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ARGONAUTS OF AOTEAROA: VOYAGES OF ALTERNATIVE AGEING VIA THE MOVANNER ARCHIPELAGO

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ABSTRACT

Older people driving motor homes are increasingly commonplace on our roads. This research focuses on senior New Zealanders who identify themselves as ‘movanners’ as opposed to ‘house truckers’ or ‘tourists’; and in particular on single full-timers. These mobile, single seniors communicate constantly regarding their locations and future plans. They often travel familiar paths, repeating the same journey route and utilising as their ‘places’ the well-known margins of the road, unnoticed by other traffic and beneficial to senior movanners’ mobility. This study argues that they have appropriated ‘cool’ new technologies (as opposed to the technologies of disability and deterioration often associated with older people), to retain their independence, enable their journeys and achieve ageing wellbeing in mobility. Senior movanners exploit connections to build network capital resulting in concrete benefits for their successful mobile lives.

The field research was conducted over three years and consisted of interviews and less formal conversations with senior movanners, auto-ethnography, as I hired motorhomes to travel myself, and mobile participant observation in the motorhome of one of my single female participants. In addition, I collected quantitative data by tracking two key informants who each carried a GPS device which enabled me to view their journey tracks retrospectively and collaboratively. Family relationships are well maintained, although reconstructed to fit in with their mobility. Through network capital and technology utilisation they have recreated the ‘roadlands’ as a social space, forming causeways for what I have termed ‘The Movanner Archipelago’.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Journeys are sometimes messy. There are hold-ups, technological and structural failures, detours, changes of plans, accidents, and unscheduled stopovers. Confusion can arise as to where one has been, how long ago, who was there and the time the journey took. A favourably remembered destination can be transformed by overcrowding or bad weather; friendly neighbours one trip can be replaced by noisy tourists the next. Senior movanners¹ live these experiences as they journey around New Zealand, in pairs or alone, full-time or part-time, driving or being driven in sophisticated vehicles which are their mobile homes. My ethnographic journey to track and trace senior movanners as they move around the country has not been without its own messiness, disrupted mobilities and technological failures in the process of studying mobile subjects. However, it has been a pleasurable excursion, wandering with different mobile informants through their world as they anticipate their next destination, arriving without timetables, sometimes by haphazardous drifting, sometimes not.

Their geographical context is the physical landscape of the main islands of New Zealand but they have imprinted this landscape with their own individual journeys and personal meanings. Continual references to popular places and recurring informants link nonlinear journeys, and the thesis reflects these ageing Argonauts' wanderings, "like an odysseusing(sic) tour of a large group of islands, passing from one to another, losing track of time and orientation, visiting some several times, only glimpsing others, tantalisingly, in the distance" (Roberts 2011). The archipelago metaphor was inspired by reading the novel *The Islanders* by Christopher Priest who creates a non-conforming world he calls the 'Dream Archipelago' populated by both mysterious islands and characters disrupted in time and space but entangled, so the illusion of the

¹ New Zealand Motor Homers often refer to themselves as Movanners.

linear is highlighted. As a conceptual tool the archipelago metaphor captures both the fluidity of the movanner journey and the traces of many of my informants' pre-movanning marine life which they have brought with them to their new mobile life, the benefits of which manifest regularly. The idea of an archipelago is that of a single entity constituted of geographically dispersed nodes which are, however, connected by pathways that are well-worn and familiar. Senior movanner are comfortable on these pathways that link their self-constructed archipelago; they are 'at home' on the road. The tracks connect known moorings (Elliott and Urry 2010:20, Borovnik 2012:72,77), islands in the archipelago, which they continually return to. These islands that are on the movanners' horizon may be obscure, they may be mountainous or low lying, inhabited or deserted, close or far, but all hold the potential for adventure or sightseeing and make an archipelago of practical navigational aids, beneficial infrastructure and possible moorings, conveniently spaced, where one can stop for a night or two on the journey; sites that become full of meaning and memories, islands of shared stories and people.

From the depths of their familiarity with routes, pathways and moorings around this archipelago, emerges the crux of this thesis which is the construction of what I have termed a 'social roadland' by senior movanners in New Zealand enabled by their successful implementation of the concept of 'network capital'. Network capital is defined as "the capacity to engender and sustain social relations with those people who are not necessarily proximate, which generates emotional, financial and practical benefit (although this often entails various objects and technologies or the means of networking)" (Elliott and Urry 2010:59). Network capital is different from economic, symbolic and cultural capital (in the sense of Bourdieu) because "network capital is largely subjectless, communications-driven and information based" (Elliott and Urry 2010:11) and built up by people with high levels of geographic mobility who "have extensive institutional contacts and are 'at home' in, and moving across, many diverse settings" (Elliott and Urry 2010:11). Urry and Elliott often focus on working mobile elites, international business men or academics, however, I am transferring and applying this concept of network capital to my study of ageing New Zealand movanners. I believe that the practices of senior movanners constitute concrete examples of network capital being built and sustained for real benefit. Although they

may be a cohort marginalised by their age, they are experts in utilising network capital to enable and ease their mobile lives.

Senior movanners' sites of social connections and relations are dispersed along the archipelago, rather than being only at the destination point; the journey's end. However, although these social relations do not take place in a static or stable 'place', rather they happen on the road in locations based on intermittent co-presence (Elliott and Urry 2010:100) does not mean their social relations are not as intimate, familiar or any less beneficial than sedentary relations. Their social roadland is constituted of people in fixed locations and also people who are simultaneously on the move who comprise their network capital but their social roadland is also comprised of the non-human, like the infrastructure that eases their journeys. The concept of network capital where information is produced, transmitted and disseminated (Elliott and Urry 2010:11) helps make mobile social connections on the road; for example one of my key participants frequents a parking site that is not only free, with good amenities, but where other mobile people she has previously met there, make her feel safe. More examples will be evident in Chapters 4 and 5.

Mobility and technology are entwined, and so is ageing well. I am interested in the synergy of mobility and technology producing positive outcomes for senior New Zealanders which enables, not only independence, but importantly, freedom and adventure. I want to examine this synergy as it works in real life situations for senior motor homers by firstly understanding how successful mobility, which most of my informants embody, can change social interactions from the more common sedentary site, to a social roadlands site and secondly, as a result, reconstruct family relationships. Successful mobility is dependent on the freedom granted by self-containment² and this in turn depends on the older person's ability to uptake technologies to achieve self-containment status.

Increasing technological capabilities enable senior movanners to pursue an alternative, riskier mobile lifestyle than previous cohorts could easily achieve. Through

² This will be discussed in detail later in this Chapter.

appropriation of ‘cool’ technologies such as GPS³ and mobile phones to pursue freedom through mobility, un-extraordinary seniors can minimise such disadvantages as distance from family, the risks of being on the road, finding their way around, living self-contained and being isolated and alone. It has been argued we all live on a “high technological frontier” (Giddens 1999:3) that constitutes a ‘risk society’ made up of contingent and unknown futures, but risk is still connected to safety, security and responsibility (Giddens 1999:7–8) which movanners are prepared to sacrifice for a lifestyle where the outcome is unpredictable. However, there is a positive side to our ‘risk society’ which offers choices through new technology to assist senior movanners as “risk is not only closely associated with responsibility, but also with initiative and the exploration of new horizons” (Giddens 1999:10).

The wellbeing of older adults is fundamentally linked to mobility (Liu and Park 2003:274). However, much of the research on the elderly focuses on the sedentary: the technology of in-home aids to successfully negotiate day-to-day chores (IADL’S)⁴ or, alternatively, as medical support through technologies like alarm monitoring and panic-buttons, all of which produces an arguably negative narrative of medical decay, loss of the ability to do simple household chores and immobility. A troublesome dichotomy is established of independence only achieved by being dependent on ageing-in-place ‘technology for the old’; the aids and ‘uncool’ technology of decline and immobility. Mobility research tends to navigate in the same direction when it focuses on older people: how they travel to hospital on public transport, their modifications to keep the right to drive as their cognitive abilities decline, negotiating footpaths with walking frames and mobility scooters. While these aids certainly help older people to be more mobile than they would otherwise be, the scope of gerontological research is often limited to their retaining their independence through

³ Global Positioning System.

⁴ Independent Activities of Daily Living or Instrumental Activities of Daily Living.

mobility and motility⁵ but does not include the possibilities of the aged celebrating and experiencing real freedom and adventure in old age through mobility of the kind discussed in this thesis.

I will concentrate on, but not be limited to, a sub-group within the NZMCA⁶ called 'Freewheelers', single movanners who meet regularly at their own rallies and stay connected through electronic means, newsletters and special columns in the NZMCA magazine. The Freewheelers include both women and men travelling on their own. My data was produced by a multi-modal approach which included semi-structured interviews with senior movanners (conducted both in their motorhomes while on a journey and in their houses while they were sedentary), participant observation as I travelled with a key informant, auto ethnography as I hired vans to travel myself, and numerous 'conversations' with senior movanners. My quantitative data was based on GPS coordinates. I had two key informants whom I refer to as 'Barb' and 'Peter' who both carried a GPS device, supplied by me, in their vans on their journeys around the North Island from May 2011 to February 2013. The captured data was subsequently downloaded by me into software to show the coordinates as a pictorial track on a map and furthermore, enabled the tracks to be overlaid with personal travel narratives as I discussed the resultant track with each informant. This technology and process will be discussed fully in the methodology chapter and in Chapters 4 and 5 where the results are analysed.

1.1 IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

⁵ Urry defines motility as the potential to be mobile and using what is available to become mobile oneself.

⁶ New Zealand Motor Caravan Association. This was founded in 1956 in Gisborne by A.J. and Gladys Anderson.

By 2050 it is estimated that over two billion people will be over the age of 60, one in five people in the world (Patterson 2006:4). This is the result of a combination of two key trends: the growing number of older people and the increased longevity of humans compared with previous times (Wykle et al. 2005:xi,19). Projections from a study in 2009 on ageing and wellbeing using Statistics New Zealand (middle series) indicate that 100,000 people aged 65+ will be added every 5 years from 2011 to 2036 (Koopman-Boyden and Waldegrave June 2009). In New Zealand, the number of people over the age of 60 is growing faster than the total population and is estimated to reach 1,219,500 by 2025. In 2006, of the 65+ age group who lived in private dwellings, 31% lived alone (Koopman-Boyden and Waldegrave June 2009:2). As the population of the world both ages and lives longer, the aged as a category will form an important part of our society and our economy, and the increased latter years will become a significant stage of our lives. If we are able to fill this life stage with new experiences and purposeful roles there is a benefit to both society and to individuals (Wykle et al. 2005:43). Projecting the possibilities of a quality old-age through media and popular culture could challenge the perception of this life stage as a slow decline to ill health and death (Friedan 1993:8,9). Older people sharing houses as flatmates and other alternative arrangements seniors are experimenting with are part of a movement towards a non-traditional system of old age living (1993). Some senior New Zealanders perceive mobility using motorhomes as one such alternative, the practices and outcome of which are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Technological development has accelerated in the last few decades, especially computer and communications technology and it is important that older people are not left isolated from the rest of the younger population because they have not kept up with contemporary technology, both its use in social connectedness and to help with tasks. There is an age-divide between users of technology (Castells 2006:132,256). Wireless communication devices which were originally aimed at the adult business person were quickly appropriated by the youth culture, resulting in these emerging strong users being studied heavily, leaving the aged person's use of such technology relatively unknown (Castells 2006:40,41). This thesis asks whether technology which

is of practical benefit to older people engages them, and eases their uptake of it and will feature as an underlying theme through the following chapters.

1.2 ANTHROPOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

The growing number of older people living longer, with more choices available to them, urges greater anthropological involvement in gerontology. However, because anthropologists have historically studied the exotic aged, researchers of the aged in western societies have often been from the medical disciplines and focused on disease and illnesses: the body in decline. Furthermore, given that anthropologists have long been interested in mobility and routes (essential elements of the movanner's lifestyle) and coupled with the multiple techno-capabilities of the vans they are driving, the study fits within the new mobilities turn which analyses mobility in conjunction with technology and from where the call has gone out for multi-disciplinary contributions (Canzler et al. 2007a:182). Finally, family has long been the focus of anthropological interest and movanners' relationships with family, how they stay in touch, how they feel about their connections with family, may add to knowledge on how family relationships are changing in our society as some seniors choose alternative ageing lifestyles. My participants sometimes described their escape from house and family as not only an economic benefit but an emotional benefit; the ties that bind are both financial and family. In Chapter 5 I discuss how they feel about the family they have 'left behind', and how relationships work with their new circumstances, which may be indicative of the changing social relations that typify mobile lives in late modernity.

The current mobile lives of those in western societies are now thought to be increasingly unsustainable⁷ (Urry 2012:29, Elliott and Urry 2010:xi,131-140). If this proves to be true, this tribe of senior movanners may one day disappear as the resources needed to keep them on the road become scarcer and more heavily contested. Oil, on-board technologies, the infrastructure of roads, petrol stations, signage, systems of repair, all necessary for movanners' continual ability to drive in

⁷ Also at a video presentation at the 2nd Mobilities Symposium at Massey Palmerston North, 2011.

their motor homes, may be unsustainable making it impossible for large numbers of retired seniors to enjoy motor home mobility in their later years as an alternative ageing lifestyle. Anthropologists study societies at a particular moment in time; if western societies become less mobile and tied more closely to their immediate neighbourhoods, it raises the possibility that the life now enjoyed by a cohort of movanning seniors may never be repeated (Elliott and Urry 2010:154).

