

CAMPSITE MIGRANTS:

British Caravanners and Homemaking in Benidorm

Abstract

Based on ethnographic fieldwork amongst British migrants on a Spanish Camping and caravan site, this article argues that the home is a productive entrance point for understanding the dynamics of this form of migration. Whilst campsites are planned and legally regulated as leisure spheres for mobile camping, touring caravans provide an affordable option for migrants otherwise excluded from the Spanish property market. In this article, I show how economic activities are centred on the caravan homemaking wherein mobile dwellings are transformed into – and used as – immobile living units. The making of the caravan home is furthermore central to the shaping and maintenance of social networks of support that are based on 'handyman' manual labour and a cash economy.

Keywords

Mobile Dwellings • Homemaking • Economy • Spain • UK

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Introduction

In 2008, Gary and Margaret, a Welsh couple who had been made redundant from their jobs as campsite managers four years earlier, decided to sell their house, pack up their things and leave England for Spain. They invested some of their money in a second-hand touring caravan on Camping Mares in Benidorm and spent the years prior to formal retirement living off their savings. When I first met them in 2010, the couple, who had 14 years behind them working with – and travelling in – caravans, would frequently talk to me about why they regarded campsite life to be of a fundamentally different quality than usually found in conventional housing arrangements. As we will see further in this article, such qualities centred on life amongst like-minded neighbours and forms of support made available in the campsite environment. Or as Gary put it: 'In an apartment you will just go and close your door and you won't see your neighbours'.

This article engages with what I have somewhat bluntly called the 'caravan migration' from the United Kingdom to Spain. For Northern Europeans, in general, and British, in particular, migration to Spain is well documented in the academic literature (see, e.g. Casado-Díaz 2006, 2009; Gustafson 2001, 2008, 2009; Huber & O'Reilly 2004; Janoschka 2011; King *et al.* 2000; Oliver 2008; O'Reilly 2000, 2003, 2009). Gary and Margaret, however, are representative of a form of mobility that, despite its popularity, has gained little attention in the academic literature when compared to other forms of migration (i.e. Benson & O'Reilly 2009a, 2009b, 2015; Cohen, Duncan & Thulemark

2015; Hoey 2014; Knowles & Harper 2009). Many campsites in Spain have become locations of housing for large migrant groups from Northern Europe. These campsites have thus come to accommodate individuals who often have made a 'double move' when downsizing from a house in their country of origin to a mobile dwelling and also settled, as retired or working, on long-term or permanent basis in Spain.

Departing from the daily life amongst the British residents on a campsite in the Spanish town of Benidorm, here called *Camping Mares*, this article approaches caravan migration by focusing on how *homemaking* both shapes, and is reshaped by, social networks and economic exchange. Drawing on a growing body of literature on the domestic sphere and migration (see, e.g. Appel 2012; Dalakoglou 2010; Walsh 2006, 2011), in this article, I show how social networks are produced through people's engagements with the materiality of the home dwelling. For migrant campsite dwellers such as Gary and Margaret, the caravan itself plays a central part in the narrative of the campsite as a version of the good life. In their and their neighbours' retrospective accounts, it is common to refer to the house and the apartment as an evil, not only tying its inhabitants to burdening economic and legislative relations, unnecessary housework, maintenance and abundance of things (Leivestad 2015) but also hindering the qualities of social relationships made available in another housing context. After migration, the caravan is thus commonly portrayed as a home that, apart from being economically viable, also holds a particular social potential.

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As I show in this article, whilst providing a cheap entrance to the Spanish property market that allows for home ownership instead of a dependency on the rental market, the caravan is also a home that because of its size, fragile materials and potential mobility can be easily transformed, moved, extended and developed through Do-It-Yourself activities on the campsite. Such transformations of the mobile home also provide and produce a particular infrastructural sphere of economic and social interrelations that enable people to 'live and live well' (de L'Estoile 2014: 71) in their migratory setting. This article, by carefully examining the migrant home, thus also draws attention to the way agency is reshuffled and negotiated between individuals and their home as a consequence of migration.

