualisation of post-productivism, stressing "the potential efflorescence of a range of alternative niche-farm

and *non-farm* industries and enterprises in agricultural heartlands [...], with largely *ex-urban migrants* bringing their own *interpretation* of rural life to their new locale" (Argent et al. 2010: 18, emphasis added). This definition goes beyond the urban-rural dualism presented by Champion and Hugo (2004), as it connects urban and rural areas through increasingly mobile people and ideas. Moreover, the definition is in line with the purpose of this paper since it includes alternative non-farm industries such as tourism.

These increasing connections between urban and rural areas create multifunctional rural landscapes in and beyond agricultural heartlands. Argent et al. (2010: 18) claim that strategically located rural land is "being progressively valued not for its production capacities but for its perceived aesthetic, capital gain and status features". Hence, also in areas characterised by de-industrialisation (such as Swedish Bergslagen), rural dwelling and land use are motivated ever more by consumption values over production ones (ibid.). Wilson (2001: 96) similarly asserts that the related concept of multifunctionality "better encapsulates the diversity, non-linearity and spatial heterogeneity" of rural society, thus embracing the social and environmental impacts of multifunctional rural land use (Woods 2011).

In other words, post-productivism looks at broader geographical scales and policy discourses, while the concept of multifunctionality addresses local economic and socio-cultural changes in rural land use, demography and society (Almstedt et al. 2014). Müller (2011) however, reminds us that multifunctionality is not a novel phenomenon, as Nordic rural areas have a long history of diverse activities, such as second home ownership and the presence of second home owners. The following section explores whether or not Dutch lifestyle migrants in rural Sweden contribute to multifunctional rural land use.

## DUTCH LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SWEDEN

The rural changes described above are often related to ex-urban migrants (Argent et al. 2010: 18). It is clear that urban-rural lifestyle-led international migration has gained attention in Nordic countries over the past decades (e.g. Swedish Radio 2011). The Swedish National Rural Development Agency (SNRDA 2008) noticed a rising number of Dutch migrants in Sweden. The annual number of people moving from the Netherlands to Sweden has increased from 494 in 1995 to 1450 in 2013 (Statistics Netherlands 2014). The total number of Dutch-born migrants living in Sweden more than doubled from 4,532 in 2000 to 9,781 in 2013 (Statistics Sweden 2014a). Moreover, SNRDA (2008: 46-52) noticed that Dutch incomers opt for rural destinations to a larger extent than other immigrant groups from Europe (e.g. Poland and Germany). Hedberg and Haandrikman (2014: 133) illustrate this with their finding that 15% of all European migrants living in rural Sweden in 2008 were born in the Netherlands (compared with 6% in Swedish urban areas).

Undergraduate studies in Sweden associate such Dutch and other lifestyle migration to rural Sweden with transnational entrepreneurship, rural development, integration and identity formation. One of the earliest findings in this field comes from a study by Andersen and Engström (2005), in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce in Värmland, who concluded that Swedish stakeholders need to make more efforts if they want to enable these Dutch newcomers to establish their enterprises in Sweden.

This is relevant because Värmland and an increasing number of other rural Swedish stakeholders attempt to develop rural place marketing strategies in order to attract newcomers from the Netherlands and other parts of Northwest Europe (NUTEK 2007: 92-97; Eimermann 2013b). Värmland (2015) receives funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to cover the costs of attracting new residents at the annual Emigration Expo (2015) in the Netherlands. The Dutch-Norwegian migration consultancy agency Placement (2015) organises similar information meetings. Since its foundation in 2003, Placement has assisted over 2,500 Dutch and Belgians in their migration to Norway, Sweden or Denmark. Recently, Region Dalarna (2015) has broadened its strategy to include German and British prospective migrants as well.