My research focuses on single older people. Some are full-timers, and so mobile it is hard to form a clear picture of where they are travelling, how many miles they do in a day or a season, and how long they stay in one place. Many of my informants use GPS to navigate around unfamiliar towns and cities, to plan routes and to find amenities like petrol stations and sites to stop for the night. As part of my research strategy I provided a small GPS device to two of my key informants which enabled me to track their journeys for more than a year. Although GPS is simply a technological tool to help trace the movements of my key informants, its presence also created social interactions and opportunities for learning, and set up complex interplays between researcher and researched as we all strove to master the technology. As an ethnographic study of ageing seniors engaged in mobility, with all the day-to-day decisions and activities relating to the practice, meaning and sociality of their journey, my thesis contributes to the call for alternative mobility studies not focussing on the aeroplane or automobile of commuting capitalist elites (Jensen 2009:xviii). It is the culture of aged mobility with which this thesis is concerned.

1.3 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY OF SENIOR MOVANNERS IN NEW ZEALAND

Senior movanners are generally retired people over the age of 60 driving motor homes which they own. Most are retired or semi-retired couples but there are also single movanners of both sexes. They self-classified as 'movanners' rather than 'RVers'⁸ and

⁸ RV stands for Recreational Vehicle.

do not regard themselves as 'tourists' or 'house truckers' (Green 2010:11–12). 'Tourists' are easily distinguishable on the road because they drive rental motorhomes such as 'Keas', 'Jucy's', 'Britz', 'Maui' and other branded rental company vans. 'House truckers' often have their whole family in rustic, converted trucks and were described to me by movanners as "people who do the markets" meaning they generate some of their income by selling at local markets. Motorhomes can be home built but are usually purchased as purpose-built vehicles. The most popular types of motorhomes in New Zealand are 'A' Class, 'B' Class and 'C' Class vehicles. 'A' Class vehicles look like buses except they are not converted buses; they are built up from a bus chassis as a purpose-built motorhome, while 'B' Class vehicles are van shaped and 'C' Class Vehicles are roomier than vans because they are wider and higher and have a cabover area (Green 2010:12–13). The cost of motorhomes varies from a few thousand dollars to over \$500,000.

The literature from North America has classified people who motorhome into three distinct groups based on the amount of time they spend in their vehicles (Jobs 1984:184, Counts and Counts 2001:48). A *fulltimer* considers their vehicle their home; they describe themselves as *living* in their van and spend the longest time in it compared to other categories, while *seasonal travellers* spend around four months in their vans usually migrating south for the winter (in the northern hemisphere) and have residences to which they return, while *vacation travellers* spend less time than this (Counts and Counts 2001:48, Jobs 1984:184). Nearly half of my informants self-classified as being full-timers however, they did not necessarily spend twelve months in their motorhomes as they house-sat or went for traditional overseas holidays for part of the year (Green 2010:11,33). If not full-timers, most of my informants spent 1–3 months in their vans and the rest between 4 and 9 months, going away for weekends or for longer trips, usually outside school holiday times.

The movanning community in New Zealand is largely defined by their association, the NZMCA, which was founded in 1956 in Gisborne (Spain 2006:5). It is hard to overstate the importance of the association to New Zealand movanners and for this reason it

features often in this thesis. My husband and I are members #39652 and currently the membership numbers being issued are in the 47100's. The number does not signify a degree of separation from the association, on the contrary it is proudly displayed on the front of the van alongside the 'Red Wings'⁹ as a recognisable symbol of membership, indicating a common bond and longevity status. It is a unique number which means the lower the number the longer you have been a member of the association which in turn carries mana with fellow members. The number is a symbolic lynchpin of the mobile community formation with which this thesis is concerned. Currently there are 24633 memberships with individual members numbering 45621.¹⁰ The graph below shows the exponential growth of memberships since the 1980's and as most senior movanners are members of the NZMCA, the figures mirror the growth of the cohort of seniors who are now, or have been, on the road in their motorhomes and gives a clear indication of just how popular the lifestyle has become.

⁹ The emblem of the NZMCA, described as a winged badge, was designed by Andy Anderson in 1956 at the inception of the Association (Spain 2006:115).

¹⁰ As at September 2012 from an email from the Membership Administrator of the NZMCA.

Membership Numbers of the NZMCA

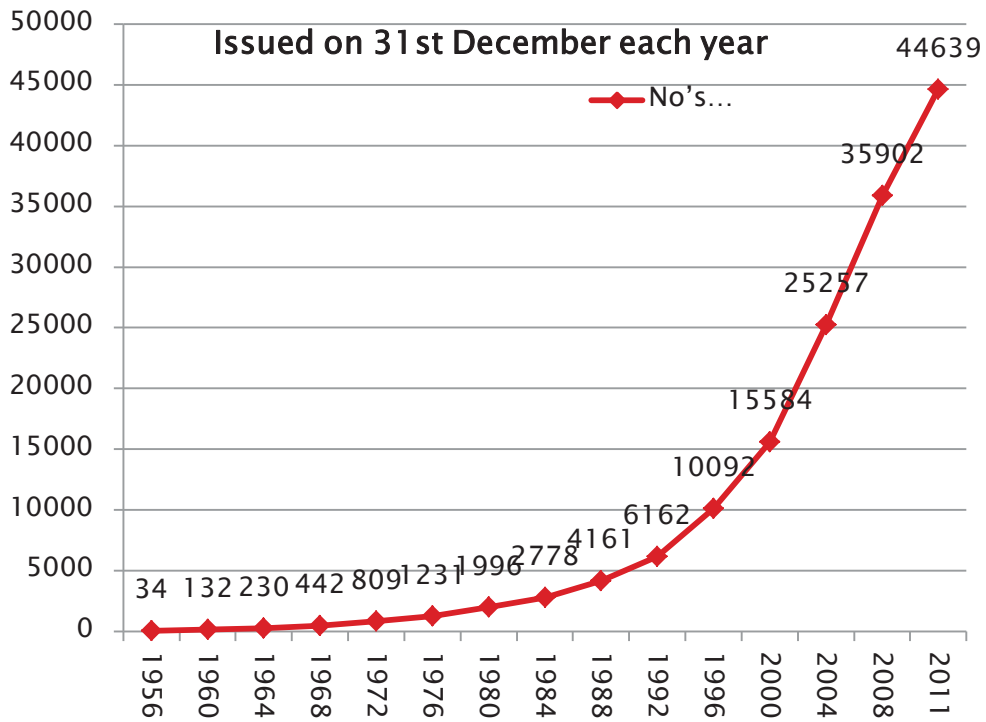


FIGURE 1 MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS OF THE NZMCA

1.4 SELF-CONTAINMENT

“I want a ticket to go anywhere
Maybe we make a deal“

(Chapman 1986)

If the world is an integrated system of the human and non-human where human subjects are unable to “think and act independently of their material worlds” (Büscher et al. 2011:3) a brief discussion is necessary on the infrastructures, technologies of self-containment, regulations, and general compliances, that are the concrete realities impacting on senior movanners on their journeys.

Self-Containment is the ability to meet the ablutionary and sanitary needs of the occupants of a motor caravan, for a minimum of three days, without needing any external services or discharging any waste. Wastewater is collected in holding tanks then disposed of via a dump station. Dump stations are connected to reticulated sewerage or septic tank systems, therefore the treatments used in the wastewater must be approved toilet treatments, that, when used in the right quantities, do not affect the operation of these systems. (NZMCA 2012c:99)

The self-containment of the motorhome necessitates the use of technology and demands currency and compliance with technology and regulations. It is important to understand that most senior movanners drive vans that are self-contained, that most are now certified self-contained (CSC) and that they prefer to freedom camp if they can, rather than stay in a camping ground (NZMCA 2012d:2).



FIGURE 2 SIGN FOR THE PRESENCE OF A DUMP STATION BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD.

The NZMCA policy reads:

All motor caravanners are encouraged to certify their vehicles. It is a requirement of joining the NZMCA that members (joining from 01 July 2009) will have their motorhome/campervan/caravan certified self-contained within three months of joining, or purchasing/completing their motorhome/campervan/caravan.

The NZMCA promote certified self-containment to:

1. Protect the health and wellbeing of the public and users of motor caravans;
2. Protect the environment, and through this promote more stand-alone areas for overnight parking;
3. To avoid financial impositions and prosecution for inappropriate dumping of waste. (2012c:99)

In 1990, the standard written in 1976 by the NZMCA became a national Standard and was reviewed again in 2001 becoming NZS 5465:2001: 'The Standard For Self Containment of Caravans and Motor Caravans' (2012c:99).

1.4.1 THE FREEDOM CAMPING BILL

The Freedom Camping Bill 2011 was introduced to control the “freedom camping” activities of the thousands of tourists expected in New Zealand for the Rugby World Cup and came into force on the 30th August 2011 (NZMCA 2012b:6,22). Freedom Camping, as defined on the Department of Conservation (DOC) website means to:

Camp (other than at a camping ground) within 200m of a formed road, or of a motor-vehicle accessible area, or of the sea or harbour, or of a Great Walks Track, using one or more of the following:

- Tent or other temporary structure
- Caravan
- Car, campervan, house-truck, or other motor vehicle

(Department of Conservation 2012)

The NZMCA and its membership (who wrote rules in 1990 setting standards for vehicle waste containment to protect the environment from indiscriminate dumping of waste), saw this bill as a threat to members' ability to freedom camp around New Zealand. It is important to note that the Department of Conservation allows freedom camping on its land but lists areas on public conservation land where freedom camping is prohibited. This list is available on the DOC website and to senior movanners through a link from the NZMCA website.

The Freedom Camping Bill did not result in blanket bans on freedom camping throughout the country and in fact the presumption is that people *can* freedom camp on local authority or public conservation land unless a location is specifically restricted or prohibited. (The Bill does not regulate on private land.) The Bill did not give local authorities the right to impose blanket bans (as some Council had done) in their areas but in fact has contributed to nationally consistent rules on parking overnight on public land. It did create offences that local authorities can use to issue instant fines of \$200 (suggested) to those who breach the rules. To take advantage of this offence creation, local authorities have to enact by-laws under the Act which will replace camping by-laws under the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA02). The Bill has at its heart a reinforcement of the NZMCA's own core value of responsible freedom camping but did not acknowledge the New Zealand Standard NZS 5465:2001 and failed to include the NZMCA's submissions around differentiating between Certified Self-Contained Vehicles (CSC) and non-Certified Self-Contained Vehicles based on the Standard (NZMCA 2012a:16,17).



FIGURE 3 SIGN AT A CAR PARK IN NORTHLAND

The concern for senior movanners in this country is that local area councils will start to enact by-laws restricting freedom camping in their areas because of the actions of a few who have no consideration for the environment or other people. Because they prefer to freedom camp they frequently come into contact with young tourists in rental vans at cultural and inter-generational junctions. A movanning couple related freedom camping next to a 'Wicked' van in the South Island, a type which is not self-contained. They therefore invited the young tourists over to their van for breakfast during which an official representing a local authority arrived to move the tourists on. The movanners successfully resisted the expulsion by interfering and telling the official (untruthfully) that the tourists had just arrived that morning and had not stayed there overnight. In the South Island the attempt by control structures to hinder freedom camping either by charging or ejecting, is a shared experience of movanners and tourists.

In October 2010 the Auckland Council changed the rules governing stopping for the night in a Regional Park, where there is a park campground also available, to allow only one night. They allowed a maximum of three nights when the campground was unavailable but to be able to stay even one night as a freedom camper in an Auckland Council Park you had to have a Certified Self Containment Certificate, which meant by definition that you did not need a camping ground! A camping ground costs more and has to be booked in advance which removes the fun and spontaneity movanners desire and attenuates their authenticity as freedom camping movanners. From September 1st, 2012, the cost of an Auckland Council pass increased from \$92 to \$123, and yet the value it has for senior movanners has diminished with the implementation of the one-night limit.

One of the reasons the rules changed was because the public commented on the visual impact of motorhomes in coastal locations according to an Auckland Council Park spokesperson (Hueber 2012:15). Older movanners are often criticised in popular media discourses as visual environmental polluters and free-loaders that access the best prime coastal spots without investing capital in the district (i.e. a holiday home).

Cresswell has untangled the various politics of mobility in New Orleans which had elements of race, class and age which not only made mobility social, but had life and death consequences when Hurricane Katrina hit the city (2008:129–139). Movanners have fewer dramatic consequences of the social and political constructions of mobility but nevertheless such politics could potentially lead to problems for senior movanners in future years by continuing to restrict where they can freedom camp. Their right to be mobile, or motility, depends on freedom of movement and its relationship with public spaces, which is the right to overnight on public areas that have traditionally been available for such a use. However, Sheller has posed ethical questions about public spaces being degraded by this traditional use and the negative impact on the environment and on other users of the spaces, and concludes there are differing forms of mobility freedoms all negotiating with one another (2008:26–31). In New Zealand the current political agenda of the NZMCA in lobbying the government over the bills before parliament restricting overnight stopping, is an example of a group negotiating mobility freedom.

I was told a story third-hand that some senior movanners who were staying at the end of Beaumont St in the city (where traditionally there has been overnight parking allowed on public land) came face-to-face with some new signs put up by Auckland Council which said 'Parking 120 minutes' and 'At All Times'. This meant that even after 6pm, when the time restriction was redundant, they could not stay the night. They tore the 'At All Times' module of the signs down and threw them in the ocean. When an Auckland Council parking officer came around and started to chalk their tyres the senior movanners confronted him and pointed to the signs saying they were allowed to stay there for the night. The officer apologised and retreated. At a well-known movanner site in northland this summer, the council suddenly installed timber bollards to prevent access. Within weeks they were chain-sawed down.

These may have been only temporary victories but they showed resistance to local authorities who are gradually making it harder for mobile people to stop and therefore interfering with their plans and itineraries (Sheller 2008:30). The NZMCA is striving to

restrict future negative outcomes by proactive measures such as mandatory certified self-containment which serves to differentiate them from other mobile people. One informant believed the difference between themselves and house truckers was the environmental damage the house truckers caused because their trucks are not self-contained. The infrastructure of self-containment pervades Chapters 4 and 5 as the sites of the infrastructure are crucial, not only for the day-to-day practices of senior movanners, but also for the opportunity they create to make meaningful cultural 'places'.

