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**‘We must stay for the exams!’**

### **Pacing mobilities among lifestyle migrant families in Goa, India<sup>1</sup>**

I understood that I cannot make plans for too long. And actually, it feels good like this. It’s really about enjoying what you do at the moment. (Stella<sup>2</sup>)

Lifestyle migration refers to a phenomenon whereby citizens of affluent nations move abroad in order to find a more meaningful and relaxed life, usually in places with lower living costs and sunny climates (Benson and O’Reilly 2009, 609). Over the past two decades, the state of Goa on the western coast of India has become increasingly popular among ‘Western’<sup>3</sup> lifestyle migrant families with children. Many of these families repeatedly spend periods of two to five months in Goa and the rest of the year in their passport countries, while some of them stay more or less permanently in Goa.

The parents often say that they have found a paradise where they can enjoy the present without worrying about the future, as the interview extract at the beginning of this chapter illustrates. This notion implies a somewhat static view of time and movement; the perfect life has been found and there is no need to change anything or move anywhere, only to stay in Goa and live happily ever after. In practice, however, foreign families cannot stay in the paradise of Goa forever, and they move between India and other countries frequently. Moreover, time goes by and situations change – children grow up, for example – and families may need to accordingly reconsider their lifestyle choices, their mobility trajectories and the pacing of their mobilities.

In this chapter I discuss the emphasis on presentism and the pacing of mobilities among lifestyle migrant families in Goa. By moving there, the families attempt to escape to a relaxed and timeless bubble, where constraints are not placed on them from outside. The bubble, however, does not exist in isolation; it is affected by various, at times contradictory, timescales and constraints that affect the pacing of the families’ transnational mobilities. In what follows, I examine various political, economic and educational constraints, and show how these affect the pacing of the families’ mobilities. I argue that there are tangible contradictions between different timescales in the lifestyle migrants’ lives; in particular, bureaucratic time (that related to Indian visa policies) and educational time (that related to school terms) do not coincide with the climate, which in turn determines the high tourist season, and consequently the peak income season, in Goa. I argue that these different temporal structures affect the pacing of the families’ transnational mobilities to a great extent. Finally, I discuss how the families’ rhythms and timings of mobility change as children get older. At the end of the chapter, I elaborate on time and the pacing of mobilities among lifestyle migrants in general – beyond the context of Goa – and ask whether lifestyle migration is a temporary solution that enables people to enjoy the present without constraints but which eventually dissolves into something else. I end the chapter by discussing the phenomenon with Victor Turner’s concepts of liminality (1969) and liminoid (1982).

The long-term implications of lifestyle migration have so far not received much scholarly attention. Moreover, lifestyle migration is often ignored by policy-makers and administrators; it is viewed as a personal choice that does not concern either states or outsiders. This chapter, however, shows that what may at first look like a personal choice is, in fact, affected by a number of institutional regimes, economic practicalities as well as personal obligations. Moreover, instead of being a question of a once-only move into a better life in an exotic location, frequent transnational mobility as well as phases of immobility are often significant aspects of lifestyle migration, and the pacing of people’s transnational mobility is to a great extent dependent on various factors that cannot be controlled by

individuals. Lifestyle migrants' transnational mobility takes place in physical and institutional circumstances and in ageing (or growing) bodies. Moreover, the migrants' escape to a better life abroad has not only structural but temporal limitations. Consequently, when analysing lifestyle migrants' transnational mobilities, it is crucial to also pay attention to time.

### **Lifestyle migration: who, where and why?**

Michaela Benson and Karen O'Reilly define lifestyle migrants as '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 and O'Reilly 2009, 609). These migrants come from affluent industrialized countries, predominantly from the middle classes, but also from the working classes (see e.g. Leivestad 2018). The most significant group – at least in terms of numbers – is retirees (see King et al. 2000; Oliver 2015) but people of working age as well as families with children also move abroad in order to find a more relaxed lifestyle (Korpela 2018; O'Reilly 2012). Factors that contribute to lifestyle migration (Benson and O'Reilly 2009, 609-610) include unemployment, pressurized working environments, hectic lifestyles, rising crime rates, high living costs, consumerism and insecure living conditions in migrants' native countries. Destinations attract people because of lower living costs, a pleasant climate and what the migrants perceive as a slow pace of life. Other contributing factors include easy online communication (which makes it possible to be in frequent contact with friends and relatives when abroad) and faster, cheaper international travel, as well as visas targeted at (often well-off and retired) lifestyle migrants. It has also been argued that lifestyle migration offers people a way to take control of their lives. Often, this includes gaining plenty of leisure time. Sometimes lifestyle migrants set up small business ventures in their new destinations (for example guesthouses or bakeries). A central characteristic of such enterprises is that, even if the migrants work long days, they are their own bosses and decide for themselves when and how to work; their aim is to do something they consider meaningful and interesting rather than to make a profit (Hoey 2009).