In addition to international lifestyle migration, Thulemark (2015) studies domestic lifestyle migration in Sweden, referring to previous research on similar urban-rural migration by Stenbacka (2001) and Amcoff (2004). Based on longitudinal micro-data, Thulemark et al. (2014) analyse incoming lifestyle migrants employed in tourism and their role for rural development in the Scandinavian Mountains. Once lagging and peripheral rural localities, the Sälen and Idre municipalities in the Dalarna region were developed by the Swedish state as tourism destinations as early as the 1970s, and adapted to economic recessions some twenty years later (*ibid.*, 411). Creative in-migrating tourism workers can contribute to rural development, but the volume and structure of employment opportunities in tourism vary in different destinations (Thulemark et al. 2014). Thus, various areas attracting new residents can experience rather different magnitudes and types of in-migration (*ibid.*, 419).

Similarly, Overvåg (2012) studies leisure- and nature-based migration to Scandinavia, exemplified by European entrepreneurs offering dog sledding experiences. He argues that these in-migrants (mainly from Germany and the Netherlands) contribute with skills and competences to the local labour market (*ibid.*). Therefore, regions that aim to attract more such in-migrants should develop and improve their use of local natural resources. On the other hand, comparing local and newcomer entrepreneurs in rural areas, Akgün et al. (2011: 1218) find that the motivation and behaviour of newcomer entrepreneurs appear to be primarily related to their own lives and needs, rather than to concerns with local rural development. Similarly, Overvåg (2012: 266-267) warns of the risks of focusing too much on one branch (tourism) at the expense of other branches, and that strategically settling and leaving migrants (e.g. Eimermann 2014) can result in a porous society instead of social sustainability.

In sum, lifestyle migration has gained importance in studying incomers' contributions to local rural development in Sweden. The migrants' strategic switches (as a result of continuous comparisons between various places) offer opportunities for and pose threats to the local social fabric. This paper's conclusion discusses how future research can study these realised opportunities and averted threats in different rural locales.

## THE RESPONDENTS' MULTIFUNCTIONAL USE OF THE SWEDISH RURAL ENVIRONMENT

Table 1 presents the interviewees and their occupation after migration. This table indicates varied occupations for the respondents interviewed in 2011. Often, females combine working part-time in different sectors. As a result of few local employment opportunities, the migrants frequently changed post-migration occupation in search of their aspired lifestyle. For instance, the couple in family 12 explained how they initially aimed at continuing their post-production company after migration but gradually shifted towards hand-painting and organising local events such as an ice sculpture festival and a kiting day. Likewise, family 5 combines income from their small B&B, the male working as a freelance illustrator and the female combining part-time work as a teacher with working in marketing. On aggregate, this indicates both that few jobs are available in rural areas such as Swedish Bergslagen and that the rural environment offers a multitude of possibilities for migrants willing to use this environment in multiple ways.

The respondents interviewed in 2014 also develop multifunctional rural land use through their activities in rural tourism. For instance, the hotel managers in family 14 are planning to develop hiking trails and a beaver safari. In their opinion, local tourism entrepreneurs don't see the potential for developing such initiatives. Family 16 bought a piece of land, built a pancake restaurant and a mini golf course which they run during summer, combining this with income from the male working as a plumber during the off-season. Similarly, family 17 offer lessons in horseback riding, horseback rides through the area, quad excursions, accommodation and a western style restaurant at their horse

ranch. Likewise, the male in family 21 has plans to use his experience as a mountain biker to develop a mountain biking trail near the family's B&B. This also indicates how these economically active family migrants employ their creativity to consciously pursue their aspired post-migration lifestyle, and how they need multiple sources of income in order to make a living.

One important reason why these migrants need to find their desired post-migration lifestyle in various creative ways is that Swedish Bergslagen is a lagging area with few job opportunities. Hence, the female in family 10 worked in industrial design with her partner before starting a small flower shop, followed by working at an employment agency in a neighbouring and larger municipality to increase the family's income.

Table 1. Interviewees and their post-migration occupations.