In the next chapter I will review the literature on the new cross-disciplinary 'turn' to mobilities, followed by the literature on the aged and technology. In Chapter 3, I discuss in detail the methodology of this study. The ethnographic chapters 4 and 5 look at the day-to-day practices of senior movanners based on my fieldwork and GPS data with special emphasis on the acquiring of network capital to create a "social roadland" and the way senior movanners are connecting and interacting with family. I finish with a summary of findings in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

The first purpose of this review is to investigate the theoretical and methodological literature based around ‘the new turn to mobilities’ as it emerges from macro–and micro–scale mobilities studies so as to locate my ethnographic study. Contemporary mobility theory partly focuses on power structures that enable or hinder the mobility of particular social groups in society; I will focus on the aged as one such group. The mobilities literature will provide tools to find and explain the hidden powers and meanings of the mobile leisure lifestyle. The review will next focus on the literature of “wellbeing” in older age, discussing the definitions of this subjective term and the various methods by which attempts have been made to measure it. Lastly, technologies specifically to do with the elderly, including communications technology, are reviewed. Embracing a nomadic old age is dependent on the technology enabling both the mobility and the day–to–day necessities of living in the modern world: planning, banking, communications, wayfinding and socialising among many others. The three areas: mobilities, ageing wellbeing and technology that form the theoretical framework of the thesis, although treated separately in the literature review, are interlinked. Mobility studies that focus on the aged, ageing wellbeing studies relating to being mobile, and the technology relating to both ageing wellbeing and mobility are relevant for their overlapping multi focus.

2.2 MOBILITIES

The ‘authenticity’ of cultures has long been connected to their rootedness in the soil, their local, knowable attributes, celebrated and theorised by anthropologists more than most (Clifford 1997:2–3, Gupta and Ferguson 1997:33–52, Marcus 1998:33). Clifford was an early explorer of the tension between being on the move and dwelling in place, seeking to find what linked people in different locations, with language remarkably similar to the current mobilities turn as he sought to explain hybrid identities of moving people as “Identifications not identities, acts of relationship rather than pre–

given forms: this *tradition* is a network of partially-connected histories, a persistently displaced and reinvented time/space of crossings”(Clifford 1994:321). As Greenblatt describes it: “The reality, for most of the past as once again for the present, is more about nomads than natives”(2010a:6). He argues that cultural mobility has always been a part of the human condition and the myth of authenticity was perpetuated by 19th century academic institutions and the rise of nationalism (2010a:6). The increasing mobility of people, objects, ideas and finance has been labelled the ‘new mobilities turn’ in the social sciences and argued should be to the forefront in research for the new millennium; various disciplines have started to embrace the study of mobilities as central to understand what is going on in the world and to place mobility at the start of everything (Cresswell 2011:551, Elliott and Urry 2010:21). Thus, the new mobilities turn is a causeway that links geography, transport and social researchers, “putting the social into travel and connecting different forms of transport with the complex patterns of social experience conducted through various communications at a distance” (Canzler et al. 2007b:6).

John Urry argues that “mobilities”, as a plural, is not just an appendage to social analysis but instead that social sciences need to rethink the way they examine phenomena by concentrating on the mobilities now so prevalent in modernity, as people connect despite being distanced from each other (2007b:13,14). He is interested in networks of mobility systems and how the access to these networks or systems is indicative of new social inequalities (2007b:22, 2010:11). The key players in the mobilities turn believe this shift is different from previous mobilities research and geographer Cresswell puts forward reasons why. Firstly, the new connection of mobility research to the humanities; secondly, the different scales of moving that the new turn attempts to capture and link; thirdly the movement of people, ideas and objects are studied; fourthly, how movement is related to slowness and immobility; fifthly, the need for empirical study so that rootedness is not privileged and finally how mobility is politicized are all accommodated within the new turn (Cresswell 2011:552). I will now discuss the key terms of the new mobilities research.

The interpretation and defining concepts of 'mobilities' tends to be influenced by the discipline of the author, resulting in human geographers and sociologists who dominate the new turn, having definitions that reflect the interests of their particular disciplines and focus on certain aspects of mobility (2006:6–7). Geographers typically stress the physical, daily spatial mobility of humans, whereas sociologists prefer a definition that reflects a more social aspect of mobility (2006:6, Castells 2006:4,75,97). The key point is that the new turn to mobilities encapsulates more than just physical movements in time and space because these limitations do not take into account the social and cultural aspects of mobility, nor the relationship between movement, mobility and intentions, and thirdly ignore the networks of mobility (Canzler et al. 2007b:2–6, Jensen 2009:xviii). 'Mobilities' is understood to include multi-layered meanings including: connectivity (Urry 2012:24–30, Castells 2006:245–247), networks (Castells 1996:246, Elliott and Urry 2010, Kaufmann and Montulet 2007:52, Cattán 2008:262, Urry 2012:24), scales, motility (Urry 2007a:38), speed (Kellerman 2006:19, Northcott 2008:219, Bergmann and Sager 2008:2–3), technology and complexity (Sheller 2007:176–192), systems and structures (Urry 2007a:119) and processes and meanings (Kellerman 2006:137, Cattán 2008:79,86, Elliott and Urry 2010:ix). Another condition of the mobility definition is whether the journey is reversible or not (Kellerman 2006:7). Daily journeys and travels, tourism, bike rides and walks all of which can be two-way, are separated from forced migrations and residential change that are irreversible (2006:7). For Canzler, mobility is defined as a cognitive, technical, social, and economic ability to move across territorial and social boundaries (2007:105). Mobility also means the flow of information electronically (Kellerman 2006:7).

Any discussion of mobility inherently implies fixity as its opposite, therefore, 'place' needs to be defined as it holds at its core a relationship with mobility. Clifford recognised the contradictions inherent in 'places' and the many diverse forces impacting on 'sites' including those of anthropological fieldwork (Clifford 1997:27–29). He saw focusing on these experiences of encounter as just as important as studying the "rooted native" and that "specific dynamics of dwelling/travelling be understood comparatively" (Clifford 1997:24). Avoiding the assumption that 'place' is

fixed, Castells has defined place as “a locale whose form, function and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contingency”(Kellerman 2006:129). However, Kellerman sees place as having a multi-layered level of meanings to include the reality of high tech communication devices and globalisation since the 1980s and maintains that it is now nearly impossible to separate place and space, individuals and technological networks, as the activity in cyberspace increases (2006:129, Elliott and Urry 2010:21,60). Although the character of places is not new, both the functioning and meanings of places have changed by connectivity through technology increasing mobilities of people and ideas both corporeally and virtually, for example the home is now a place where both public and personal connections occur (2006:143). He goes on to say that the reach of connectivity has contributed to “a decrease in the traditional and rather absolute nature of homes as places of leisure, relaxation and personal interaction”(2006:143). It is the role of this 21st century connection of technology and ‘places’ that I am interested in, both as a reconfiguration of ‘home’ to a motorhome and to explain why movanners have demonstrated their physical houses are not the ‘place’ they want to spend their retirement. Their location, as Clifford predicted, is an “itinerary rather than a bounded site – a series of encounters and translations” (Clifford 1997:11), a description which captures the concept of a social roadland, that I argue, senior movanners have created.

2.2.1 THEORIES AND EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

The many moving parts of the new mobilities turn include the ethics of mobilities (Bergmann and Sager 2008), the power associated with access to mobilities (Urry 2012, Cresswell and Merriman 2011) and the mobility of the elite dependent on the immobilisation of others (Urry 2012, Elliott and Urry 2010). The need for a multi-disciplinary, holistic approach to mobility studies to adequately accommodate the pace of different mobilities and the place of ‘place’ in mobility studies, means that Urry has usefully described the turn to mobilities as necessary: “Thus mobilities develop into a distinct field with characteristic struggles, tastes and habituses. It is a site of multiple intersecting contestations”(Elliott and Urry 2010:59). Urry focuses on the ‘network capital’ constantly forming for mobile people in the ‘rich north’ who have agency, a construct of mobility similar to a New Zealand senior movanner’s contextual reality.

They are driving modern, potentially fast vehicles and are dependent on the infrastructures of mobility such as roads, petrol stations, signage and technological devices. He defines motility as the potential to be mobile and using what is available to become mobile oneself (Urry 2007a:38). I have observed senior movanners creating and sustaining network capital as Urry describes and the concept of network capital I argue, makes a social roadland for senior movanners on New Zealand roads.

These pluralities of ethics, power, immobility, pace and access, refer to not only people, but finances, information, ideas and objects (Canzler et al. 2007b:1). There is mobility of people, things, money, culture, ideas (Cresswell 2011:551,554, Urry 2007b:16). The theoretical relevance to this thesis is the focus on mobility as cultural and social, and the meanings intrinsic to mobilities. The day to day practices of mobility are signifying practices which can be defined and given meaning through alternative, marginal mobility studies instead of high-tech hypermobility research characterized by the car, plane, internet and mobile communications devices (Jensen 2009:xv,xviii, Cresswell 2011:153). My study is a hybrid one; the vans senior movanners drive fall into the category of high-tech hypermobility, as does the communication technology they use, but their pace is not hyper and senior movanners' status, like their mobility itself, is that of transition (Jobes 1984:187).

Greenblatt believes it is increasingly important to understand both change and cultural stability, otherwise the point of both is missed (2010b:250–253). His manifesto sets out five key premises for the study of mobility: firstly, to research literal movement and its related conditions, such as the vehicles, controls, and costs so that the reality of being mobile can be understood (2010b:250). Secondly, his manifesto of mobility studies includes seeking out the 'hidden' practices of mobility, both real and metaphysical; thirdly, paying attention to the physical zones of contact and exchange; fourthly, accounting for the tension between individual agency and structures of control and how it is negotiated on the ground, and finally, understanding mobility by exploring what it means to be rooted because the two inform each other (2010b:250–252). Mobilities' relationship with the sedentary can reveal the hidden social meanings

behind mobility (Kellerman 2006:9) so mobility cannot be studied in isolation: “Mobility and fixity, flow and settledness; they presuppose each other” (Massey 2005:95).

Although Greenblatt is talking about mobility and rootedness on a large scale, his last manifesto can help guide the research of smaller scale mobility studies such as that of senior motor homers. In fact, he believes such local ethnographies are a necessary investment before cultural mobility theory can emerge (2010a:16). By fulfilling the anthropological tradition of ‘participation with’, ‘walking with’ (Ingold 2004:330–331) and observation of, people going about their daily lives, this thesis about mobile older people in New Zealand explores the premises of Greenblatt’s model and also of Cresswell’s model which is outlined below. Many movanners who are not full-timers move between a state of fixedness in residential homes and travelling in their motor homes; all movanners come face-to-face with structures of power and there are hidden and meaningful practices of mobility in what they are doing.

Cresswell emphasises that the social sciences’ interest in mobilities is not new (2008:129). He believes anthropology can contribute because of its long tradition of holistic research and argues that enlightenment about the politics of mobility will occur when it is studied holistically and across disciplines, particularly to build bridges with those involved in transport geography who tend to focus on how we get from A to B and think less about the significance of moving (2011:554). Both these developments he hopes will help to expose the powers intrinsically situated in mobilities, which should be a central focus of any study of the new mobilities (2008:130). He supports studies which range across scales of mobility and make unlikely connections. The web surrounding mobilities is comprised of strands of power about access to mobility systems, how that access in turn impedes the mobility of others, speed versus others’ slowness, and who has to stay still because others are mobile (2008:131). Cresswell states three ways to unveil these hidden power dynamics: firstly by studying the way we are moving from A to B, secondly by looking at the meaning we attach to these movements we are creating, and thirdly, the actual practice of movement as

experienced by the body (2008:130). His ideas can usefully be applied to movanners' mobilities to look at the material: how fast, how far, comfort levels, and frequency; the meaning, the narratives and discourses created around the mobility, and lastly the embodied practices of the journey as experienced in many diverse ways by movanners.

Cresswell discusses Adey's way of looking at mobility as a relationship to the person moving that defines their identity, "an orientation to oneself, to others and to the world" (Cresswell 2011:552). This is similar to language we saw earlier used by Clifford who also asked "what skills of survival, communication and tolerance are being improvised in today's cosmopolitan experiences"(Clifford 1997:11). "These subjects are defined by representational schemes that lie beyond the scale of the individual" (Cresswell and Merriman 2011:9). The 'subjects' in my research, senior movanners, are generalized as a group by both their age and the mode of their motorhome transport, and as such are often caricatured as doddery, queue-creating, visual polluting 'oldies', despite driving modern forms of transport. These informants, although aware of the way they are perceived by others (for example, in their constant reminders to each other to pull over and not hold up other traffic), do not let it prevent what they are doing. Furthermore, although mobility is normally seen as a product of agency, not all mobility is desired; mobility can result from a position of powerlessness rather than individual agency and therefore is not inherently liberating (Pinder 2011:178). Some movanning individuals are living full time in their motor homes because they have lost their houses.

2.2.2 CONCLUSION

Mobilities entail more than physical movement and while anthropology has long recognised its complexity, latterly its multi-disciplinary embrace, plurality of meanings and theoretical centrality for emerging studies means it is being described as a new 'turn'. The current theorists concentrate on the powers and politics inherent in mobilities, mobilities' relationship to 'place' in modernity meaning it cannot be studied in isolation, and the different methods and pace involved in getting from A to B. Mobility studies look to answer questions about the meanings and practices of

different mobilities by looking at the physical zones of contact and the tension between mobile individuals and structures of control, and how mobility for some is dependent on the immobility of others. The networks of mobility are a focus for Urry because strong networks lead to practical benefits. In particular he focuses on understanding why some individuals and social groups can create and expand their mobile networks and some cannot, through investigating how *access* to communication systems and devices (necessary elements in network construction) is (un)available. Using the new centrality of mobility may help to explain how senior movanners negotiate the practices of their mobile life, how their mobility is entangled with the politics of age, place, identity and belonging, the meanings inherent in their mobility and their willingness to master technological devices useful to them.