The argument is laid out in different sections. Following a brief methodological note is a consideration of how we might approach the domestic sphere in relation to migration. Paying attention to domestic spaces is particularly important with relation to the everyday lives of caravan migrants, and as the next section shows, the campsite setting provides an unexplored segment of white British working-class migration to Spain. The analytical parts of this article consider the transformations of the mobile caravan into an immobile housing unit, and the various ways in which a caravan homemaking both shapes – and is shaped by – economic practices and social formations amongst British migrants. Finally, I consider the relationship between the caravan home and social networks and how we might understand caravan migration as a different form of migrant enclaving.

Methodological Considerations

The material discussed in this article is primarily based on participant-observation and semi-structured interviews with British caravan dwellers on a campsite in the Spanish town of Benidorm. The material was collected as part of a doctoral research project on caravan and campsite dwelling in Europe. During the years 2010–2015, I completed 12 months of fieldwork on campsites in Sweden and Spain, as well as within the caravan industry. During the winter of 2010–2011, I lived on Camping Mares in a rented mobile home for four months, and through the following years, I returned to the site annually for subsequent fieldwork ranging from a few days up to one month. The campsite will be described in detail in Section '(Im)mobile Neighbourhood'. Amongst the long-term and full-time residents at Camping Mares, a majority were of British and Dutch nationality, and my key interlocutors were all from the United Kingdom. Some were still seasonal migrants, staying in Benidorm between 6 and 9 months a year and living in their motorhome or caravan when back in the United Kingdom. Others, like the Welsh couple Gary and Margaret, had sold their house in the United Kingdom to be able to fund a caravan life in Benidorm. Whilst some of the site's residents would move from a motorhome into a permanent caravan, none of my interlocutors saw it as a stepping-stone into the housing market, but rather, as I discuss later in the article, regarded the campsite as carrying valuable qualities for leading a good life.

Whilst the majority of my key interlocutors were white, heterosexual couples, and all retired or semi-retired and aged 50–67 years, the site also had a younger population of people in their 30s–50s who worked on or off the site. The connections between the on-site work arrangements and their wider implications in the shaping of a local neighbourhood will be discussed later. For most site residents, welfare connections to the United Kingdom in forms of pensions and benefits were, however, crucial for the maintenance of everyday life in the mobile dwelling in Spain.

Fieldwork on the campsite consisted of engaging in daily activities with my caravan neighbours, from grocery shopping and tea in front of the telly, to bingo nights, quiz outings and patio parties. During fieldwork, I also completed home interviews with 40 individuals in 20 caravan units. These semi-structured interviews focused on the motives of migration and also on the economic and material aspects of caravan homemaking. Whilst participant observations and interviews allowed me to further explore the everyday infrastructures of caravanning, I also complemented this material with inventories (see Leivestad 2017) that centred on the material aspects of the campsite home. In the following text, I discuss the significant role of the domestic sphere in relation to understanding everyday aspects of migration.

Migration and the Materiality of the Home

Dimitris Dalakoglou (2010) has convincingly argued that the materiality of the house has been surprisingly invisible in migration studies (see also Basu & Coleman 2008). There are, however, important exceptions that can be included in what Ayona Datta (2008: 518) has referred to as a 'material turn' in anthropology and neighbouring disciplines. In the context of transnational migration, social scientists have more specifically been interested in the connections and discrepancies between 'home' as an everyday living space and 'home' in terms of belonging (Walsh 2011: 516; see also Ahmed, Castañeda & Sheller 2003). Katie Walsh's studies of British expatriates in Dubai provides a prime example of the importance of material culture of the domestic arena in terms of negotiating and handling questions of belonging in a transnational context (Walsh 2011: 516, Leivestad 2017). Her research follows a renewed interest in domestic materiality and homemaking within both social anthropology and human geography (see Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995; Miller 2008) that acknowledges the house dwelling not as a permanent and stable entity but as 'unfixed, dynamic and mobile' (Dalakoglou 2010: 763).