2011	Occupation (Hällefors)	2014	Occupation (Hagfors, Munkfors)
1	♂ Producer ♀ Art project leader	14	♂ Hotel manager ♀ Hotel manager
2	♂ Road constructor ♀ Shop owner	15	♂ B&B, camping manager ♀ B&B, café, shop owner
3	♂ Restaurant owner ♀ Restaurant owner	16	♂ Restaurant owner, plumber ♀ Restaurant owner
4	♂ Self-employed (safety at work) ♀ Self-employed (safety at work)	17	♂ Technical support at horse ranch ♀ Horse ranch owner
5	♂ Illustrator ♀ Teacher (pt), B&B, marketing	18	♂ Restaurant owner, letting apartm. ♀ Restaurant owner, letting apartm.
6	♂ Hostel manager ♀ Hostel manager	19	♂ Technical support at café ♀ Café owner
7	♂ Truck-driver ♀ Nurse (pt)	20	♂ Restaurant and pub owner ♀ Restaurant and shop owner
8	♂ Carpenter ♀ Nurse (pt), shop owner	21	♂ Restaurant and B&B owner ♀ Restaurant and B&B owner
9	♂ Forestry, camping manager ♀ Manager of small food shop	22	♂ Involved in Holland projects ♀ Involved in Holland projects
10	♂ Self-employed (industrial design) ♀ Employed at employment service	23	♂ Involved in Holland projects ♀ Passed away recently
11	♂ Secondary school teacher ♀ Nurse (pt)	-	
12	♂ Editor, motion designer ♀ Director at media company	-	
13	♂ Employed at factory ♀ Self-employed (cleaning service)	-	

Source: Fieldwork 2011 (county of Örebro) and 2014 (county of Värmland). (pt = part-time)

Perhaps the story of family 9 is the most pertinent:

We settled in Hällefors in 2007 after having spent holidays in Sweden several times over the past decades. We bought a dilapidated house as a temporary residence (top left in Figure 3), close to a lake, and our intended future home, after renovation (bottom right). One main reason for choosing this destination was related to agricultural possibilities. Our migration was based on a plan to start a small enterprise with a shop selling organic food. Partly financed by the ERDF, such a shop was soon constructed (top right). We started cultivating vegetables, strawberries, raspberries and blackcurrants. The idea is to sell these fruits in the shop, but at the

moment the shop is used for small art exhibitions and as a meeting place for the local hunters' organisation. We also use it as a reception for our newly built camping site, advertised mainly through the internet. (Interview family 9, 2011)

At the time of the interview, the male in family 9 had been working for two years in forestry, since this was a more stable source of income and was related to his previous education and internship in Sweden. The female had worked part-time at a hotel, cleaning guest rooms to secure income in the period directly following migration. But soon she combined this with renovating a former barn down the road to adapt it for poultry, horses and sheep (bottom left in Figure 3). The family organised annual sheep shearing days. She told me that "the village consisted of a few elderly people. They were happy that a family with three young children had moved in here. And the grazing horses and sheep keep the countryside open and revitalise it." The family said the local population appreciated them and other Dutch incomers, as their initiatives and hard work contributed to the maintenance of infrastructure and land.

Later, family 9 bought a cow together with six other families, as part of a LEADER project, with the aim to render local agriculture more sustainable. This cow lives in the family's barn and is taken care of by the seven families living in neighbouring localities, who also enjoy her milk and cheese. One goal is to slowly increase the number of cows – and perhaps pigs – in the future in order to create a self-sustaining dairy and meat industry. Also, the idea is that local cohesion among these and other families will grow, for instance through monthly meetings or producing cheese together. According to one of the participants, "to have a living cow in the pasture is a symbol of a living countryside" (Nerikes Allehanda 2014: 4).