2.3 WELLBEING IN OLDER AGE

Increasingly, older age is not a demographic comprised of just one 'group'. Instead the demographic is marked by a diverse range of groups with differing physical, cognitive, social and technical abilities and needs, as the increased longevity of humans starts to impact (Pangbourne et al. 2010:325). Levin's ethnographic account of elderly mobile lifestyles in Sweden highlighted the heterogeneity of this group and the continuing debate on what constitutes an elderly person where categorizations historically come from the medical disciplines (Levin 2009:142–153). In New Zealand the HOPE Foundation which is involved in ageing research reported that:

The older generations are routinely stereotyped by observers as being a uniformly homogeneous group in the population. This is a misconception. They are no more homogeneous than the younger generations. The HOPE Foundation's segmentation which identifies 5 distinct groups in the 65+ population shows that a variety of characteristics can be used to identify groupings (segments) within the older population. (HOPE Foundation 2009:12)

Mann, whose research was undertaken in the United States, also makes the point that the elderly are not a homogeneous group, especially in regard to experienced

disabilities (2003:177). Overall the boundaries between middle-age and old-age, and between old-age and old-old age, (sometimes referred to as the fourth age) are becoming blurred (Cohen-Mansfield and Poon 2011:365, Moody and Sasser 2012:5). Chronological age is no longer seen as the only measure of different old-age groups; other dimensions such as vigour, health, disability or cognitive decline can often situate people of different chronological ages in a compatible group (2011:365). However the vigour of many elderly New Zealanders is not universal:

There is however a danger that again this new cohort of active older people will become the new stereotype for older people. Instead their diversity ranges from the stereotypical older person in declining health being frail and dependent with a narrowing circle of friends, to the similarly aged person in excellent health, fiercely independent and enjoying wide social networks and leisure activities. (Koopman-Boyden and Waldegrave June 2009:3)

In his study of older people as tourists, Patterson has found a lack of consistency in both names for older people and for the different age categories into which they are divided for study and analysis in the leisure literature (2006:12). He found the tourist industry tends to start categorizing older people at around 55 years of age (2006:17). Anthropologist Holmes has found that the definition of old age varies according to the degree of societal modernisation (1995:257). In gerontology literature, older people are generally defined as 65 years and older, to coincide with retirement and other changes that occur at this age relating to pensions and governmental impacts; the age of 65 was chosen in an arbitrary manner in most industrialized countries in connection with historic economic trends such as recessions, increasing the confusion about what constitutes an 'old' person (Friedan 1993:153, Patterson 2006:13). It has been found that a sense of purpose and meaning are crucial ingredients for leisure activities for the aged (Cohen-Mansfield and Poon 2011:368, Moody and Sasser 2012:29). I argue that high mobility could place older people in a compatible social group, regardless of chronological age. I have observed the senior movanners I studied being part of the group whether they are 65, 75 or 85, as long as they are capable of driving their motorhome or being a passenger on the road.

2.3.1 THEORIES OF AGEING

Theories on ageing are currently being debated among gerontologists engaged in quite different areas of ageing study (Cohen–Mansfield and Poon 2011:372, Moody and Sasser 2012:6–7, Jobes 1984:182,192, Onyx and Benton 1995:46). One of the earliest was Disengagement Theory which stressed the need for the elderly to ‘let go’ and endeavored to explain the reduction of social networks in old age by viewing old age as a new phase of life (Cumming and Henry 1961). Disengagement was seen to reflect the natural process of the life course, however, it has been criticized for lack of a clear definition of what behaviour is being disengaged from, and because *some* adults disengage from *some* activities yet may take up different activities, there is seldom total withdrawal (Moody and Sasser 2012:9,10, Jobes 1984:193). The theory’s claim that disengagement is universal across all cultures has also been criticised by anthropologists because evidence from studies across a variety of cultures has shown this not to be the case (Holmes and Holmes 1995:73, Onyx and Benton 1995:46, Moody and Sasser 2012:10); “...had the basic theoretical orientation of social gerontology been established by anthropologists (with their cross–cultural perspective and relativistic approach), there would be no such thing as a “disengagement theory” (Holmes and Holmes 1995:73).

Modernisation Theory argues that as civilization has modernised through technological advancement, the status of the elderly in Western society has declined; in essence the prestige of the elderly is inversely related to technological development (Moody and Sasser 2012:7, Cowgill and Holmes 1972). This has been criticized because it depends on the premise of a ‘golden age’ when the elderly were always revered, respected and looked after, but anthropologists know the ways different societies treated their old people were varied and often contradictory (Holmes and Holmes 1995:153–155,276–278, Mead 1954:162). The two theories are related because they believe that as society becomes technologically advanced the status of the elderly will decline and therefore they will naturally disengage (Moody and Sasser 2012:9, Cumming and Henry 1961:14).

The 'Successful Ageing' model developed by Rowe and Kahn (1998:46), after the MacArthur Foundation's projects in the 1980s, brought to the forefront of ageing studies, engagement with life and the need to maintain social networks in old age. The MacArthur projects, which were multi-disciplinary, were the catalyst for a new way of thinking about ageing, stressing the potential of ageing as a positive experience and shifting the focus from the medical and pathological, to the social and lifestyle aspects of ageing (1998:xi-xiv). Leisure plays an important role in the three components of the Successful Ageing model defined as 'Avoidance of Disease', 'Engagement with Life' and 'Maintaining High Cognitive and Physical Function' (1998:39). Both the Activity and Continuity Theories of ageing build on this base by stressing that exercise, social networking and productive behaviour keep individuals engaged, and contribute new roles which in turn create wellbeing and life satisfaction (Moody and Sasser 2012:11, Jobes 1984:192-193,196, Counts and Counts 2001:50, Mills 1999:167-168). Continuity Theory adds the point that people tend to continue with the roles and activities which have worked for them all their lives, and by maintaining previously developed habits, they enhance their wellbeing in old age (2012:11, Mollenkopf et al. 2011:784).

Wellbeing has long been a focus of research on the aged (Ryff 2011:xv, Friedan 1993, Loe 2010, Counts and Counts 1992). The challenge of how to define and gauge wellbeing is on-going and the best methodologies to achieve understanding of wellbeing in the old, and the oldest-old is also a subject of research and debate (2011:22,322). Wellbeing can be defined in numerous ways: by achieving one's goals, by feelings of happiness and pleasure, by avoiding negative outcomes, and is dependent on whether the concept is subjective or measured by preset components of the measurer (2011:4). The idea of subjective wellbeing, that the perception of wellbeing is different for everybody, means activities that create wellbeing can come from within as well as be external activities. Secondly, subjective wellbeing means that we can adapt to changes brought on by old age depending on our attitudes and the perspective we are able to apply (Moody and Sasser 2012:11,22,23, Mollenkopf et al. 2011:783-784). Theories that acknowledge flexible adaptation signify more positive views of the ageing process than theories which stress loss, passive adjustment,

withdrawal and decline. However, they reveal that a personal ability to adapt could be further aided by having social structures in place to help the process such as rites of passage to mark transitions as we do in earlier stages of life (Moody and Sasser 2012:7,13,14). One measurement challenge of well-being research is the cultural differences that must be allowed for, both in the research methodology, and in the analysis of the findings (2011:8,261,375). Anthropologists Charlotte Ikels and Christine Fry maintain that cultural understanding and meanings are crucial when we seek to understand well-being in the aged and they discuss strategies that can lead to the measurement of cross-cultural comparisons of wellbeing using psychometric indices, but also through ethnographic strategies of studying the experiences of older people in the context of their lived lives (2011:261–262).

Ikels and Fry were involved with Project Age, a cross-cultural project studying well-being in older persons in seven communities around the world (2011:263). After initial psychometric testing across the communities, they abandoned this method because of doubts associated with the validity of using the research design and history of one culture to measure another, and the culture of test-taking and its inherent cultural assumptions. Analysing the results also proved problematic because the cultural meanings of each of the studied groups belied what the researchers were observing. In the community studied in Ireland, for example, where stoicism is highly regarded, the participants ranked themselves quite highly on a scale of wellbeing, even though it was plainly evident they were experiencing serious hardship, while in Hong Kong where modesty is a virtue, they ranked themselves in the middle, even though they said their lives were great (2011:271). They found cultural distortions in the way participants presented themselves but concluded with findings based on “ethnographic eliciting of the meaning of well-being in Project Age” (2011:278) that were common across all the communities they studied, which were health and body status, material security, social issues, and ideas about personhood. They called for more ethnographic studies of the aged (2011:278).

Levin makes the point that not a lot of research has been done on older people from the point of view of *mobility* and that many older people do not for one reason or another want to stay all day in their houses. Some people feel trapped in their homes even though the domestic space is necessary for wellbeing in older age. She also makes the point that “ageing is an embodied process and a process of personal movement and exploration” (2009:152). Mann shows that assistive technology helps elders with disabilities achieve a higher quality of life at home, even those with cognitive impairments, and enables them to age-in-place more successfully (2003:185). Like much of the research on technology for the elderly, he focuses on in-home devices which help older people function in, and move around, their home environment, such as monitoring technology and communications technology (2003:181–185). The importance of ageing-in-place cannot be understated as research has shown it is the preferred place to age by the aged themselves, that it contributes to well-being as it plays a reparative role, that the home is a setting for many health-related activities including the informal help of family, and lastly it is the place of self-management of medical conditions which are not going to resolve themselves (Gitlin 2003:189–191).

Because of the benefits stated above, research and development of home-based technologies to help the aged age-in-place are continuing and becoming more complex (Gitlin 2003:191). It is worth noting that fulltime movanners regard their motor vehicles as their home, albeit a mobile one, therefore, it has commonalities with ageing-in-place research benefits and also links with the new ideas of what actually constitutes ‘place’ in the era of rapid development of connectivity technology discussed earlier in the mobilities literature. The highly developed technologies that are staple fare of the modern day motor home mean they become micro-techno-environments in which older people can be observed functioning on a day to day basis. By focusing on the intersection of leisure, ageing and technology use, I intend to look through a different lens from the medical model research on the role of assistive devices for older people, seeking to avoid the bias inherent in many such studies. For example, researchers Liu and Park, when discussing internet communication changing the way older people interact, stated that: “Online social networks can provide a chance

for older individuals to communicate with others with the same disorder or on the same medication” (2003:264). However, from my observations older individuals also have more pleasant experiences to communicate about.

2.3.2 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, ageing studies attempt to examine many different aspects of the ageing process in the pursuit of developing a blueprint of how humans might live at this stage of life. However, much of the research tends to look from a medical lens and focuses on problems and declining health in old age. The research involving the mobility of old people focuses on ageing-in-place equipment like walkers and mobility scooters, or transport as a means to an unexciting end, such as attending medical appointments. However, there is a vision of ageing in the 21st century as an open-ended construct (Moody and Sasser 2012:xix); a life stage whose meaning can be rewritten as the population of the old increases to become an influential cohort, able to explore what it takes to enjoy their old age and influence the institutions of society to enable them to keep achieving their goals. My thesis concentrates on mobility as an essential activity of this life stage, which includes the resources necessary for mobility so senior movanners can continue to motorhome. The potential of technology to assist mobility (unrelated to technological aids that conjure up images of decline) is a focus of this thesis to understand how advances in technological devices connected with mobility can improve the wellbeing of the aged. Technologies that enhance and enable productive behaviour and leisure activities in the aged contribute to wellbeing and begin to blur the boundaries of old age and encourage the process of age-integration in our society as the aged are able to play their part in the world through their ability to be mobile.

2.4 TECHNOLOGY

It is their use of technology that has allowed senior movanners to pursue their lifestyle of continual mobility. Technology is defined as being both socially constructed and collective as well as learned intentional object-making to improve one’s interaction

with their environment (Kirkpatrick 2008:2, Vergunst 2011:206). By becoming part of the human way of life and routinised, tools become technology and embody meaning important to the people using the technology; tools are only tools through their relationship with the body (Vergunst 2011:206). Societies have always utilized technologies and although capitalism developed them in different ways than had previously existed before its rise, technologies had always been part of human social existence and cannot be said to have usurped a more 'natural' way of living (Kirkpatrick 2008:61–62, Ingold 2004). Technology cannot be equated with modernity; it has always been part of the human existence. However, at the beginning of capitalism in Europe, technology intersected with radical social, economic and cultural change that defined technological modernity (2008:61) and its role in production was brought to the forefront by Marx who then related this role to social organization (Urry 2012:27).

2.4.1 DEFINITIONS AND EXISTING THEORIES

Technology is associated with power and although this relationship does not always include subjection, technologies' design features can have harmful outcomes so these inherent properties need to be understood and exposed (Kirkpatrick 2008:2,156). Mobile phones, for example, are often harder for elderly people to master than for young people, owing to the particular ergonomics of the device: small screen and small buttons (Castells 2006:128). The result is that older people in general do not communicate by SMS (the cheapest option) partly due to ergonomic problems; they are not as comfortable with the technology as younger people and fail to access all the features available on their phones (Castells 2006:132). Even as technology is developed by one organisation, others (hackers) are subverting the purpose–built for their own agendas, and sometimes enabling others to access their new creation for free or for use other than the original purpose (Castells 2006:2) which changes the power relations inherent in the technology.

Both harmful and helpful technology has the potential to affect senior movanners, especially women on their own. Feminist writers have produced their own theories

relating to the design of technologies being specifically formulated so the outcome is detrimental to women. Haraway argues that women do not have to be threatened by machines but can be responsible for and take pleasure in, machines that are not part of women's 'organic' nature (Haraway 2000:315–316). Through embracing this, women can reconstruct the boundaries of daily life by connection and communication of bodies and machines which can lead to greater daily life satisfaction for women (Haraway 2000:315–316). I think many senior moving women are a successful example of such an embrace. The difficulty however, is evident in many senior moving women's lack of confidence driving the larger buses and motor homes because of their size and the necessity of upgrading their driver's licence with an HT¹¹ licence. However many women circumvent this problem by simply buying a smaller van if they find themselves on their own.