In the case discussed in this article, the home dwelling is a literally mobile home, a touring caravan or motorhome on wheels that has gradually been transformed into an immobile permanent housing unit. Rather than centring on the objects of the domestic sphere and how they make sense in relation to migrant homemaking (see Walsh 2006, 2011), I am interested in the way caravans are materially transformed and the role they play as nodes in economic and social relationships. As I have argued elsewhere, domestic materiality is thus more than the mobile objects that indicate rooting or belonging (see Leivestad 2017). Rather we need a concept of homemaking that include both material *building practices* (Datta 2008) and house-related *infrastructures* (Appel 2012; Lea & Pholeros 2010; Xiang & Lindquist 2014) such as electricity and drains, in order to allow for a more comprehensive take on the importance of the migrant home and its on-going material and social transformations.

In the case of the caravans on Camping Mares, the mobile units are connected to the campsite, through electricity, drains and wires and also through their location along the streets and connections with public toilets and other common buildings where site residents meet each other. These material infrastructures provide openings, as will be discussed in depth later in this article, for the social and material co-production of social networks that are based on manual labour in and around the caravan home. But a closer look at the caravan home also reveals the fragile economies of British working-class migration to Spain that I discuss in the following section.

Campsite Migration

In January 2016, the British migrant population in Benidorm became the subject of a new *Channel Five* docudrama. In *Bargaining Brits in the Sun*, the camera team follows what they describe as 'An army of British expats, living the dream on a budget' as they work in bars, run businesses and struggle to maintain a better life in Spain. The *Channel Five* series fed into an already established popular imaginary of Benidorm as a destination for working-class British tourism to Spain, usually portrayed as a cheap Mecca for holidaymakers. For example, the award winning sitcom *Benidorm*, airing its seventh season in 2015 continues to ironically present the Spanish coastal town as a hub for the British working-class charter tourist.

Benidorm first grew from a small fishing village to become a nexus at the very centre of Spanish charter tourism as early as in the 1950s, when local entrepreneurs managed to make powerful alliances with the Franco Regime and attracted major foreign investments to the area (Aledo, Steen Jacobsen & Selstad 2012). Benidorm still attracts millions of British charter tourists annually, easily reachable with direct flights to Alicante from a range of UK cities. But as the *Channel Five* series reveals, the town is also an important destination for British migration to Spain. Out of a population of 74,000 inhabitants, the 2010 census identified 37% foreign citizens, out of which 21% were UK nationals (Ivars Baidal, Rodríguez Sánchez & Vera Rebollo 2013: 185).

According to the *Channel Five* television series, one of the keys to a 'cheap and cheerful' life in Spain is a caravan on one of the town's 10 major campsites. Benidorm is statistically one of the most important destinations for camping in Spain¹ and, compared to other major Spanish campsite destinations, characterised by having by far the longest average stay (26.4 nights in 2014). In 2014, the town's campsites received more than 32,000 visitors from abroad (compared to approximately 27,000 Spanish nationals), who according to statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, *La Encuesta de ocupación en campings*. 2014) together paid for almost 1.5 million overnight stays. Spanish campsite statistics from 2014 indicates that amongst the 2 million campsite visitors who were foreign citizens, approximately 246,000 were British (almost 12 %). That made UK nationals the fourth largest group of campsite visitors in Spain after France, the Netherlands and Germany.