Lifestyle migration is often understood as an escape to a better life. It is a comparative project, in which life before migration is seen in negative terms and life in the new destination in positive ones (Benson and O'Reilly 2009, 610). In practice, however, the better life is not ready and waiting for the migrant; it is an ongoing project, with the better practices being constructed and experienced in everyday life. Benson (2011) has, in fact, described lifestyle migration as a never-ending quest for a better life, referring above all to the migrants' aim of leading 'authentic' lives in an exotic destination unspoilt by modernity. There is, however, always scope for more authenticity and the goal is, therefore, never reached. The view of an ongoing quest provides an interesting lens through which to elaborate on the passing of time among lifestyle migrants; what happens when someone leads this 'better' way of life over many years? Do the lifestyle, and the rhythms and paces associated with it, change as the years go by?

### **Theoretical remarks: pace and time among lifestyle migrants**

Pace refers to the speed at which people travel. In addition, it describes rhythm – 'the frequency of people's movements and how long they reside in each place' (Iaquinto 2018, 571). According to Molz (2009), the story of modernity is told as a story of acceleration, and pace often works as a moral marker whereby speed is either celebrated (it is good to accelerate and move fast) or opposed (for example, by the slow food and slow travel movements). Sharma (2014) has discussed the acceleration of time in more detail, arguing that instead of the world getting faster, the actual issue is the discourse of 'speedup' within the particular political, economic and cultural contexts in which people experience time

(Sharma 2014, 8-9), and she points out that the sharing of space does not necessarily guarantee the sharing of time (Sharma 2014, 22). In my view, the pacing of people's mobility is closely related to time. First, movement always takes place in time and, secondly, different understandings and frameworks of time affect when and how particular mobilities take place and how they are viewed.

Lifestyle migrants often characterize their lifestyle as an escape to a better life, which includes an attempt to gain more time for themselves; by moving abroad, people aim to gain more leisure time, and usually succeed in doing so. In addition, they want to be in control of their own use of time and, as the interview extract at the beginning of the chapter implies, a significant characteristic of lifestyle migration is the celebration of the present; people want to enjoy life here and now instead of worrying about the future, as they claim many others do.<sup>4</sup>

The idea of leisure time is closely connected to the development of capitalist societies and so-called capitalist time (Bear 2017). According to Bear, capitalist time refers to the 'forms of abstract time reckoning that act as a universal measure of value, but which conflict with our concrete experiences of time' (Bear 2017, 146). In capitalist societies, control over time is seen as 'a medium of power and governance' (Munn 1992, 109), which refers above all to the fact that power lies with those who control how much time individuals need to use for work in order to earn a living. This, in turn, easily leads to people wanting to escape such governance in order to gain more time that they can control themselves. For example, Giddens (1991) argues that in late modernity it has become increasingly important for individuals to create their own lifestyles, whereby they can decide for themselves how to use their time. In similar terms, Nowotny (1994, 13) has written about 'Eigenzeit' ('time belonging to the self') by which she refers to private time and space separated out from public time and space.

It is not, however, simply a question of having, or not having, time for oneself. Several scholars (e.g. Zaloom 2007; Knights 2006) have pointed out that there are manifold temporalities and several temporal structures within which people operate simultaneously. These various temporal structures both constrain and enable people's activities (Orlikowski and Yates 2002). Usually, people navigate them without much trouble, but sometimes these different conceptions of time are incompatible, and this can generate tensions and constraints in people's lives and social relations (Knights 2006, 255-258).

I argue that in looking at the pacing of lifestyle migrants' transnational mobilities, it is crucial to pay attention to time because different timescapes affect this pacing in a variety of ways. In this chapter, I focus in particular on the temporal structures that affect and constrain the pacing of the transnational mobilities of lifestyle migrant families in Goa. Above all, I elaborate on how the families negotiate and navigate the conflicting timeframes as the years go by.

### **Lifestyle migrant families in Goa: the phenomenon and the research methods**

India has been a popular travel destination for Europeans since the colonial era (see e.g. Ghose 1998a; 1998b; Mohanty 2003) and many young Europeans and North Americans travelled there in search of an alternative lifestyle during the hippie era of the 1960s and 1970s (see Hall 1968; Wiles 1972; Odzer 1995). Nowadays, thousands of backpackers tour the country every year (see Enoch and Grossman 2010; Hottola 1999) and some of them end up becoming lifestyle migrants.