Figure 3: Properties owned by family 9 in Hällefors (Photo: Marco Eimermann, 2011)



Summarising her everyday life after migrating to rural Sweden, the female in family 16 said “in fact, we bought freedom”. She referred to being able to purchase a piece of land at a rather strategic location along the municipality’s main road, renovating and constructing buildings and working in their restaurant during summer. The female horse ranch owner in family 17 reasoned along similar lines:

“The natural setting is attractive; we wanted water and mountains, affordable and not-too-distant property – further north housing is cheaper, but it would be too far from our target groups in mainland Europe. And of course, we wanted grazing and riding space for our (20) horses.” (Interview family 17, 2014)

During high season, many respondents (e.g. family 14, 16, 17 and 19) hire staff for their businesses through Dutch friends, family and organisations. They are brokers between Bergslagen and international social networks. Thus attracting lifestyle migrants to lagging areas also means attracting new ideas and diversifying local social networks.

As such, the interviews show that entrepreneurial incomers not only create jobs, but also foster quality of life in their destinations. Yet, the jobs created can be seasonal, part-time or limited in volume. It can be questioned whether all incoming lifestyle migrants care about the quality of life in their communities, or whether they prioritise realising their dreams rather than stimulating rural development. This is a relevant question, since transferring, acquiring or starting a small rural business in an idyllic setting may be solely motivated by the migrants’ aspirations to improve their own quality of life (Akgün et al. 2011).

## CONCLUSION

This paper’s twofold aim was to explore issues of production in lifestyle migrants’ everyday lives, and to examine the migrants’ potential contributions to local rural development in Swedish Bergslagen. It studied Dutch economically active family lifestyle migrants in this lagging rural Swedish area and their post-migration search to produce the lifestyles sought. The findings can be analysed considering three points related to lifestyle migration research.

First, this paper reinforces the argument that it is valuable to reflect on similarities and differences between lifestyle migration and amenity migration (e.g. Benson & Osbaldiston 2014). In contrast to Sälen and Idre in Swedish Dalarna (Thulemark 2015), the Bergslagen area lacks job opportunities and has not fully managed to mediate its local amenities as part of its repackaging for the new consumption-based economy (Woods 2009). This is why Swedish Bergslagen is considered a lagging area. Considering lifestyle migrants’ contributions to local rural development, the interviewees illustrate how their ideas and approaches diversify local social networks, which contributes to economic, socio-cultural and demographic rural change.

If there is a distinction between amenity-rich migration destinations and low-amenity rural areas, what would this difference imply for local rural development? Comparing (amenity) migration to prosperous destinations with (lifestyle) migration to lagging areas can contribute to understanding why certain rural locales are thriving while adjacent places are not. Differences and similarities will vary from case to case, with opportunities for employment and education as pivotal points. Hence, this paper points at the contribution of lifestyle migrants to the increase of multifunctional rural activities as well as economic, demographic and cultural rural diversity.

Second, it is valuable to study various (lifestyle) migrants’ potential contributions to local rural development. For this purpose, research should include more than domestic moves by Swedes working in tourism in the Norwegian-Swedish mountain range (Thulemark 2015) or Dutch, German and other European migrants of all ages. For instance, Hedberg and Haandrikman (2014) consider how Thai women and marriage migration contribute to globalisation of the Swedish countryside. This also opens up

for examining gender issues, both within families and between regions of origin and destination (for instance, female entrepreneurship is rather novel in Swedish Bergslagen, see Hedfeldt 2008).

Further studies of local rural development through lifestyle migration could increase our understanding of what deprived rural places offer, in terms of opportunities and threats for lifestyle migrants' aspirations. In this sense, Overvåg (2012) argues justly that strategically settling and departing migrants can result in a porous society instead of social sustainability. Although not anticipated in the rural place marketing strategies, these migrants' flexible presence and enterprises can contribute to local economy and attract new (flexible) dwellers through their social networks. As such, lagging lifestyle migration destinations such as Swedish Bergslagen not only attract lifestyle migrants, but also their international networks as a potential contribution to local economy. Various groups and types of strategically switching lifestyle migrants, as well as their possible role as agents of rural change, can become a prominent part of future research in the field of local rural development (Woods 2009).