In terms of resources and ability to pursue a better quality of life, caravanners' diverse backgrounds pose a challenge to the lifestyle migration concept, as it was first coined by Benson and O'Reilly (2009a, 2009b) as the mobility of 'relatively privileged'. Recently, Benson & O'Reilly (2015: 6), drawing on the work of Knowles & Harper (2009) and meeting the critique from Spanish scholars Huete, Mantecón and Estévez (2013), have tried to clarify the usefulness of the lifestyle migration category as primarily 'an alternative way of thinking about migration'. Lifestyle migration is thus not, the authors argue, 'an attempt to homogenise discrete categories. It is a lens rather than a box' (Benson & O'Reilly 2015: 6). Whilst Benson & O'Reilly's point is well taken, as it draws attention to how this lens as an analytical tool can be used to highlight the role of lifestyle in migration and also 'the opportunities and structures that support and hinder' (Benson & O'Reilly 2015: 14), the label's somewhat short conceptual history still put forward certain theoretical connections that remain problematic, not least when trying to apply this term to the examination of the caravan context.

A brief door-to-door survey that I completed in 2012, targeting 110 individuals at Camping Mares, indicated that most of the British permanent caravan dwellers on the site come from the northern

industrial areas of England, such as Liverpool and Newcastle. Occupational backgrounds ranged from carpenters and mechanics to cleaners and healthcare assistants. In terms of education, few of my interlocutors had any higher formal education. Their economic possibilities were, however, diverse. A couple at the campsite had, for instance, run their own carpeting business and were well off, both with an expensive motorhome and a house back in England. One British couple who acted as my key interlocutors would, however, represent the other end of the scale, with low state pensions and a house in England they rented out and tried to sell. When buying the caravan at Camping Mares, they had to borrow money from friends and later from a mortgage broker, providing them an additional loan on the house with high interest. Just a small minority of the site's permanent caravan dwellers have taken the step to officially register with residency in Spain. Most keep registered at a family's address or at a sub-rented dwelling in the United Kingdom, whilst simply holding a post address at Camping Mares. Some caravanners clearly hold a fear of loss of welfare benefits or connections in the UK health system as the most important reason for not registering with Spanish residency.

It thus seems important to acknowledge that social class is more central than what has thus far been recognised in the lifestyle migration literature. Whilst recent work on lifestyle migration has pointed to the questionable theoretical grounding in the reflexive-individualism and liquid/late modernity fronted in the work of Giddens and Bauman (Benson & Osbaldiston 2014, 2016; Korpela 2014), Oliver and O'Reilly (2010) have more specifically problematised what they see as a clear absence of social class. In their studies of British in Spain, the authors note their own 'discomfort with leaving class behind' in favour of individualisation theories. Oliver and O'Reilly's way forward is based on the work of Bourdieu by fronting issues of social reproduction through by now familiar concepts of the field, habitus and various forms of capital. However, rather than taking migration motivations and aspirations as the point of departure for disentangling such questions (see Oliver and O'Reilly 2010), focusing on homemaking in the migratory setting provides a different entrance point for understanding in which ways class remains important. Class in the caravan migrant setting is both reproduced and transformed in a transnational environment wherein national sameness and unity is reinforced in the presence of other nationalities and – perhaps more importantly so – where the on-going creation of an informal economy builds on conventional working-class labour and leisure. In the section that follows, I will trace the housing infrastructures of campsite dwelling, showing how an apparently mobile place is turned immobile.

(Im)Mobile Neighbourhood

Camping Mares, located along one of the access roads to the centre of Benidorm on former orchard ground, is constituted by a network of districts and streets. Built in the 1980s and owned by a local Spanish hotel-mogul, the campsite has approximately 700 pitches offering electrical hook ups², public showers and other sanitary facilities, indoor and outdoor pool and a common building with restaurant, laundry and a grocery shop. Touring caravans and motorhomes are neatly parked on squared pitches along the asphalted streets, most of them concealed behind furnished awnings and garden furniture. Site planning has allowed for the formation of two main forms of camping dwelling: 'touring' and 'permanent'. Around 450 of the pitches are located on what is commonly referred to by the site's regulars as the