Hippies arrived on the beaches of Goa in the late 1960s, and the 1990s were the golden years of Goa trance.<sup>5</sup> Trance music is still popular in Goa, even though the scene became commercialized many years ago. Nowadays, many tourists and lifestyle migrants are also involved with various New Age practices.<sup>6</sup> Goa attracts hundreds of lifestyle migrants

every year, but it is impossible to know their exact numbers as most of them do not register with the local authorities. The families with young children typically seek a relaxed beach life. An important factor is the lower living costs compared with those in the parents' native countries, which allows them to have a higher standard of living in Goa. It is notable that the parents in these families are often of different national origins themselves and, as a consequence, many families spend time in at least three countries every year, making them transnationally very mobile.

The majority of these families do not actually migrate to Goa but rather circulate between two or three places. Yet, even though they do not stay permanently, the lifestyle itself is relatively enduring, or at least lasting for several years. Most families have homes in two places – in Goa and in one of the parents' native countries – but some settle down in Goa on a long-term basis. Even in the case of those who frequently spend time away from India, their lifestyle is different from so-called lifestyle mobility (Cohen et al. 2015) because they keep returning to the same place year after year.

Most lifestyle migrants are in Goa on tourist visas, but they emphasize that they are different from tourists because they repeatedly return there for several months at a time and rent houses instead of living in hotels or guesthouses. A few of them have business visas, but this is not a feasible option for the majority as they do not generate enough income to qualify. Nevertheless, most lifestyle migrants in Goa earn a living by providing goods and services to package tourists there. Some of them design and sell clothes or jewellery, others work as massage therapists, homeopaths, yoga teachers, DJs, musicians and so on, and some run cafes or restaurants. Most of these businesses operate in the informal sector, and most lifestyle migrants work only part-time; having plenty of leisure time is important for them.

My research in Goa focused on how the 3 to 12-year-old children of lifestyle migrants experience this transnationally mobile way of life and what kind of values, views, activities and practices there are among them (Korpela 2014; 2016; 2018). I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Goa for a total of 10 months during the winters of 2011, 2012 and 2013. I participated intensively in the families' lives, visiting their homes and spending time with them at beaches, pools and other popular gathering places. I conducted interviews with children and parents, and with adults working with the children (e.g. teachers)<sup>7</sup>. In addition to a detailed field diary and interviews, my fieldwork materials include photos taken by me and pictures drawn by children during projects I ran with them. During these drawing projects, I chatted with the children and audio-recorded our conversations. Although my actual fieldwork in Goa ended several years ago, I am still in contact with many of these families online, and thus know what has happened to them during the past few years. I have also met some of them in Europe, and I returned to Goa briefly in 2018.

### **Life in the timeless paradise**

The better life (or good life – see Torkington et al. 2015) that lifestyle migrants claim to have found in Goa, seems like an effort to create a bubble in which time stops. They claim to have escaped hectic lives for a relaxed, slow-paced life. Among the families in Goa, this manifests in various ways. First of all, their daily routines are relaxed; when children leave school or daycare in the afternoon, families often go to the beach or pool together, or visit each other and stay until the evening. In fact, the families' social activities often revolve around children and their friends and, consequently, nuclear families create their own time bubbles with other families. Parents have a lot of time available to spend with their children (and other families) because they work only part-time – if at all – and because most of them have housekeepers to help with everyday tasks such as cleaning and cooking. Several parents told me that this was one of the main reasons they liked being in Goa; in their native countries, they would see

their children only in the evenings and at weekends, whereas in Goa they had much more time in which to be involved in their children's everyday lives.

The families in Goa spend a lot of time on the beach and at pools. These venues manifest an atmosphere of slowing down time because they are leisure zones where people relax and rest, and which nobody is in a hurry to leave. Another significant aspect is that the leisure spaces of pools and beaches are also touristic spaces, and tourism is indeed a question of enjoying the present for the duration of the time away. In a way, lifestyle migration to Goa can be viewed as an attempt to live in an eternal holiday space – a leisure paradise where time stops, or at least moves very slowly.

Importantly, life is very much focused on the nuclear family and a few close friends. Relatives, including the children's grandparents, live far away, and although the families often communicate with them online, they are not part of their everyday lives in Goa. In a way, this geographical distance enables a focus on the nuclear family and contributes to the ethos of a timeless bubble.