Third, this paper demonstrates how the interviewed migrants are in fact both lifestyle seekers and labour migrants (Hall & Williams 2002: 31). Seeking their aspired lifestyle, they often transfer, acquire or start a small business, involving their existing social networks. The majority of interviewees in this study are economically active family migrants. This paper's argument to more prominently add production to studies of lifestyle migration originates from this empirical material, but it is worth considering how other groups (e.g. retirement migrants and mid-life migrants, Benson 2010) seek to produce their sought lifestyles as well.

The themes of local rural development and issues of production in consumption-driven migration have been explored here using examples from Nordic rural areas. This exploration can engage academics from different fields, such as rural geographers studying rural change and sociologists exploring how the migrant's views on rural development increases our understanding of their post-migration lives in lagging rural areas.

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## POVZETEK

### ŽIVLJENJSKO-STILSKE MIGRACIJE ONKRAJ DVOJICE POTROŠNJA – PROIZVODNJA: NIZOZEMSKI MIGRANTI IN VEČNAMENSKA UPORABA KMETIJSKIH ZEMLJIŠČ NA ŠVEDSKEM

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Čeprav se literatura o življenjsko-stilskih migracijah pogosto osredotoča na življenjsko-stilske migrante kot potrošnike, pričujoči prispevek prikazuje, kako se različni načini proizvodnje ob prizadevanju migrantov za ustvarjanje zaželenega življenjskega sloga vključujejo v vsakdanje življenje migrantov. Izhaja iz težav pri odzivu na ekonomsko stagnacijo in depopulacijo. Ker so raziskovane destinacije v švedskem Bergslagnu tradicionalno zaznamovali industrijska proizvodnja, gozdarstvo in v manjši meri kmetijstvo (Åkesson 1998), se postavlja vprašanje, ali se lahko preoblikujejo v prostore potrošnje za pretežno urbane prebivalce (Lundmark 2010).

Namen članka je dvojen: raziskati probleme proizvodnje v vsakdanjem življenju življenjsko-stilskih migrantov in njihove možne prispevke k razvoju podeželja na manj razvitih območjih, kakršen je švedski Bergslagen. Teh vprašanj se avtor loti s poglobljenimi intervjuji s 23 nizozemskimi migrantskimi družinami na Švedskem loti v dveh študijah. Prva kot del terenske raziskave za doktorsko disertacijo obravnava nizozemske migrante v občini Hällefors, leta 2011 izbrane ne glede na njihovo zaposlitev. Druga študija je nastala leta 2014 in se je osredotočila zlasti na nizozemske ponudnike kmečkega turizma v občinah Hagfors in Munkfors.

Izsledke je mogoče analizirati glede na tri teme, povezane z raziskavami življenjsko-stilske migracije. Prvič, članek krepi argument, da je vredno premisliti o podobnostih in razlikah med življenjsko-stilsko migracijo in migracijo prednosti (npr. Benson & Osbaldiston 2014). Drugič, vredno je proučevati razne možne prispevke (življenjsko-stilskih) migrantov k lokalnemu razvoju. Nadaljnje študije lokalnega ruralnega razvoja kot posledice življenjsko-stilskih migracij bi lahko povečale razumevanje tako priložnosti kot groženj, ki jih deprivilegirana podeželska območja nudijo obravnavanim migrantom. Tretjič, članek prikazuje, da so intervjuvani migranti pravzaprav hkrati življenjsko-stilski in delovni migranti (Hall & Williams 2002: 31). Ob iskanju zelenega življenjskega sloga se pogosto preselijo in pridobijo ali ustvarijo majhno podjetje, ki vključuje njihovo obstoječo družbeno mrežo. Lokalni ruralni razvoj in problem proizvodnje v primeru migracij, ki jih motivira potrošništvo, sta predstavljena s primeri z nordijskih ruralnih območij. V te raziskave bi se lahko vključili akademiki različnih strok, med njimi ruralni geografi, ki proučujejo spremembe podeželja, in sociologi, ki raziskujejo, kako razmišljanje migrantov o lokalnem ruralnem razvoju povečuje razumevanje njihovih post-migracijskih življenj v manj razvitih podeželskih regijah.