touring area. Here, the caravan or motorhome is parked on a pitch and *hooked up* with the site's infrastructure on short-term or long-term basis. In wintertime, the touring area is mainly frequented by foreign nationals who stay on the site for approximately 6–9 months a year (see Leivestad 2015). Still, this part of the campsite is characterised by patterns of seasonal mobility (cf. Salazar & Zhang 2013) that drastically change the caravan landscape in cyclical rhythms. Around 200 pitches on the campsite, however, are dedicated to the so-called *permanent dwelling* (Fig. 1). In most cases, water and drainage are here laid to the pitch, allowing for more fixed relationships to take shape between the former touring caravans and the site they are hooked up with (Leivestad 2015).

In 2008, when Gary and Margaret came to Camping Mares to look for a caravan to buy, they soon found a good object: a German model of unknown origin on a corner pitch at the end of the road that traverses the campsite. The caravan, similar to that of many of their neighbours, had been on site for at least 10 years and had been gradually transformed by at least three former owners (see also Leivestad 2017). Gary and Margaret used some of their savings and paid for the caravan in cash, whilst they pay an annual rent for the pitch of 4,200 Euro. Their usage of the site is carefully regulated in an extensive Spanish written contract between the site owner and the caravan dweller that includes the prohibition of 'permanent' building structures, a point usually ignored by both campsite dwellers and daily management. Whilst the campsite management remains in control over the pitch, the caravans, extensions and sheds that are owned by the caravan dweller form part of a wider informal site economy as they are sold and passed on between individuals, usually of Dutch or British nationality.

During my fieldwork in 2010 and 2011, it became obvious that the logics of this caravan economy interrelated with a UK housing market suffering from deep recession. As the economic crisis hit hard in both Spain and the United Kingdom from 2008 and onwards, one saw a drastic fall in caravan prices on Camping Mares. Some caravans had been bought for up to 30,000 GBP prior to the crisis, but after owners who used them mainly as holiday homes were forced to sell after having been made redundant or lost their jobs in the United Kingdom, some mobile dwellings were now sold for as little as one-tenth of the price. High annual campsite rents and a burdening changeover fee³ required in cash by the campsite management pushed such sales forward. Campsite residents such as Gary and Margaret have funded the purchase of their caravan property through the sale of a house in England, a common solution for many of the site's British residents. Amongst these caravan dwellers, home ownership is highly valued, and the fact that the pitch remains rented rather than owned is seldom problematised.

There is also little awareness concerning the caravan's shelf life. Many caravans, such as that of Gary and Margaret, have been parked on Camping Mares for an unknown number of years. The hot climate and the limitations of the caravan's material properties cause both humidity and rot (see Leivestad 2015). Water leaks and humidity caused by the caravan's limited lifecycle are sometimes not discovered, because of the fact that the actual caravan has been concealed behind a range of building structures. The caravan dwellers who own a permanent caravan on the site put much effort into transforming the caravan into a 'real home'. These transformations usually imply extending living space in terms of the building of extensions, cladded awnings and patio sheds. Amongst the British who have relocated to Camping Mares on a permanent basis, the 'doing up' of caravans is a common way of extending and upgrading the mobile living space, often done on the basis of conventional 'real



Figure 1. 'Permanent' caravan (photo: Terje Tjærnås)

home' aesthetic ideals associated with a former house (Leivestad 2015, 2017; see also Appel 2012; Dalakoglou 2009, 2010). Caravan interiors are thus ripped out and removed, transforming the actual mobile dwelling into merely a bedroom. Awnings are insulated and cladded and furnished as living rooms with fake fireplaces, carpet flooring, mantelpieces and domestic decorations. Patio sheds often hide fully equipped kitchens. The actual features of the caravan are well-hidden behind textiles or cladding, and their wheels – a formal requirement for legal parking on the site – are concealed (Leivestad 2015, 2017).