The effort of creating a timeless bubble is also manifested in these families having hardly any contact with local Goan people. Their connections with locals are typically instrumental; they know restaurant workers, housekeepers, salespeople, motorcycle mechanics and so on, i.e. people they pay to provide them with particular services. Since there is no personal interaction between the 'Westerners' and the 'locals',<sup>8</sup> the lifestyle migrants are able to ignore the timescales that govern local people's lives. For example, their yearly schedules revolve around trance parties and other events targeted at 'Westerners' in Goa, rather than around local events and holidays. The fact that they are outsiders – officially visiting tourists – allows them to occupy this position, in which they can ignore local timescales and focus on enjoyment in their own time bubble. Another example in this regard is that when the lifestyle migrants fly to India, their international flights usually arrive in Mumbai. All the families I knew in Goa then took domestic flights to the state – a distance of about 600 kilometres. They did not even consider trains or buses, even though they would have been much cheaper; getting involved with the crowds and the unreliable schedules of Indian public transport was something the families definitely wanted to avoid. In Sharma's words (2014, 22), 'the sharing of space does not guarantee the sharing of time' and, in Goa, although the 'Western' families are physically present in local villages, their timescapes are completely different from those of the Goan inhabitants.

A significant aspect of the lifestyle migrant children's lives is that they cannot make long-term plans regarding most of the hobbies in which they engage while in Goa. For example, practising yoga is popular among the children but the teachers are in Goa for only about three months a year, as a consequence of which this hobby, like many others in which the children participate, is temporary. In fact, it is common for freshly arrived adults to set up children's activities in an attempt to generate income for themselves. In most cases, these are short-term; children engage with them for a few weeks, until the organizing adults leave or decide to do something else. This situation contributes to the feeling of living in the present; one can never be sure which activities will be available in the future. Not having long-term plans is not only a practical issue among lifestyle migrants in Goa; it is also an ethos that the adults celebrate but which may have far more profound consequences for their children. For example, with sport and music, it is difficult to progress when there are long breaks. Those children who live for part of the year in some place other than Goa can invest more time and effort in hobbies when they are away, but those who live in the state on a more permanent basis depend on whichever hobby opportunities are provided at any particular time.

The lifestyle migrants in Goa construct the space of timeless paradise in their everyday actions and, in this process, create a particular understanding not only of space but of time connected with that space. In other words, time is not only either imposed on an

individual by structures and employers or claimed by individuals as their own; it is also created socially and needs to be understood within the context of its use. This refers to the notion of social time, an understanding in which ‘time is seen as a reflection of social practices and is socially constituted through the routines of social life’ (Knights 2006, 254). Among the lifestyle migrant families in Goa, this social time emphasizes the slow-paced present. However, as I will show in the following, although lifestyle migrants have chosen to live in a particular space characterized by a slow pace of life, they do not live in isolation and, for most of them, the local slow-paced present is temporary. In fact, they are affected by various timescales, and these greatly affect the pacing of their transnational mobilities.

### **Pacing transnational mobilities**

#### **First look: the seasonal cycle**

Lifestyle migration to Goa is seasonal. The high season starts in late November and ends in early April, corresponding to the most pleasant weather conditions (not too hot and not too wet). Most lifestyle migrants schedule their sojourns in Goa for this high season.

In addition to the weather, there are economic factors that affect the seasonal nature of lifestyle migration to Goa. Leading a relaxed life in Goa – as well as moving transnationally – requires money. If there are no tourists, there are no customers for the lifestyle migrants, as locals are not interested in (paying that much for) the goods and services they offer. Some lifestyle migrants manage to make enough money during the high season to stay in Goa at other times, and some supplement their income by selling their products online, but most of them leave when the tourist season ends, in order to earn money elsewhere. Therefore, the economic realities of earning a living affect the timings of their mobilities and, in Goa, there are income opportunities only during the high tourist season.

The seasonal nature of this lifestyle means that the everyday lives of these people are characterized by frequent arrivals and departures. November and December are the arrival months and March and April the departure months, although there are people leaving and arriving at other times too. According to Munn, periods are defined by specific social activities or facts (Munn 1992, 95), and among lifestyle migrant families in Goa, this means that arrivals and departures mark out the high and off seasons. Their own and other people’s transnational mobility are thus part of their everyday lives in Goa; reunions and farewells are frequent, and people need to adjust to the fact that many of their friends, or they themselves, stay in Goa for particular periods but not permanently. Consequently, enjoying the present in Goa is actually short-term; it is repeated year after year but, for the majority, it is not continuous. Although people emphasize enjoying the ‘timeless’ present, the culture of arrivals and departures – and the rhythms related to it – show that there are various repeated discontinuities in this lifestyle.