According to Kirkpatrick, "The centrality of information technology to any understanding of profound social changes of the last two decades should be seen as the result of specific social groups choosing to exploit its capabilities in ways that comport with their interests" (2008:135). This is evident in mobile phone usage being appropriated by users according to their own needs and social context, thus reproducing societal differences in the use of mobile communications (Castells 2006:75). Taking this further, Poster(2006) believes that modern digital information technology has changed how people self-monitor so identity is contested and negotiated, which leads to subjects being able to experiment with other roles, joining communities of like-minded people and experiencing freedom as a consequence of the new technology. He included not just a virtual world, but the formation of real communities with similar interests through the medium of internet communication. Senior movers in New Zealand connect with each other through email, texting and using websites such as that of the NZMCA where relevant information such as self-containment requirements, a directory of parking sites and fees, and advice on a range of issues relating to motorhoming in New Zealand is available.

¹¹ Heavy Truck Licence to drive a vehicle with a gross laden weight over 4,500kg tonnes.

2.4.2 TECHNOLOGY AND THE AGED

Technological items are socially constructed (Mollenkopf 2003:210). Technology is understood through contextual social practices, shaped and modified by the habits, interests, values and projects of subjects (Castells 2006:246). This is especially true of the complex relationship between technology and the aged (2003:210). Technology can be seen on the one hand as 'cool' and young, or on the other as assistive, a prosthesis, depending on who is using the technology (2003:210–211). Mirroring this, ageing has both positive social constructions of achievement, wisdom accumulation, respect generation; but also negative constructions of decline, mental deterioration and being 'not young' (2003:210). This has been found to hinder uptake of potentially helpful devices as older people consider them to carry a stigma, to identify them as handicapped and may only change as technological assistive devices are re-imagined to be modern and young (2003:211).

It is the relevance of computer technology to the daily lives of older people that determines whether they access the internet or use other forms of digital technology (Pangbourne et al. 2010:320). However the focus of much of the research linking older people, digital technology and mobility is on healthcare services and how they can be more easily accessed. Improving public transport as a way to deliver a better service to older people making their way to hospital or other healthcare facilities is often a primary outcome of such research, missing the potential for new technologies to really improve the daily lives and expand the world of seniors who use it (Liu and Park 2003:263). This is true of communication devices that can be used for information gathering and enable an enhanced experience for ageing in the home (2003:263). Liu and Park acknowledge that not only does the potential of technology for senior adults help their ability to perform tasks, especially the IADL's, but it promises to expand the life enhancement of seniors in terms of communication and information services, and help maintain independence as seniors become more inclined to use the internet (2003:262–263). Indeed they argue that the existing parameters of IADL's should be extended to include these new technological developments as they are so crucial now

to enhancing wellbeing in seniors (2003:263). While not strictly 'in-home', this research on technology and senior movanners links the two in a symbiotic relationship to emphasise the potential of their meeting for improvements in life satisfaction for a mobile cohort.

The mobile telephone as a technological device has expanded rapidly throughout society since the early 1990s and now is a multifunctional device that infiltrates work, family, leisure, travel, school – in fact every part of life (Geser 2007:444,445, Chen 2011). Senior motorhoming informants use their mobile phones to stay in touch with their families and to organise to rendezvous with people simultaneously on the move, as well as with stationary friends and family. The mobile phone plays an essential part of their mobile lives and is relevant technology to these seniors. Urry has stated that one of the transformations that has occurred in the 'rich north' that creates what he describes as 'network capital' is the "entanglements of physical movement and communications so that these have become highly bound up with each other, as contemporary twins"(Urry 2012:27). Studying the impact of mobile phones on the motorhoming life of older subjects rather than teens or families untethers age from being one of the social characteristics defining and differentiating mobile phone usage. For example, personal safety is a main factor of mobile telephone uptake among the elderly and the notion of it as a 'lifeline' is a key feature of the device (Castells 2006:97, Elliott and Urry 2010:36) which will be evident in the context of senior movanners' lives in the following chapters.

2.4.3 DRIVING AND GPS

Limited mobility can be partly overcome by technological devices enabling elders to still access products and services they need (Liu and Park 2003:264). Technology can assist older people to stay mobile by keeping them driving their own cars and helping them access other means of transportation, a process which can be as cognitively demanding as driving; both are important because mobility is fundamentally linked to the wellbeing of older adults (2003:274). Interestingly some of the modifications that older drivers make to their driving habits as they perceive their abilities decline, such

as driving more slowly, less frequently, avoiding driving during peak hours, at night, and in the rain, are reflected in senior movanners' behaviour in order to reduce the risks of hurting themselves or other road users. They try to be off the road and parked up by 4pm. This is not only to make the most of the spot they have chosen by taking walks, swimming and socialising with other campers, but also to be secure in a place before it is too dark to see well, and to be off the road before the light has faded to dusk which may affect their vision. They also drive at a measured speed; most told me they never drive over 100k (even though their vans may be capable of doing this) to reduce the risks of road accidents and because they are often driving in unfamiliar regions. They have the ability to avoid bad weather conditions such as heavy rain or high winds by simply staying put, or if they are mobile, pulling off the road for an unscheduled stay.

One of my key informants has just purchased a navigating device, and the other is in the process of doing so. Because driving is a combination of skills involving judgement, perception, speed of decision-making and multi-tasking, problems senior drivers encounter due to declines in speed of processing information and changes to working memory, can make driving and navigating increasingly difficult (Liu and Park 2003:275-276). There is evidence that driver training for elders can reverse problems with visual attention and that navigational devices can help with wayfinding (2003:276). The main problem associated with wayfinding is that it is a sequential process of steps and when one step is missed, it then destroys the success of the whole process (2003:276). This affects senior movanners more than the general older population of drivers, because they are usually in unfamiliar territory and if they miss a turn they are forced to multi-task; drive their motor home while trying to follow street signs, traffic signals or glance at a map at the same time (2003:276). The added difficulty of turning a large motor home around if they do happen to make a wrong turn should not be underestimated.

Movanners in general view technologies positively: they aid their leisure, allowing them freedom and at the same time participation in a community of likeminded people. I observed the everyday dynamic interaction between the older person and technology

and listened to their conversations with each other which often involved talking about technology related to their vans and communications on the road. Technology uptake and mobility, as well as being two of the pillars of this thesis, also intersect in the research process of most mobility studies. I have found their convergence created different types of engagement with subjects. This discussion is next, in the Methodology chapter.

2.5 SUMMARY

In the mobilities turn, being on the move is entangled with contemporary technologies; they are connected in the literature and in turn their intersection creates the connectedness which characterises people on the move in the 21st century. Older people in western society are not often the subjects of research in connection with ‘cool’ technologies that add real freedom and independence to their lives; more often the technologies they are encouraged to learn and use (and are researched on) are those of decline and immobility, helping them age-in-place. To understand how technology is being used by senior movanners to enjoy a mobile lifestyle celebrating freedom and independence in older age, I have chosen to look through the windscreen of the ‘mobilities turn’ to view the inherent meanings, connections and power plays of such a life.

It is important to remember interest in mobility is not new and anthropologists especially have long studied nomadic peoples and been interested in routes as well as the rootedness of the people they studied. However the emerging thinking of the new mobilities turn enables connections to be made between ageing mobile people and their uptake of technology and how it contributes to ageing wellbeing in New Zealand. By focusing on the meanings of getting from A to B and the social aspects encountered along the way, rather than the destination of such journeys, and incorporating how movanners are using technologies to achieve successful lives on the move, I hope to add to the collection of mobilities studies. Elderly people are not often the focus of mobility studies of ‘cool’ technology like mobile phones (Castells 2006:40) and GPS devices which hold possibilities of adding freedom and independence to their lives. Greenblatt, Kellerman, Urry, Cresswell and others have called for mobility to be studied

with the emphasis on the cultural and social, and the parameters they endorse to guide such studies also happen to highlight examples of components necessary for ageing wellbeing. Therefore a serendipitous synergy between the two frameworks emerges, such as ‘engagement with life’ (Rowe and Kahn 1998:39–46) occurring in the “physical zones of exchange and contact” (Greenblatt 2010b:250–252) when mobile.

Where the literature on mobilities, ageing wellbeing and technology use of the aged overlaps, it has assisted the aims of this study which are to investigate whether senior movanners are creating a social ‘roadland’ by their day-to-day practices and how they are interacting with family members while living a mobile old age. Their use of technology incorporated in high-tech vehicles which enables the life they want to lead theorised through the centrality of ‘mobilities’ defines the scope of this project. The literature has reinforced both the importance of wellbeing in old age, but also the difficulty of measuring this concept. It has focussed on new technologies with potential to help with successful mobility, but often instead symbolises the relentless hypermobility of the modern age, which sometimes leaves older people feeling literally, corporeally, emotionally and virtually ‘left behind’. I will turn now to the methods I used to understand the technology-driven, ageing Argonauts of Aotearoa as they drove the movanner archipelago.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Anthropology has long studied both people rooted to place and nomadic peoples and seen both groups as deserving of observation and analysis. However, there has been a certain bias toward the legitimacy of fixedness (Clifford 1997:2–3,22, Marcus 1998:32–33) and the assumption of it as a natural state of people, resulting in much of the literature on nomads focussing on their destructive impact on sedentary groups (Wink 2001, Bradburd 2001, Azarya 2001). If societies had definitive boundaries they tended to be seen as more ‘knowable’ and legitimate compared to nomadic peoples who seem to be fluid and chaotic. However, it may be more useful to see movement as the normal state of peoples and culture rather than their rootedness in one place (Greenblatt 2010a:2–6, Clifford 1997, Brody 2001:7,97).

The ethnographic traditions of anthropology place the discipline well to help in the current development of mobile methodologies. Before the advent of the new turn to mobilities Clifford had asked “How are people fashioning networks, complex worlds, that both presuppose and exceed cultures and nations” (Clifford 1997:10) and was concerned with the localisation of the anthropologist’s ‘field’ and the tendency to ignore technologies that suggested inter-local contact and breached the boundaries of that field (Clifford 1997:22–23). The development of grounded research strategies for future mobility studies is being widely debated by researchers from disciplines such as human geography, sociology and transport studies, and mobile ethnography in particular is changing rapidly (Cresswell 2012:647,650–651, D’Andrea et al. 2011:150–151, Haldrup 2011:69).

There is a need for everyday studies of mobilities through participant observation and face-to-face encounters (Vannini 2009:8). Mobilities are not homogenous although the many studies of aeromobility and automobility have added to this perception (Vannini 2009:5) conveniently mirroring Levin’s findings that homogenising ‘old people’ is also a mistake; “older people is in fact a heterogeneous group” (2009:153). There is some

symmetry then, in this ethnographic study of the 'everyday' and of the local, but I hope to add a deeper level of analysis by focusing on people who are by age and gender, somewhat on the margins of our society and who are engaging in an activity unusual within their cohort. By connecting seemingly disparate areas of elderly people, complex technology, freedom and modern vehicles I intend that this mobility study fulfills the criteria of a good example of a mobile ethnography (Cresswell 2012:651). My focus on age as a category of the research is a strategy that "tends to reveal conditions and effects of power and meaning (dis)allowing movement as mobility or motility" (D'Andrea et al. 2011:157) so should be considered along with gender, class and race in any mobility study (Elliott and Urry 2010:22).

Our speedy, mobile lifestyles are affecting the way we conduct our field research. The literature laments that methods such as participant observation are heavy on time resources (Vannini 2009, Bissell 2010:68) and that time constraints can alter the focus of mobility research away from the observation of the journey, to observation of, and at, the destination point instead (Northcott 2008:226) so that what is occurring on the journey is missed (Vergunst 2011:205). This fieldwork avoided focusing on destination sites "as though life were lived at a scatter of fixed locales rather than along the highways and byways upon which they lie" (Ingold and Vergunst 2008:3) to instead focus on what happened during movanners' journeys. The method also attempted to reflect the values and practices of movanners by being slow: embracing their pace, taking time to reflect, enjoying the meandering without focusing on the final destination as the ultimate meaning of the journey. It was not. Senior movanners did not rush their journeys but instead took time to look at the views and stopped to explore the natural world they were travelling through. As ethnographic fieldwork is also inherently time consuming this languid approach serendipitously allowed for reflexivity and adaptation as different experiences with my subjects occurred. Travelling is seen as a product of both space and time which can pass slowly on a boring journey as opposed to seemingly flash by on an enjoyable one (Jain 2009:93-95). A movanner's self-propelled journey is usually devoid of both these extremes of consciousness, and time takes a back seat creating opportunities to make connections on the journey and so construct a social, meaningful 'roadland'.

Urry has identified the problem of existing approaches adequately addressing “the concrete practices that facilitate forms of personal, social and political life as increasingly ‘mobilized’” to develop accounts of individuals’ mobile lives (Elliott and Urry 2010:x). In particular his concept of network capital helped reveal how senior movers were living a mobile life. This chapter examines my methodological approach, research methods, and my key informants and their/our interactions with the technology of GPS as a tool which helped with data gathering, recognition of patterns and general interactions with my informants.

3.2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Anthropologists have long experienced the challenges of fieldwork with nomadic peoples like pastoral herders (Gooch 2008:67–79), hunter gatherers (Brody 2001), tourists (Salazar 2011, Graburn 1983:26–27) walkers (Vergunst 2011) and recreational vehicle travellers (Counts and Counts 1992:156–157). I also faced the challenge of capturing the fluidity of my transient subjects (Jain 2009:92). My experiences as a mobile researcher travelling to the field, travelling to/with my subjects, travelling across disciplines (D’Andrea et al. 2011:153) was a central part of the research process as I embodied both roles; mobile researcher also journeying (Jain 2009:96).