Camping Mares, then, whilst planned and legally regulated as a site for mobile leisure camping, has become a location for housing structures of relative permanence. In the next two sections, I discuss how social networks are shaped in and around the making and maintenance of a caravan home in the campsite context. Here, caravan migration intersects with economic strategies and vulnerabilities and the value of manual labour in (re)making alternative housing.

'Handyman' Economies

A few roads further down from Gary and Margaret lives Helen, originally from Yorkshire and in her late 40s, whose caravan migration clearly illustrates how social networks and economic activities are produced and channelled through processes of homemaking. 'I always wanted to live in Benidorm (...) I used to come every year on a holiday', Helen says from the sofa in her awning that is decorated with a fake fireplace and antiques bought on local markets. The caravan, which cost her 48,000 GBP, was found by accident during the last day of her holidays in 2006. At that point, she was in the process of selling her house in England and had come to Camping Mares to look at a few caravans, meanwhile her sister rented her house.

Helen actually nurtured a dream of living in a log cabin, but when she saw this caravan, the shape in the front reminded her of a Swiss chalet and she was sold. For a year, Helen continued to travel back and forth between her job in UK local public healthcare and Benidorm until – after falling in love with her British caravan neighbour – she decided to sell her house, quit her job and make a permanent move in 2007. It would never occur to Helen to live on a campsite in England.

'There are too many rules and regulations', she smiles, 'we have them here as well, you just don't take any notice'. Whilst government control does occur, and permanent structures such as gates and fences – and the shower Helen has installed in a shed on the patio – are not allowed, the management is permissive about it. Helen has used her interior decorating skills to hide the actual caravan behind textile curtains. 'Everyone says: "oh, it's like a house". It is a house, it is my house! People at home think I am mad. But they picture a caravan. But that is literally just bedroom and bathroom'.

Helen's interest in caravan interiors has also provided an economic platform. Together with some of the residents on site – skilled in manual labour – she has found an opening to invest in run-down caravan property and through rebuilding and refurbishing, she eventually sells with a profit. In 2011, Helen would occasionally travel back and forth to England to buy materials for refurnishing caravans, because, for instance, windows for awnings were cheaper there than in Spain (see also Dalakoglou 2010). But whilst Helen admits that she is 'eating into' her savings to be able to maintain her life in Benidorm, she is (in addition to the caravan investments) working part time as an uncontracted cook in the campsite restaurant. She has also found a niche in the local caravan market by sewing awning interiors, marketing her skills on Camping Mares and neighbouring sites. Helen's means of economically managing her life in Spain, whilst pointing both to entrepreneurial activity and a precarious job situation, furthermore illuminates how the campsite itself becomes a space for activities and practices where one can start to observe the contours of an informal economy established around the making of a home (cf. Hart 1973).

The campsite practice of homemaking forms a parallel to the housing market many of the caravan dwellers have deliberately withdrawn from in the first place, because they wanted to avoid taxes, mortgages and maintenance-demanding property. But homemaking practices also open up for possibilities for income for manually skilled labourers and retirees. The caravans themselves and the site where they are parked thus provide infrastructural openings for non-contracted work through activities of building – carpentry and electrical work – within the frame of a cash economy. George – a retired carpenter in his 60s and one of Helen's neighbours – frequently took on jobs for British residents on his street who wanted to increase their living space by building extensions or insulated awnings. By hiring help from a man in his early 20s – the British boyfriend of one of the site's younger residents – George would buy materials from local hardware stores and transport them in car onto the site. After the workdays at his neighbours' property, George could walk only few meters back to his own caravan patio and there continue to socialize with the friends whom had hired him and who for the time being slept in George's caravan awning whilst rebuilding their own.