I argue that it is perhaps precisely because of the short-term nature of the lifestyle that the present is celebrated to such an extent; it is a strategy to downplay the fragile nature of the community and the contradiction between the timeless present and the culture of arrivals and departures that indicates constant change. At the same time, the seasonal nature of the lifestyle results in a cyclical notion of time, and it is this cycle that is a central characteristic of the lifestyle in Goa. There are repeated discontinuities but also repeated reunions, and the pacing of people’s transnational mobilities is clearly seasonal.

The high and low seasons correspond to the climatic seasons of Goa, which is something that individuals cannot control, and the lifestyle migrants prefer the warm and dry winter months, when there are more people and events, to the quieter hot and wet months. Therefore, at first glance, lifestyle migrants seem to move between India and other countries according to the seasons. However, they cannot organize the pacing of their mobilities merely according to the weather.

## Second look: political constraints

By definition, lifestyle migration is a question of voluntary transnational mobility. Accordingly, the families in Goa sojourn there because they themselves desire it, and they consider their life in Goa to be of better quality than it would be in their passport countries (Korpela 2018). Moving to Goa is, however, not only a question of an individual's choice.

Q: What are your future plans? Do you think you will live here in Goa?

A: In the meanwhile, we are doing it. This is as far as I can tell you. (Laughter). We still rely on the Indian authorities so they will decide when the visa is given and not given. (Ines)

It is very difficult, or even impossible, for foreigners to obtain a permanent residence permit in India – except for those who marry Indian citizens. Consequently, these lifestyle migrants typically hold tourist or business visas – all of which are fixed-term and need to be renewed every now and then, typically every three, six or twelve months. Even children are very aware of issues related to visas, as the extract below illustrates.

Sometimes people need to leave Goa because they have a visa problem. (Ben, 5)  
This group of lifestyle migrants is very diverse in terms of visas: some have visas for only a few months while others try to stay in Goa for most of the year. In order to renew a visa, it is necessary to leave India. Sometimes, it is enough to merely exit and re-enter,<sup>9</sup> but at other times a new visa must be applied for and then the wait for the bureaucratic process to be completed can take days and sometimes weeks.<sup>10</sup> This means that the lifestyle migrant families in Goa need to leave India from time to time. The timings of these 'visa runs' do not necessarily coincide with the families' wishes to leave Goa. Most lifestyle migrants in Goa willingly leave India at times to visit friends and relatives and to earn money elsewhere. However, expiring visas often force them to also leave at times when they would prefer to stay. Visa runs during the high season are particularly disliked, but the need for visa runs in general is commonly complained about. Therefore, although the 'Westerners' in Goa like to describe their lifestyle as a matter of individual choice, their actions are also restricted and guided by institutional structures, above all by Indian visa policies (see also Korpela 2016; 2019).

The challenges posed by visa policies illustrate well how 'bureaucratic time' (Hoag 2014) or 'structural time' (Evans-Pritchard 1940) tangibly affect lifestyle migrants' lives in India and require that they adjust their lives to the timescales dictated by both visa policies and authorities. These adjustments are, in turn, telling of the importance of the hierarchical power to control and govern time (Munn 1992, 109), namely of how the Indian state has the power to determine who can sojourn on its soil, when, and for how long. Visa policies thus greatly affect the pacing of the lifestyle migrants' transnational mobilities, both the timings of their mobilities and the length of their stays.

Visa issues caused constant stress and worry among the people I knew in Goa. People were irritated by the fact that they could not freely determine the timings of their transnational mobilities and the length of their sojourns in Goa. The visa policies also change frequently, and no one can be sure what kind of visa they will be granted each time. Consequently, the timings and lengths of the visa runs are not a fixed sequence (Munn 1992, 100); they can diverge from one moment to another and sometimes even between different family members. For example, if spouses (and children) have different nationalities, they may get different kinds of visas, resulting in different pacings of mobilities related to visa renewals.

In addition, those lifestyle migrants who want to remain within the social security and health care systems of their native countries need to take into account the restrictions imposed by such systems; rights to social security and public health care are usually residence-based. In other words, it is not only the Indian state but also the lifestyle migrants' native states that play a significant role in controlling the pacing of transnational mobilities.

### **Third look: educational constraints**

Issues with visas, social security and income are, however, not the only factors that constrict the pacing of the lifestyle migrants' transnational mobilities; children's schooling is another significant constraint.