I traveled to sites to study my informants as they travelled to their favourite sites as tourists, travellers, gypsies, or neo-nomads. Crang asks how “to respond to this situation where we are travelling to learn about people who are travelling and learning?” (2011:207). To answer his question he sought to avoid analysis based on simple comparative representations by deciding to weave together dichotomies through his ethnography, so his findings were not too strictly separated. D’Andrea has also called for the integration of such dichotomies as the specific and the generic, and the trivial and the significant, in mobility research (D’Andrea et al. 2011:157). Crang’s examples of pleasurable activities versus serious study and pursuit of ‘deep’ knowledge versus superficial ‘tourist’ knowledge experienced on his journeys,

resonated with my own situation. I was trying to find out what my participants were doing and why, while they were simultaneously learning local history, local flora and fauna and local economic structures (for example one couple visited Stockton mine). Even as I was collecting academic data, it was usually a pleasurable experience. I was staying in beautiful places, passing through attractive landscapes, walking on beaches or in bush and generally partaking in the leisure practices of the movanners themselves which was not a hardship and certainly not in the traditional spirit of adversity associated with anthropological fieldwork (Crang 2011:206–208).

As previously mentioned, many of the interviews I conducted occurred when informants were sedentary at the point of interview; they were at home, house sitting or 'parked up'. Irving's work on extracting interior dialogues of informants reminds us that ethnographic data gleaned from a sedentary informant can vary from that which emerges if the same informant was mobile, especially when recounting feelings and memories of a journey, however, both data sets are still relevant (Irving 2011:15–21). Although Irving is concentrating on the interiority of emotions of illness being brought to the surface through the mobile performance undertaken by his informant re-walking a road, it is a good example of time/space compression in mobility as the contrast of his informant's experience of the *length* of the road on the different days is striking and was dependent on her internal emotional state.

The concept is applicable to memories and emotions of a movanner's journey told from the sitting room of a house being transformed from those invoked and narrated by actually reliving the physical journey of sites and landscapes, from the driver's seat of the motor home. The empirical data collected while mobile, Irving reminds us, is fluid and contextual, dependent on the action it was collected through such as sitting or driving (Irving 2011:21–22). It is one of the challenges of a mobile ethnographic study to recognise that a sedentary approach is not going to be enough to understand the complexities of mobile lives and to find methods that will help with knowledge production that perhaps combines traditional and innovative practices (D'Andrea et al. 2011:150–151, Büscher et al. 2011:1–2).

Keeping this in mind, in many instances I relied on my informants' sedentary narrations to grasp their mobile experiences, conversations with informants who were stopped during their journey, or participant observation. However, with two participants I also collected quantitative data using GPS. This provided not only statistics about times and kilometres, but a complementary layer to their previous narratives of similar journeys and to my observations from being on the road with one of them. Vergunst sees technology and ethnography as a complex interplay and while technology sometimes upsets the traditional ethnographic observation it also enables, through viewing technology as 'techniques' (culturally learned skills), another level of insight into the social aspects of mobility through the use of technology by both researcher and researched (2011). My dependence on technology disrupted my own research at times as I struggled to synchronise various devices necessary for my own potential mobility and data collection. Technology is more than simply a tool for mobility studies and my experiences with the different technologies of both senior movers and researcher (especially GPS and mobile phones) reflected Vergunst's view and became an important part of this thesis, discussed in detail through the following chapters.

The post-journey discussion, as the GPS data was downloaded and revealed to the informant, added a further layer to the data collected. This combination of quantitative and qualitative data collected while sedentary, as a fellow traveller in a van, and when I was absent from the van (through the GPS), added the necessary depth for a good mobile ethnographic outcome as one cannot be on the road with informants all the time. It also reflects a call (D'Andrea et al. 2011:154, Büscher et al. 2011:2) that the theoretical component of a mobility study be interwoven with the methodological component in order to generate both the quantity and quality of data necessary to answer relevant and also unanticipated questions. Irving argues for the researched to be involved as their own subjects of study, rather than the objects of it (2011:20) and when I reviewed the GPS tracks of each key informant in their presence, it generated discussion, awoke memories and new stories about that trip, reminded them of photos

taken which they then produced, and on a few occasions unequivocally showed them places they had been that they had forgotten about.

My age (not as old as most of my informants but old enough) facilitated both access to senior movanners and the ensuing relationship that developed with my two key informants. As I studied senior movanners however, I realised I did not want to situate myself in this age category by being mistaken as a movanner and took the first opportunity to make it clear to others that I was researching the lifestyle. Undoubtedly, however, the lifestyle is attractive to me sometime in the future and this feeling became stronger the more times I hired a van and experienced the movanning life. Before reviewing my particular research methods and my multi-modal approach to data gathering, I will explain who my key informants, Barb and Peter are, and outline essential details about the Freewheeler's club, in the following section.

3.3 KEY INFORMANTS AND THE FREEWHEELERS

Although I interviewed many senior movanners both in their houses and in their vans, I had two key informants: 'Barb' who is a single female movanner and was the new secretary of the Freewheelers Club when I first met her, and 'Peter', a single fulltime movanner male, who was not in the club. Barb had typically engaged in friendly conversation with a group of senior cyclists at Long Bay Regional Park where she was staying for a couple of nights and among the group was my father. He mentioned my research and through him, she invited me to knock on her van door and introduce myself. She is a friendly, dynamic and capable woman, independent and outgoing with contacts all through the movanning community. Peter is a previous teacher of mine and a family friend of my parents, so we had an historical connection and he trusted me when I asked him to carry a GPS device in his van. Barb is aged in her 70's and Peter in his 80's.

Every informant I interviewed over three years was a member of the NZMCA and proudly displayed their 'wings' on the front and back of their vans and endeavoured to live by the values of the association when they were on the road. The structure of the



FIGURE 5 NZMCA WINGS ON THE FRONT OF A VAN



FIGURE 4 WINGS DISPLAYED ON THE REAR OF A VAN

NZMCA is a regional one. There is a 'Far North' sub association, a 'Northland' sub association and so forth all the way down to 'Southland' sub-association. This rather ironic subdivision of an organisation devoted to mobility by sedentary home area developed from area representatives in the early 1960's, which became area committees with representation on the NZMCA (Spain 2006:32). These regional associations organise their own rallies and events, although any member of the NZMCA can attend any event, and in fact are especially welcomed (Green 2010) when attending an out-of-area event, which happens frequently because they are of course, travelling. Their website states:

The NZMCA is a membership based organisation representing the interests of private motor caravan owners in New Zealand. Members receive benefits including, but not limited to, discounts on services and products, free and low cost overnight sites, a dedicated insurance scheme and a range of handy publications.

Fellowship, camaraderie, and information sharing are also valued attributes.

However, inside the NZMCA, and crossing regional boundaries, special interest groups have developed and the Freewheelers is one such interest group of single motor homers. Other special interest groups include 'Good News Vanners' who have a Christian focus, 'Fifth Wheel Group' who own '5th Wheelers'¹², 'Heavy Weights' who own large vans and 'Vantrampers' who focus on tramping at pre-arranged destinations.

Freewheelers are comprised of both single men and single women and they can be full-timers or part-timers. Most of the Freewheelers I encountered were retired. Single movanners are in the minority within the total movanning community according to NZMCA statistics which show about 14.7% of memberships were single and 85.3% were double memberships as at April 2012 (email from the Membership officer, NZMCA). The reality behind this statistic means that a single movanner can feel uncomfortable at NZMCA rallies and one informant related a story of walking into her first rally and not having a welcoming experience. Another informant whose husband had died told me "you lose two things if your husband dies and you give up motor homing because of it"; she knew how to drive her motor home (some women cannot or will not) and had joined the Freewheelers so she could keep movanning and be part of a group that had no partners travelling with them.

Death and illness were constant partners in my interaction with informants and I had to be sensitive to changing circumstances. One informant had her husband die suddenly and subsequently did not wish to talk to me. Sometimes older movanners were just too tired to see me numerous times. The stories senior movanners told me often contained personal accounts of partners dying or suffering, or exposed economic losses which had led to their current mobile lives, so there was a need for anonymity. Another ethical consideration was the need to conduct myself appropriately on my own journeys around the North Island as a representative of the NZMCA and not misuse the trust that membership bestowed on me. For example, I could not share information contained in the Travel Directory with non-member 'outsiders' (such as tourists) and

¹² Type of campervan that has to be towed by a truck especially fitted out for the task.

had to make sure I emptied grey and black water appropriately, pulled over so as not to let a queue of traffic build up behind me, and generally abide by the written and unwritten rules of the association. I had learnt that reciprocity is important to senior movanners in New Zealand (Green 2010:57–60) just as it is in North America (Counts and Counts 1992, Mills 1999, Jobs 1984, Counts and Counts 2001) and so made sure there was mutual exchange in my ‘conversations’ with them to reduce any perceived inequalities in the relationship between researcher and researched (Marcus 1998:121) which they would not have appreciated. The ethics involved in the use of GPS is discussed with the method itself.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODS – A MULTI-MODAL APPROACH

The main challenge for my current research was capturing practices and meanings that happen during a movanner’s journey. This is a community that has no fixed institutions from which to observe, no workplaces, no shops, no schools, no physical facilities. Their own living space, the vans, and the temporary facilities they created were my only sites and these by nature, are extremely intimate and highly personal spaces. It was only through the close relationship developed with my key informant, Barb, that I was invited to journey with her and so invade this intimate ‘place’. I needed such an informant because although I am a member of the NZMCA, I am not a member of the Freewheelers as I am not single, and more pertinently my travelling ability is limited because I do not own a van.

Previously I had conducted fieldwork at destination points where senior movanners gather or conducted interviews at their houses. I had hired vans to attend rallies and to journey around the North Island. Now, armed with greater knowledge of their community-making at destination sites, I wanted to observe the journey itself. Although I would not be a true insider, my interactions with other movanners would be facilitated by being a member of the association as my husband and I now had an identifying number and could display the wings insignia which are both symbols of inclusion that other members recognised and trusted. Membership also gave us

access to important information regarding sites to stop at, rules and regulations for both national and regional parks, connections with other movanners, information about upcoming rallies and the Travel Directory. This information is on-going and topical.

3.4.1 INTERVIEWS AND ‘CONVERSATIONS’

I did 10 semi-structured interviews, each of two hours duration in 2010, using an interview form I designed with a wide variety of questions ranging from details about the types of motorhome they drove, their camping and boating history, their relationships with neighbours and family, what they thought of the costs of motorhoming compared to the costs of their houses, duration of journeys, pets, division of chores at home and on the road, socialising at home and on the road, problems encountered, safety issues, physical activities and personal outcomes. Some interviews were with full-timers conducted in their vans, some with part timers conducted in their houses or their vans, some with full-timers house-sitting in someone else’s home, some at rallies, POP’s¹³ and camping grounds. I interviewed couples, singles and groups, sometimes with other family members who were not mobile. These interviews were helpful in that I amassed specific information about movanning in New Zealand and began to get “a feel” about movanners and their lifestyle and I got to know more than 20 movanners reasonably well. They gave me the names of others who they thought could help me, who I otherwise would not have met, especially full-timers who have no fixed abode. During these interviews I heard many movanning stories, gained general movanning knowledge that I lacked and started to see emerging patterns for specific research.

I used some of the data for my research project on community making and successful ageing in 2010. In 2011 and 2012 I conducted more semi-structured interviews and during those years engaged in numerous ‘conversations’ with senior movanners as I

¹³ Park over Property. Members of the NZMCA allow fellow members to stay on their properties for free or for a very small payment.

encountered them on my own journeys or ‘parked up’ in my neighbourhood. The initial data collected and analysed from the interview forms enabled me to have more authentic interactions and conversations with movanners because I had basic knowledge. I knew, for example, I could approach senior movanners parked around my local neighbourhood if their door was open as this is a sign they do not mind being disturbed. I initiated many conversations over the last three years in this way, as I also knew they would almost certainly have time for a chat.

3.4.2 AUTO ETHNOGRAPHY

In 2010 I visited an Auckland Regional Rally at Shakespear Bay and spent a few hours being shown around and chatting with participants. Based on this initial rally experience I hired a van so I could participate fully in a weekend rally held by the Northland Regional Association at Bland Bay. This van displayed the ‘Wings’ of the NZMCA; driving it I experienced the constant waves of other movanners I passed on the road and first felt the sense of belonging to a community, hidden from other road users. The red ‘Wings’ served as an identifier that other travelling members easily recognised from a distance in speeding traffic to enable acknowledgement, a strategy similar to that of traditional nomadic clans in a desert environment (Oliver 2003:33). My husband and I participated fully in this rally, parking our van where directed by the Rally Marshall,¹⁴ wearing the yellow “first time at a rally” badges, bringing our chairs and cups of tea to the communal morning tea in the marquee and having to correctly repeat our association number (39652) as ‘newbies’ as we introduced ourselves, which was acknowledged with appreciative clapping. We attended Happy Hour at around 4pm, bringing along our chairs, drinks and nibbles to the marquee where we met many more movanners both couples and singles and heard stories of their travels especially their trips to the South Island. The next morning we attended the communal morning tea and helped pull down the marquee.

¹⁴ From the Northland Regional Association and in charge of the rally.