Amongst the British residents at Camping Mares, neighbours such as George would be referred to as a *handyman* – whose occupation previous to migration amongst campsite residents is known – or presumed to be – connected to some sort of manual labour. Whilst George takes on building jobs, others engage in various forms of maintenance of run-down property as well as refurbishing. Other handyman jobs include the work involved in connecting the caravan to the campsite infrastructure usually in terms of installing wires and drains. Whilst in this section, I have shown how the making and maintenance of a caravan home provide economic openings and possibilities, in the following section, I discuss how the material structures of campsite living intersect with the formation of networks of support.

Supportive Networks

The previous examples points to the informal economic niche produced in the making of the caravan home and how this niche is mainly occupied by individuals who have formally retired or voluntarily withdrawn from the British job market. Morris (2013) offers a case of fruitful comparison when discussing the social network of Russian workers who engage in do-it-yourself practices of furnishing and decoration in their homes. 'DIY can be seen to compensate them in terms of providing some kind of productive autonomy lost from the workplace', Morris (2013: 87) argues. In the case of the British caravan dwellers on Camping Mares, the practices of DIY caravan rebuilding, and also the varieties of female run businesses, point to similar workings of productive autonomy, in a setting where many of them are retired, on sick leave, unemployed or have left formal work on a voluntary basis. The caravan economy of the campsite is based, as Morris also argues, on networking and the exchange of skills, in a setting where qualities of manual labour are highly valued.

Returning to Helen, who engages in sewing and redoing caravan interiors, she is also one of the nodes in the extensive sub-rental of caravan property that takes place at the site, an activity officially prohibited by the campsite management. Individuals and families that only spend part time on Camping Mares will make their caravans available for rental to residents who have family or friends coming to visit. Along with such sub-rental of caravans, some of the site's permanent residents also provide car transport to and from the airport in Alicante, for 50 Euro per trip. In addition to the mainly male labourers on site engaging in manual building work, the site also hosts other local, largely female-run businesses, such as backyard patio hairdressing, cooking and baking that are marketed by word of mouth through visits to neighbours or during bingo nights at the campsite restaurant.

Here, I argue, whilst these economic activities to a large degree resonate with Morris' observations in the Russian context, they clearly also interrelate with aspects of how a good neighbourhood is envisioned amongst the British caravan dwellers. Exchange of skills and favours within the campsite network such as building, driving or cooking – at times paid labour and at times not – serve as a means of facilitating life at the site, also for residents who, when reaching a higher age or losing a spouse, find themselves more dependent on their neighbours (Oliver 2017). Webs of support (Morris 2012: 90) are thus created within the very bounds of the campsite. To campsite residents, local services provided by neighbours, such as those described earlier, form part of a larger network of on-site welfare/care practices in which the economic aspect of them sometimes is rather blurred. As services are offered and bought by word of mouth, they largely remain within an internal network on the actual campsite and feed into a locally produced imaginary of a self-contained unit largely independent of many of the other local British businesses and services in Benidorm. Whilst work autonomy figures as a crucial parameter of status in this network, it does not exist separate of the economic dependency on social relationships and the network of neighbours, but also on the national state in a setting where any sense of economic stability is based on official welfare benefits, and where expectations of the UK state to take care of its nationals, and continue to do so if they return from Spain, is a resistant narrative (cf. Narotzky and Besnier 2014: 10).

The previous sections show that it is the caravans themselves and the ways they are transformed and inhabited that form the very basis of the social and economic networks that are shaped on the site. These various forms of labour and exchange circulate around

the process in which the mobile dwelling is actually increasingly *conventionalised*. The process of immobilisation of the mobile dwelling that the building of extensions and awnings implies is part of an on-going creation of a neighbourhood based on conventional 'village-like' qualities. At Camping Mares, services are provided by word of mouth, paid for in cash and support is provided within what in a rather closed off social unit. So, whilst the material transformations of home intersect with conventional British aesthetic ideals of domesticity, the social life of labour and support that is attached to these material transformations also builds on an ideal of village life in which close connections between neighbours and face-to-face interaction are highly valued. This point brings me back to the citation from Gary mentioned in the introduction to this article, where he refers to the apartment as a place where you close the door and don't see your neighbours. In Gary's terms, the campsite provides an alternative option of creating life as a British lifestyle migrant in Spain today.