During their children's early years, most 'Western' parents in Goa are rather relaxed about education and happily take them out of school in the middle of an academic year to move between countries. The lifestyle migrants are very diverse in terms of children's education. Some of the children go to school in both Goa and a parent's native country, a few go to school only in Goa or only in a parent's native country, and a few are home-schooled. Home schooling is an interesting option in terms of time because it can be seen as an attempt to create the family's own time, as home-schooled children are not constrained by timetables imposed on them by a school and can create their own learning schedules. Most lifestyle migrant children in Goa, however, attend a formal school either there or in a parent's native country, or in both, and as they get older it becomes increasingly complicated to take them out of school whenever this is needed for the families' mobility trajectories. Usually, by the time the children turn 12 or 13, families decide either not to go to Goa anymore and to stay in a parent's native country more or less permanently, or to stay in Goa for most of the year and restrict the time spent away from India to the school holidays. The latter arrangement is of course complicated by visa restrictions, yet some families have managed to obtain suitable visas – sometimes using their children's education as the reason for other family members needing visas.

The interview extract quoted in the title of this chapter, about staying in Goa for the exams, was voiced by a mother when I asked her whether the family would be leaving India when the tourist season was over, and the weather was getting uncomfortably hot. Similarly, when I enquired as to whether I would be able to meet with her family in Europe in July, during my holidays, another mother told me, as did others, that they would need to be back in Goa in July because the academic year there would have started by then and school was so demanding for their teenage child that he could not miss the first weeks as he did when he was younger. Therefore, school terms constrain the pacing of the lifestyle migrant families' transnational mobilities and often force families to stay in India when they would like to be somewhere else. This also means that when children get older families become less flexible in the pacing of their transnational mobility, and eventually need to make a clear decision about whether to settle more permanently in Goa or somewhere else. This, in turn, means that their mobile lifestyle ends, or at least becomes more settled for most of the year. The fact that school terms affect the pacing of the families' transnational mobilities to such an extent illustrates well how the relaxed bubble of lifestyle migrants in Goa is not unaffected by timeframes imposed by institutional constraints.

### **Time doesn't stop: the local present and teenagers' education**

Salazar and Smart (2011, ii) have argued that in regard to transnationalism, mobility is often understood to generate change – 'often conceived of as an improvement (progress) for oneself and one's kin (e.g. migrants)'. The notion of changing and improving one's life by moving also characterizes representations embraced by lifestyle migrants in Goa. However, once these individuals are in Goa, their lives are characterized by stillness and stasis rather



than by dynamic change; their intention is to enjoy a slow-paced beach life, an imaginary that in the Goan context has its roots in the hippie era (Wiles 1972; Odzer 1995). In fact, as already indicated at the very start of this chapter, lifestyle migrants in Goa often emphasize how important it is to enjoy the moment and not to worry about the future.

It is very, very difficult in this lifestyle to plan. We are living the moment. And the moment can be in two to three months in advance, but that's all. [...] On the other hand, to know what to be doing in four years and in certain times of the day, this is also a little crazy. (Ines)

I could say in general I could have a vision; I don't have any plans. [...] to ask to plan ten years, it's very hopeless. ... You can only have hypothetical ideas... [...] To be able to make a reasonable decision about what to do, in a way it becomes like a request to navigate without a map. The map is not there yet, and somebody is going to ask you how you navigate. (Andre)

Many of my interlocutors viewed moving to Goa as a question of leaving behind (or not engaging with) ways of life in their native countries that they saw as hectic and stressful. They preferred to live in Goa, where they claimed to have plenty of free time to enjoy themselves and to do what they wanted, including spending time with their children (Korpela 2018).

For them, enjoying the present means intentionally refusing to plan or to worry about the future. Linear time, however, does not stop. It is notable that when families first choose lifestyle migration to Goa – or end up as lifestyle migrants there, as it is not always an explicit choice – they usually have very young children. They do not need to worry much about these babies' and toddlers' education, and their children's teenage years seem to be in a very distant future. The future, however, becomes the present at some point, and many families seem to find themselves unprepared for the choices they have to make regarding their children's education and future when they reach the age of 15, 16 or 17. Even when parents are happy with the relaxed life in Goa, and the yearly repeated cycle of high and low seasons there, this cycle can feel like a trap for teenagers who want to pursue other goals. As I mentioned earlier, the families leading lives of seasonal migration to Goa often desist when their children become teenagers and stay more permanently in one of the parents' native countries. Some families, however, stay in Goa, and the teenagers then have to adjust to the opportunities available to them there.

I revisited Goa in January 2018, and children I had known during my initial fieldwork had become teenagers in the interim. Many of the parents told me that they were very stressed about what to do with them. Some (boys) had dropped out of school at the age of 15 and some of their parents (albeit not all) were worried about their future prospects.<sup>11</sup> Others were worried about the quality of the secondary education; they (or the teenagers themselves) wanted access to a good education but the options in Goa were limited and costly. The parents often felt ill-equipped and ill-informed to investigate potential education opportunities, as they themselves had typically not put much effort into their own studies.

