

The British quest for better way of life explored in new study

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The British quest for better way of life is explored in the first research study to look at the everyday lives of the British living in France.

The study, led by Dr Michaela Benson at the University of Bristol, examines [lifestyle](#) migration in rural France — one of the most popular countries the British choose to migrate to — taking an in-depth look at what considerations are behind their decision to migrate, and how they imagine life in rural France to be compared against the reality of lived experiences.

The findings, presented in a new book, entitled '[The British in Rural France: Lifestyle Migration and the Ongoing Quest for a Better Way of Life](#)', reveal that these migrants carry their middle-class culture with them and it continues to frame their actions and practices within the destination as well as their understandings of their lives there.

Despite the recognition that there are an increasing number of people choosing to leave the UK permanently, heading for destinations such as France, with an estimated 200,000 British living in the country¹, there has been very little examination of their motivations, destination choices and post-migration lives. The book responds to calls to recognise the movement of these relatively privileged individuals, which are often overlooked in studies of migration.

Dr Benson from the University's School for Policy Studies, said: "The book makes a timely contribution to debates on migration and lifestyle

migration in particular on the one hand, demonstrating that the quest for a better way of life that lies at the core of such migration trends continues to characterise life following migration, while on the other hand, exploring what this persistent quest does for the migrants, and what it reveals about them.

“By promoting their own ideologies and lifestyle choices relative to those of others, British migrants in rural France reinforce their position as members of the British middle-class, but also take authorship of their lives in a way not possible before migration. This presents British migration to rural France as a form of lifestyle migration that is particular to the British middle class, while also stressing that residential and lifestyle choices following migration continue to reflect middle class values and ideologies about living.

“This is evident in the pursuit of a better of life that initially motivated [migration](#) and continues to characterise post-migration lives. As the book argues this ongoing quest is both reflective of wider ideologies about living, particularly the desire for authentic living, and subtle processes of social distinction.”

More information: 1. It is estimated that 200,000 Brits live in France (Sriskandarajah and Drew 2006).

Provided by University of Bristol

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