During the rally the weather was good so people were outside their vans where most of the interactions between movanners take place. They almost always delineate between the interior and exterior of their vans (Counts and Counts 2001:187) and most hospitality takes place in the area immediately outside the door of the van where tables, chairs and sometimes pot plants are set out, usually under an awning. The inside of a van is somewhere you have to be specifically invited into, whereas this outside area is a place anyone can stop for a chat without invitation, while the possibility of friendship is explored (Green 2010:65, Counts and Counts 2001:187). One of the reasons I wanted to attend a rally was because many of my informants had told me they had never been to one. They had formed ideas about them being too structured and organised where “everyone parks in a row” as one of my informants put it. As if to reflect empirically what I had previously been told, many of the people actually attending *that* rally at Bland Bay also insisted “they didn’t go to rallies” and this was “just their second or third rally” and that they had only attended because of the beautiful location. The negative discourse of being organised, parking in close proximity to many other movanners and having set times for morning tea and Happy Hour is one that resonates with some senior movanners but in fact was successfully overcome by having most of the day to ourselves, being able to shut our van door when privacy was required and choosing whether or not to participate in planned events. The rally was certainly a social event but also of short duration and we had plenty of free time to do whatever we chose and were in fact one of the last vans to leave on Sunday afternoon.

I hired this van again for a trip up north and twice hired a Kea Rental van for trips to Northland and the Coromandel Peninsula. On all trips I travelled with my husband and we took turns driving the vans. They were surprisingly easy to handle but it was not easy pulling over to let traffic pass as New Zealand road shoulders are rough and sloping and often the vehicle immediately behind does not take the offered opportunity to pass. In compliance with the often repeated value of the NZMCA I never let traffic build up behind me but to achieve this I often had to pull off the road and come to a complete stop. Over the course of our trips we gained basic knowledge in the technology of the vans, water conservation, emptying grey and black water

cassettes, finding TV reception, parking in sheltered positions, recognizing the symbols along the road that could help us, using the Travel Directory beneficially, and feeling an unexpected sense of vulnerability the first time we freedom camped by the side of a road.

This was at a POP in Northland that I had decided would be a good time/place to stop on our journey home after spending a full day travelling from Matauri Bay and visiting friends in Russell. All the information I needed was in my NZMCA Travel Directory so I phoned ahead and asked permission to stop there. The owner immediately agreed and when we arrived we showed our NZMCA card and he pointed to where we could park for the night. It was very close to the road and as night fell, it felt strange cooking, eating and preparing for bed while a few metres away cars were going past. I have previously looked at the social structure of the POP's and how hosting and guesting etiquette (guided by the rules suggested by the NZMCA) is enacted to form community at a temporary site, but actually staying in one myself did not quite live up to some of the stories I had previously heard from my movanning informants. Perhaps only the best stories are retold to researchers. We didn't see the owner again, let alone have him arrive with a basket of muffins, and had a rather fitful sleep as cars passed until the early hours of the morning. However, it was a safe and free haven, which we only knew about because of our NZMCA member's Travel Directory. The POP was not apparent to other motorists.



FIGURE 6 SIGN FOR A POP IN NORTHLAND.

On another occasion I was “told off” by a fellow member of the association because when I parked in a public car park at the Karangahake Gorge to walk some tracks, I took up two and a half spaces. In this instance I was driving a rented Kea van and the senior movanner luckily assumed I was a tourist. He knocked on my open door as we were eating lunch and had no compunction in asking me to move forward and only take up two parks which I quickly complied with. It was a personal experience of how senior movanners monitor the behaviour of other motorhomers, even tourists, with micro techniques in a Foucauldian manner, instances of which I had often read in letters to the bi-monthly NZMCA magazine. They are very conscious of public perceptions of themselves as a group.

3.4.3 MOBILE PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

As well as my own trips as a movanner driving a van, I have been privileged to travel with my key informant, Barb on two occasions, sleeping in her van and sharing her journey. The first journey was a three-day journey north, the details of which are

discussed in chapters 4 and 5. After hearing about many of her journeys as recounted narratives while she was either house sitting, parked up in her van or visiting me at my house, it was imperative I observe her in the process of journeying. The motorhome is a highly personal space, where the owner sleeps, prepares food, eats, dresses and undresses and completes ablutions. It was generous of Barb to offer to have someone travel with her and essentially invade this personal space for three days. I travelled with her a second time to Auckland city to spend the night freedom parking at the end of Beaumont St, a habitual stopping place for Barb, who in fact referred to the space as her “waterfront apartment”. She had told me about her experiences at Beaumont St many times, especially that she meets characters there and you “get down to nitty gritty of what NZ is, see it every day there, characters” so this was a chance to actually experience what it was like to spend a day and a night at her “waterfront apartment” that I had already heard about in a narrative form.

She also invited me to a Freewheelers rally being held at Matakana, about one hour north of Auckland in June 2011. I found the site using GPS in my car after texting Barbara for the location. She texted back the address, which I input to my GPS and was taken to the site where the big Freewheelers sign was visible at the side of the road.



FIGURE 7 SIGN ON THE ROADSIDE IN NORTHLAND.

There is a 'Central' Freewheelers as well as a 'Northland' and 'Far North' Freewheelers and various other ones around New Zealand. The Freewheelers present were a bit vague about the details although they attended other Freewheeler rallies, whatever the regional district and seem to know most people even if they were from different districts. Barb greeted the single women she knew as they arrived with a hug and a kiss. When others that she did not know arrived she still went out of her van, greeted them, and helped them park up. We spent about 3 hours painting a large fence that surrounded a horse arena which was done as 'payment' for staying on their property and using their facilities. This type of reciprocity is common in movanners' rallies. During this time Barb and I talked constantly and our own relationship deepened through shared hard work and the opportunity it created for opening up to each other. There will be more about the Freewheelers in Chapters 4 and 5 and my experiences travelling with Barb.

3.4.4 GPS AS RESEARCH TOOL

I used GPS to track my two key informants. I spoke firstly to my male key informant to see how he felt about the proposal and he said he would be happy to take part. He understood the technology, had used GPS in his boat for many years and had recently purchased a GPS for his vehicle. My female key informant, Barb, also had a good understanding of GPS and was happy to have my device in her vehicle. The devices did not transmit positions so they were not tracking the vehicles in real-time, but rather simply gathering data; including position coordinates, times and dates and elevations, which the GPS device stored. I collected the devices from my two informants when they passed through Auckland and downloaded the data to my laptop to see the track of the motor home historically.

I did not anticipate the GPS being a problem for my informants and if they did not wish to do it, they would have said "no". From previous fieldwork I felt confident of their honesty. I did not want the GPS to be a surveillance mechanism in conflict with the culture of freedom so important to many movanners but on the other hand they generally have positive views of technology because it is beneficial to their mobile

lives; they are not luddites. However, I did not want to disrupt their freedom and independence by using 'real-time' GPS, which would have meant I could actually pinpoint their position any time I chose, hence the data collection option. This is a crucial point because it is real-time GPS that constitutes 'surveillance' as opposed to simply knowing historically where someone has been. This method of only collecting quantitative data historically has been criticised by geographers such as Ahas who stated such tracking studies "generally do not provide sufficient information about human behaviour and thus have little to add to contemporary studies of human geography and mobility" (2011:190). I did not find this to be the case. I hope to portray in the following chapters, both how the GPS data gathered did provide understanding, and how, with the addition of other research methods, particularly participant involvement, it added a further layer of depth to that understanding.

My main reason for using GPS was to highlight just how mobile my two informants were over a certain time period. In interviews for the last three years I took notes of numerous journeys from many informants and the details and complexity of these journeys were hard to capture and interpret from interviews. I had trouble grasping the scale of their journeys from verbal face-to-face monologues trying to picture details like how often they stop, when and where they stop and how far they travel in a day. Through the GPS these details are embedded with a particular journey so it can be 'read' accurately and any patterns revealed. *Seeing* one key informant's journeys as a track on a map for example, made me realise she was actually repeating a similar trip, and visiting the same places that she had previously *told* me about which I will explore in Chapter 4 'Social Roadlands'. The GPS units also provided quantitative data about how many kilometers they had travelled during one 'trip', elevations, average speeds of their vehicles and times and dates which not only proved useful to me but also to them as we interpreted their journeys together later. As previously mentioned the unanticipated second value of the method was the way the GPS records served as a basis for retrospective discussions of journeys.

The NZMCA publishes an annual 'Travel Directory' for members containing detailed information on places to stay while travelling around New Zealand. The Directory has been described as

a unique blend of our members' knowledge and experience and has been brought together using experts in the publishing and mapping fields to provide NZMCA members with the most comprehensive and valuable motorhome touring title in New Zealand (NZMCA 2012a:8).

The Directory is a valuable resource for members and they are encouraged to be highly protective of it by not sharing the information it contains, built up over many years, with non-members (NZMCA 2012a:8) another indication of the strong sense of being an 'insider', the association inspires. Again, the adherence to this ideal is self-monitored within the group with a kind of micro-surveillance of fellow members. Among other information, it has GPS coordinates for every site it lists which members can enter into their own vehicle's GPS and be guided accurately to a site that is new, or they may not have visited before. The NZMCA website also has recently added a page where GPS coordinates can be downloaded straight into a member's device. In a 2012 survey of members, 15.5% of all members who responded to the survey (5050 members) reported using their GPS units daily, 19% weekly, 31.2% monthly and 34.3% never use them (NZMCA 2012d:3). In other words over 65% of senior movanners in New Zealand are relatively familiar with GPS devices and use the technology regularly.

3.5 MOBILE RESEARCHER AND THE TECHNOLOGY OF MOBILITY

I received the two GPS units at home via courier about two days after ordering them on-line from a supplier in West Auckland. The units came well-packaged, with software, chargers, cabling and a pouch for the unit itself. I downloaded the software onto my laptop without any problems and could see it came with maps and wizards to help with the transfer of data. My first test trip was to Forrest Hill. I configured the GPS to record a position every 3 minutes and simply placed it on the dashboard of the car as I was conscious of where the unit, although very small, would be best placed in a motorhome as to not inconvenience my informants. The sun was going to be a factor

while a vehicle was parked as I did not want the unit overheating, but the device had to be in a position to easily pick up satellites. That evening I downloaded the data using the wizard in the software but it failed to connect to the device and download. With my husband helping me, we tried a few different options and eventually the track points downloaded but on reviewing the data I saw that my original configuration of the unit was not quite correct and I had picked up points every 3 seconds. I reconfigured the unit again for 3 minutes. I was aware that I was both learning new software and hardware technology to use as my research tool, and also that I would soon have to explain the workings of the technology to my two informants, one of whom was quite familiar with GPS, so they could use them correctly. I felt like my own research subject as I endeavored to master this particular technology of mobility.

My next test-trip was to Tauranga and I took both GPS units. I was not driving so I took photos out of the window with my smartphone of places I could easily identify later (important for photo-sync testing), such as the big L&P bottle in Paeroa, the Karangahake Gorge, various cafes along State Highway 2, Tauranga and Mt Maunganui. We stopped at various places that day, for varying lengths of time, and returned to Auckland that afternoon. My husband and I each took one GPS unit and downloaded the data to our respective laptops which each had the QStar¹⁵ software loaded on it. I downloaded my waypoints after a small problem with the software only responding to the original comm. port that it must have chosen when installed and my trip to Tauranga literally played out in front of me complete with stops. There were no 'drifters'; that is data points that are obviously outliers, and when we later compared the trip showing on our respective laptops, they were identical which was reassuring. A few days later I transferred the photos to my laptop and set about downloading them but there was a discrepancy with the times between the photos and the track. I easily brought my photos in and by changing the software to Daylight Saving Time and also reconfiguring the time on all the photos, (which the software had an option to do) the photos appeared perfectly at the easily identifiable physical locations along the track to Tauranga at the time we had passed them.

¹⁵ The brand name of the GPS device and software.

Two days before I met with Barb to set the unit up in her motor home I spent several hours experimenting with the units and the software, the tracks, trips and photos and discovered there were more options than I had at first realised. Because I had several trips on both the units, the possibilities to manipulate the data became apparent. I had given each device a name, 'Barbara' and 'Peter' and when the waypoints downloaded as 'tracks' they came in with that nominator so that a track might be called 'Barbara2011/10/19_09:15'. The GPS unit saved a separate track every time the unit itself was switched off, so there could be for example, four tracks downloaded from the unit, each called a slightly different name based on a date and time; handy in itself. Then I, as the operator, could give the data, before it downloaded, a 'trip' name, for example 'Test Tauranga' under which all the tracks appeared. Furthermore, I realised I could 'play' the track with the slide show of photos appearing automatically at every point on the track where there was a photo, rather than me having to click on the photo icon on the track. Suddenly the journey looked visually more appealing and stimulating and multi-dimensional and my memories of the day were jogged back into life.

How were these functional options going to enhance the possibilities of the tool working well as my key informants roamed New Zealand to create the best possible data record? It firstly meant that my informants could switch the device off if they were staying overnight or longer at a destination and so save the memory becoming full with stationery waypoints if the unit failed to go into 'sleep' mode. This solved one of the problems I had foreseen of having to travel constantly to the key informants' locations to download the full GPS device in order to make sure I received the whole journey. Secondly, I would know how long the informant was stationary, which was a key area for me in the context of the journey, because the new 'track' would start with a date and time when they turned the device on before driving off. So, for example, a download of a journey might contain 40 individual 'tracks', all with individual dates, and start and end times, for detailed analysis. I then had a second option of merging all those 'tracks' together, saving that single merged 'track' as a new 'trip' (while still

keeping the numerous 'tracks' in their original state) and thus I would end up with two pictorial representations of the same journey, one detailed and one with all data combined as a single 'track'.

3.5.1 SETTING KEY INFORMANTS UP WITH THEIR GPS DEVICES

In late August 2011 I visited Barb at her house which she rents out, in Auckland. She had spent a few days cleaning after trouble with tenants, staying in her van in her own driveway while she did this. I asked her to have the GPS device in her van and she said "no problem". I showed her how to use the device while she was house-sitting in Whangaparaoa in late October 2011 and she grasped how it worked straight away and was adamant she would remember to turn it on when she started off in the morning. I sent her a text on the 22nd October 2011 saying "Happy Travels, I know you won't forget to turn the GPS on". On Friday 29th October 2011 I rang Peter and arranged to meet him at the house he stays in over the winter. His van had some maintenance while he was sedentary, a wheel alignment and various mechanical servicing and he had purchased a steel box which he had fitted to the back of the van in order to carry an inflatable dingy so he could catch more fish. I had a quick glance in the van, he warned me it was in a mess as he was getting it organised and indeed it was pretty messy. Many female movanners maintained that men on their own usually had messier vans than the women did, hence my interest in the interior of Peter's van.