The families who stay in Goa usually put their children into private international schools there, as they do not believe local Indian schools provide a good education.<sup>12</sup> Some teenagers (or their parents), however, are not satisfied with the quality of teaching even in these international schools, and want to pursue a better education. Since the options in Goa are limited, they opt for boarding schools elsewhere, if the families can afford them. If a teenager goes to a boarding school far away – either elsewhere in India or in a parent's native country or another country – this obviously adds a new mobility trajectory, with its own

timings, to the families' lives. Moreover, when parents have initially chosen to live in Goa in order to be able to spend more time with their children, it is particularly difficult for them to send their children off to boarding school.

The issues with the children's secondary education illustrates well how the families' initial escape to the relaxed, slow-paced 'bubble' of the lifestyle migrant community in Goa can become problematic as the years go by. Initially, the parents want to escape to a timeless paradise, but time eventually catches up with them and forces the families to reconsider their lifestyle choice and mobility trajectories. In addition, the pacing of their transnational mobility requires some readjustment when situations and circumstances change over time; a pace that worked well with young children does not necessarily work with teenagers.

### **Lifestyle migration and the pacing of mobilities**

Being a lifestyle migrant in Goa is a personal choice but, as I have argued above, the pacing of such people's transnational mobilities is affected not only by the weather and the related high seasons but also by economic factors, social security issues, visa regimes and children's school terms. All these factors affect the length of the families' stays in Goa (and elsewhere) and the pacing of their transnational mobilities. This, in turn, means that the pacing of their mobility does not always correspond to their wishes; they cannot necessarily stay for the whole high season, nor can they always leave when the weather gets hot and wet.

A significant factor in this lifestyle is the parents' wish to escape a hectic and stressful way of life in their native countries for what they perceive to be a relaxed paradise in Goa. The aim is to gain time for themselves (that is, time that belongs to the individual and their family), and they create a particular slow-paced life.<sup>13</sup> It seems to me, however, that enjoying the timeless present eventually turns out to be an illusion. Time goes by – it is not possible to stop it, even in a lifestyle migration paradise. First of all, as I pointed out earlier, children become teenagers. It is not, however, only children who get older; ageing obviously applies to everyone. This becomes particularly tangible among retired lifestyle migrants who adopt this lifestyle in their 50s or 60s when they are relatively healthy but whose bodies become more fragile and often in need of care as the years pass – something most of them are not well prepared for (see Betty and Hall 2015). Ageing – either in terms of growing up or growing old – is a tangible example of how enjoying the present in the 'lifestyle migration bubble' is not a permanent situation. Eventually, the 'timeless bubble' is affected by time, and consequently lifestyle choices and mobility trajectories need to be reconsidered and lives rearranged.

Moreover, it is not only a question of lifestyle migrants themselves or their children becoming older. Lifestyle migration often involves a wish to get away from duties in an individual's native country (Benson and O'Reilly 2009, 609), including social duties towards relatives. With the passage of time, however, it may not be possible to stay away from such responsibilities. I have, for example, met lifestyle migrants in India who have needed to return to their native countries years later to provide care for their elderly parent(s). Interestingly, their having been abroad for a long time sometimes makes them particularly suitable candidates for taking care of their elderly parents; their siblings are often busy with their own everyday routines and families whereas (ex-)lifestyle migrants (who do not have children) have no such responsibilities, and are thus available for the caretaker role.

In the light of my research material from India, it seems that, in the long run, lifestyle migration is 'mission: impossible'. The project of enjoying the present in a paradise is bound to change as time passes. It is not merely a question of an ongoing quest for a better life but also an ongoing negotiation with how the better life – or the individuals involved with it – changes over time. For example, in Goa, the illusion of timeless isolation – that the migrants initially aim for – does not last forever. Lifestyle migration to Goa eventually seems to

become something else, as the escape to the bubble in paradise changes in the long run. Similarly, in regard to retirees, Oliver (2011) has shown how the plans and views of British retirees in Spain change over the years. Although they initially want to escape what they consider boring lives in the UK for more active and interesting lives in Spain, their deteriorating health causes many of them to welcome a return to the UK, which they consider, at that point, a safe and comfortable place. Therefore, among both the families in Goa and British retirees in Spain, lifestyle migrants need to redefine themselves, their place in the world, their mobilities and the pacing of those mobilities as the years go by.