Conclusion: Campsite Enclaving?

Caravan migration to Spain is alongside other forms of lifestyle migration directed by a dominant narrative of 'living good' (de L'Estoile 2014). To caravan dwellers, their form of migration adds a different level to the practice of transnational mobility from the United Kingdom to Spain, as it implies also a downsizing to a mobile dwelling. Whilst this mobile dwelling is usually literally immobile, its hybrid materiality continues to trigger and feed imaginaries of a 'life on the move' (Leivestad 2015, 2017). In the campsite context, one can observe how adjustments to a 'good life fantasy' (Berlant 2011) are deeply embedded in everyday practices of home building that intersect with labour networks and fragile economies. Here, the material building of home is part of a social everyday in a transnational migratory-tourism setting, where the 'production of locality' (Appadurai 1996: 198) is far from straightforward.

This article has argued that a homemaking lens can provide new insights into how labour, economic practices and social networks are shaped in a transnational context of lifestyle migration. Campsite homemaking also involves material building practices, in which the caravan is made into a 'real home' and manual caravan work is a way of regaining autonomy amongst individuals who are no longer part of the formal workforce. Seen in this light, caravan homemaking involves particular forms of reshuffling of agency between a home and its owner. In retrospect, British caravan dwellers in Benidorm tend to refer to the conventional house or apartment in terms of burdening material, economic and legislative ties, whilst the caravan home, on the other hand, provides a perceived regaining of control – in economic, legal and material terms.

The case discussed in this article suggests that creating an affordable home in what the caravanners regard to be a good neighbourhood overlaps with – and contributes to – the material and spatial production of a seemingly enclave-like migrant community

(see Appel 2012, Low 2003). Campsites, such as Camping Mares, are, however, located far from the conventional expatriate *urbanizaciones* (residential areas) found along the Spanish Mediterranean coast (Oliver 2017), as they are far less planned, inhabited mainly by people with working-class background and characterised by temporary DIY dwelling structures maintained within an internal network of manual labour skills. With a large touring area where camping guests are expected to come and go, the campsite is not closed off in a strict sense, but economically dependent on the fluctuate mobility of tourists. However, they are gradually transformed into places not only for seasonal caravanners but also for 'permanent' caravan migrants.

The campsite's location in a semi-legal and semi-formal sphere makes it a relatively cheap and accessible route to home ownership for migrants. Here housing opportunities are made visible and even marketed within British migrant networks. Homemaking takes place within the framework of a cash economy that carries internal logics that place these economies in the periphery of the formal housing economy – whilst still dependent on it. The gradual establishment of a British migrant community is essentially based on working-class codes of sociality, in an environment where manual labour is highly valued, and favours and skills go hand in hand with the continuous (re)production of a 'good neighbourhood'. The move to the campsite is a migrant move alongside and to a rather familiar working-class environment. What we can start to see the contours of then is a reverse enclaving, in which the working class British migrant's self-containment creates and sustains supportive neighbourhoods but simultaneously reproduces economic fragilities.

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Notes

1. Historically, one can observe that motorised camping came rather late to Spain as in the 1980s camping was still a developing form of tourism in the country (Feo Parrondo 2003; Miranda Montero 1985).
2. Hook Ups is the emic term used with referral to the electric (or water) connection between the mobile dwelling and the site's fixed infrastructure, enabled through a cabled connection between the mobile dwelling and the so-called hook-up points.
3. Camping Mares' changeover fee, 3,000 Euro in 2011, was required from the campsite upon the change of ownership of a permanent caravan. Meant to compensate for the fact that the pitch is supposed to be emptied when leaving a pitch after the end of the contract, the fee was required in cash and with no receipt.

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