### **Conclusion: a liminoid community, time and pace**

I began this chapter by pointing out that lifestyle migrants in Goa embrace a static notion of time: one should enjoy the present because, when the perfect life has been found, there is no need to change anything or go anywhere. This chapter, however, has shown that this ethos is an illusion in the long run.

Lifestyle migration can be analysed using the framework of Turner's (1969) liminality. He defines liminal communities as anti-structural spaces betwixt and between. A defining character of the liminal space is that it cannot last forever; the anti-structure is always temporary and needs to be resolved. Returning to normality is important because the ultimate purpose of the liminal process is to support the existing societal structures. Moreover, a long-term liminal is impossible because it loses its spontaneous characteristic and eventually develops its own new structure.

A decade after publishing his theory on liminality, Turner (1982) introduced the concept of liminoid, referring to any position outside or at the margins of everyday life. He used this concept to analyse modern societies and argued that the purpose of liminoid is typically pleasure. It often contains a social critique of the 'normal order of things' and there is no attempt to return to that order. In more abstract terms, liminoid is the end whereas liminal is the means.

In a way, lifestyle migrants in Goa are trying to escape to the liminoid space of leisure and tourism, yet this chapter has shown that this escape cannot last forever. There is an attempt to make the liminoid an end, but this does not seem to work in the long run. Even though mainstream society may ignore the existence of the liminoid lifestyle migrant communities and view the phenomenon merely as a personal choice of particular individuals, the liminoid eventually becomes a problem for those individuals. The passing of time is a key factor here. Living in an isolated slow-paced leisure space in Goa is an imaginary that does not hold long term. The ideal of slowness is recreated in the families' everyday practices but slowness does not mean stopping time and, eventually, time catches up with those in the leisure paradise and they need to reconsider their place within a variety of structures and timescales, which in turn affects the pacing of their transnational mobilities.

Temporal structures can both constrain and enable lifestyle migrants' transnational mobilities. In this chapter, I have argued that lifestyle migrant families in Goa are involved with various, often conflicting, timescales and that this becomes more visible the longer the lifestyle lasts; there are particular shifts in the pacing of the families' transnational mobilities as the years go by. I have shown that rather than the everlasting leisure present, the lifestyle actually has repeated discontinuities, caused not only by the climate but by various institutional factors. Lifestyle migrants act within particular economic and institutional structures and regimes, in the midst of a variety of personal obligations, in bodies that age and with children who get older. Dismissing the phenomenon as merely a choice made by individuals means ignoring the various ways in which people's actions, institutional structures and the passing of time are entangled.

In conclusion, using a long-term perspective to examine lifestyle migrants' pacing of transnational mobilities offers a productive lens through which to investigate the various contradictions in their lifestyle. An escape to a timeless present does not last forever, and it may turn out to be an illusion when the future becomes the present. These passages of time often make necessary both a redefinition of the lifestyle and, eventually, a re-pacing of people's transnational mobility trajectories.

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<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, all interlocutors' names are pseudonyms.

<sup>3</sup> In this context, 'Western' refers to people from North America, Australia, Israel, a variety of European countries, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Retired lifestyle migrants often aspire to an active old age by moving abroad to a pleasant climate. Although they may have waited a long time to be able to make this move, they also emphasize living in the present without worrying about the future.

<sup>5</sup> Trance is a genre of electronic music.

<sup>6</sup> New Age refers to a movement of alternative spirituality that emphasizes mysticism, holism and environmentalism.

<sup>7</sup> All the children, their parents and other adults who took part in this project gave their oral consent to participate. They considered the study important and learned to trust the researcher during the long-term fieldwork during which she repeatedly explained to them about her research. When the researcher received the funding for her study, the ethical questions were evaluated.

<sup>8</sup> The relationships tend to be distant and instrumental, even with housekeepers who spend several hours a day in the families' homes.

<sup>9</sup> Indian visas are often valid for a relatively long time (e.g for one or five years) but there is a requirement to leave the country every three or six months. The visa holder can, however, return immediately as long as they get a stamp at the border.

<sup>10</sup> A few years ago, there was a rule that a new Indian visa could be obtained only after the applicant had spent two to six months abroad, but the rule was cancelled after some time. Recently, however, new limitations on how long someone can stay in India in any one year have been imposed.

<sup>11</sup> During my fieldwork, I met a few young adults who had dropped out of school at an early age. Some of them had managed to gain a useful professional skill and a steady income in spite of their lack of a formal education. Examples of such professions include scuba diving teacher, gardener and patissier.

<sup>12</sup> Local schools also do not accept foreign children unless they have long-term residency in Goa.

<sup>13</sup> Many lifestyle migrants in India choose not to have children, so that they can live as they wish, with no responsibilities for others.

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