We sat at the dining room table and I showed him the device and gave him a brief rundown on its features and what buttons to push. He has used GPS before in boats, and had recently purchased a GPS to navigate with while travelling in his van, and a Kindle, so my device was fairly easy to explain. We decided the device could stay in the protective pouch and that he would turn it off when he stopped somewhere overnight or for longer periods of time to save the battery and the storage capacity. The QStar charged from a cigarette lighter adaptor or from a laptop comm. port. He has an adaptor to charge his Kindle from an ordinary power point, which also fitted the comm. cable for the QStar device, so he could charge it that way, as well as through the cigarette lighter charger adaptor, or from his PC.

We actually spent more time configuring the new mobile phone he had bought that day. I entered my details as his first 'contact' then showed him how to do it, as he had all his other contacts to put in, and then went through various applications on the menus. I then entered his new details in my phone and sent a test text and email from his phone to mine, and back again. He mentioned that he had purchased a new Kindle with 3G capabilities, because he had trouble downloading books from the free wifi in the public libraries onto the original Kindle he purchased a couple of months ago and it became too frustrating. The upgrade was interesting because it was not actually the device itself that was frustrating, but its interaction with the infrastructure in order to perform its function that became a problem. Peter's access to useful infrastructures of technology was crucial in this instance; because he is mobile he relies on public places for connection such as public libraries or Starbucks' coffee shops, which in this case, proved to be insufficient for his new needs of downloading large amounts of data to his new technological device.

Having set my two key informants up successfully with their GPS devices I now could only wait until they returned from their journeys to see how successful this method had been. I hoped my instructions had been clear and that my informants could manage the devices without running out of battery, or room on the device for coordinates. The success or not of the technology, and the method itself, would only become clear after the journey had been completed.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The research methods to capture mobile subjects and experiences are being intensely discussed across disciplines and there is general acknowledgement that understanding them will always be partial, incomplete and in process (Vergunst 2011, Fincham et al. 2010, Büscher et al. 2011). Modern mobile methods are topical and still under construction. I think the multi-modal approach I took was a necessary one if I wanted to focus on the journeys rather than the destination points. To achieve this I used

interviews, semi-structured ‘conversations’, auto-ethnography, mobile participant observation and GPS and often used one source to verify another, or looked at particular data sourced from one point of the ethnographic journey (such as conversations), through the windscreen of another point (such as riding in a motorhome). This amalgamation of methods aimed to “follow the people” (Marcus 1998:90) (as the inspiration for my title (Malinowski 1922)so famously did) on the well-worn paths of the movanner archipelago but still used a multi-sited ethnographic model in the anthropological tradition. It was somewhat reassuring to read, in virtually every case study of mobile subjects/objects by academics from various disciplines, ethnographic methods being hailed as one of the best ways to study mobilities (Jirón 2011:36–41, Vergunst 2011:203, Urry 2007a:39–42, Fincham et al. 2010:3).

The turn to mobilities has at its core a recognition that the world is not simply a ‘social’ place nor a ‘human’ place (Ingold 2004) and through the use of technologies of tools and infrastructure we make the world, so that our powers as human beings “are co-constituted with/by various material agencies of clothing, tools, objects, paths, footwear, buildings, machines, paper and so on” (Büscher et al. 2011:3). These co-operations were relevant to both the researched and this researcher, to the subject of this thesis and the means by which the empirical data was gathered for it.

Anthropologists involved with mobile subjects see technology as a worthy form of ethnographic engagement and “a theme within ethnographic investigation” (Vergunst 2011:210). I tried to avoid the ‘authority of technology’ embodied in the researcher by working the technologies out together with both Peter and Barb and did not feel that it distanced me from them as informants (Vergunst 2011:210,215). On the contrary I believe our relationship deepened through the collaborative process of understanding the technologies. I explained some to them; they explained more to me.

One of the most interesting aspects of my research process was the part played by my decision to use GPS as a tool. Surprisingly, GPS served numerous purposes in the process, not only as quantitative data of movanners’ journeys, but just as importantly it generated significant discourse and additional layering after the journey, as the

results were shown to participants, which was a development I had not foreseen. In turn, this led to a deeper relationship with my key informants as we analysed the results together and they became part of the research process, checking their diaries to substantiate the data and transforming the coordinates by their storytelling. Furthermore, it meant I could give something back to them; reminders of a forgotten part of their journey, how many kilometres they had travelled during a major trip, average kilometres travelled per day or how often they stopped, that interested and surprised them. It was a mutually beneficial collusion instigated by the plethora of GPS data collected and it represented a new insight for them into their own journeying.

I was finding my way through the challenges of mobility research strategies and theories for knowledge production. Like Jirón, I was not interested in observing or tracking strangers (Jirón 2011:41), another possible explanation of why my outcome with GPS differed so markedly from Ahas's. The personal experiences of driving a motorhome myself and being in a van with Barb helped to develop deeper relationships with fellow movanners and enabled contextually authentic conversations. Although by no means as expert in movanning as my informants, basic movanning knowledge gave me a solid platform from which I could extend my initial research (on community formation among New Zealand movanners and ageing wellbeing), to investigate community-making on-the-move, the development of network capital to enable this constructed social 'roadland' and patterns of behaviour in mobility-privileged reconstructed family relationships.

CHAPTER 4 THE MOVANNER ARCHIPELAGO – “LETTING GO OF THE MOORING ROPE”

4.1 INTRODUCTION: CREATING SOCIAL ROADLANDS

This chapter is not a linear journey but instead reflects the wandering, looping, repetitive voyages of movanners themselves. I endeavour to capture both their fluidity and their moorings, through their own stories and day-to-day practices observed through fieldwork over the last 3 years. From previous research on New Zealand movanners conducted from 2009 to 2010, I concluded that senior movanners form communities when they meet at various destination sites and through their group identity as members of the NZMCA (Green 2010). A paradox emerged of a desire for independence, freedom and ‘to do their own thing’ while simultaneously demonstrating enjoyment of socialising at rallies and POPs through organised games, dances, walks and other activities and while freedom camping through rituals such as Happy Hour where acquaintances and strangers congregate in the area outside the van of another movanner. Now I intend to focus on the journey itself, rather than the destination, and its day-to-day decisions and activities relating to the practice, meaning and construction of a social ‘place’ which I have called a ‘roadland’. This chapter will detail the practices of senior movanners as they cross paths with others, both sedentary and moving along a movanner ‘archipelago’, to demonstrate how a hidden but meaningful roadland is created.



FIGURE 8 AN NZMCA OWNED PROPERTY IN NORTHLAND.

As previously mentioned, high-seated movanners who are members of the NZMCA always wave at oncoming fellow members maintaining a pleasant feeling of belonging, reinforced by knowing other travellers on the road were not only excluded, but oblivious to the mobile connections being made above their heads. A yellow towel displayed on a van by the side of the road is a recognizable signal of a movanner in trouble; a fellow member of the association knows and acknowledges the distress flag by stopping and helping. The NZMCA has a programme if a problem occurs and you cannot drive, whereby a local member is contacted who then drives your van home for you. This takes the pressure off senior movanners if this part of their mobility fails because they have developed solutions for such contingent occurrences rooted in their trust of the NZMCA. Molz has acknowledged the “exclusive site of belonging” necessary to community formation where the exclusion of others strengthens the bond between those creating the community (Molz 2007:73). This constructed site however, is a mobile one, created and strengthened while on the move. Bissell has talked about goal-driven mobilities (at the 2nd Mobilities Symposium 2011) where others, not necessary to the individual’s goal are ignored; he gave the example of a person on

their way through an airport to reach a travel destination disregarding other travellers around them because they are unnecessary. Because an ultimate destination is often not the primary goal for senior movanners, other (im)mobile people are usually not ignored and so the journey is social. Time loses its power with the removal of a travel

‘goal’, creating even more opportunities to make connections and a social, meaningful ‘roadland’.



FIGURE 9 EASY TO MISS, BUT A SIGN MEANINGFUL TO A SENIOR MOVANNER. A POP ON STATE HIGHWAY 1.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF PETER’S JOURNEYS THROUGH GPS AND RETROSPECTIVE COLLABORATION

To interpret Cresswell’s premise of what a good mobility study needs to do, I have dismantled the following journeys for evidence which unlocks the powers of my informants’ mobility. As discussed in the review of mobility theory literature, the three key areas are studying the way we move from A to B, looking at the meaning we attach to these movements highlighted by narratives and discourses around the mobility, and the actual practices of mobility. The acquisition of network capital in the sense of Urry

(2010) is demonstrated both in the way senior movanners move and in their practices. The capital enables their successful mobility. As suggested by Greenblatt(2010a) and Cresswell (2011) to understand mobility I will firstly analyse the quantitative GPS data which recorded my key informant, Peter, moving from A to B. Peter carried a GPS device with him on three journeys over the last 18 months. Below is a map of one of his journeys with all days connected (by me in the software) in order to show the duration, distance travelled and the route, as one continuous trip around the North Island.

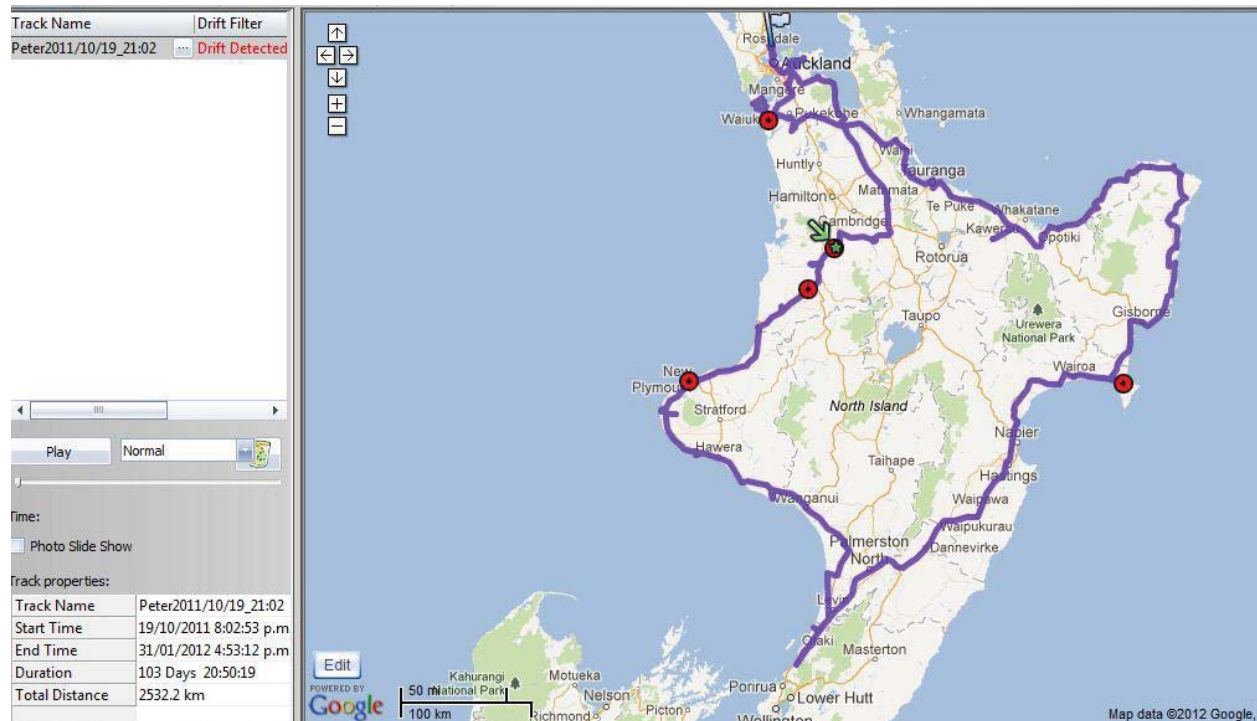


FIGURE 10 PETER'S TRIP SHOWN WITH ALL DAYS MERGED AS ONE TRIP

He was actually away from the 5th November 2011 until the 31st January 2012, a total of about 85 days and covered a distance of about 2532.2kms¹⁶. However the original unmerged data showed his track by day¹⁷ and told us more about the practices of his journey. On the days he actually travelled on the road which was about 27 he averaged 93.8 kilometres per day. He left from the Whangaparaoa Peninsula about 1pm and

¹⁶ The data on the 19th October seen in the image was 0, he turned the gps device on and off.

¹⁷ He usually turned the device on in the morning and off again at night once he had stopped.

travelled to Buckland’s Beach in East Auckland where he crossed the channel to Waiheke Island to visit his son and his family. He stayed on Waiheke Island until the 6th December at his son’s, although he did freedom camp at different parts of the island as I phoned him on the 2nd December and he was at Man-o-War Bay right at one end of the island having a few days there in his motorhome. He said he was parked right by the beach and no-one was around, he had the place almost to himself. He had turned the GPS unit off while on the island staying with his son, but would turn it on when he left next week to go travelling. He left Waiheke at about 4pm on the 6th and travelled to Orere Point not arriving until 7.24pm which is a late stopping time for senior movanners. The next day he left at 9.30am but only travelled for one hour down the road to a favourite stop of many senior movanners I have interviewed; Miranda, known to Movanners as ‘Ray’s Rest’, with its hot springs, birds, and freedom camping right on the estuary, marking it as a serendipitous combination of personal comfort, eco-interest and beautiful coastal environment for little monetary outlay.

The next day was a long journey (the details are on the slide below). He left at 8 am and stopped for the night at 4.27pm at Mokau on the Taranaki Bight, covering a

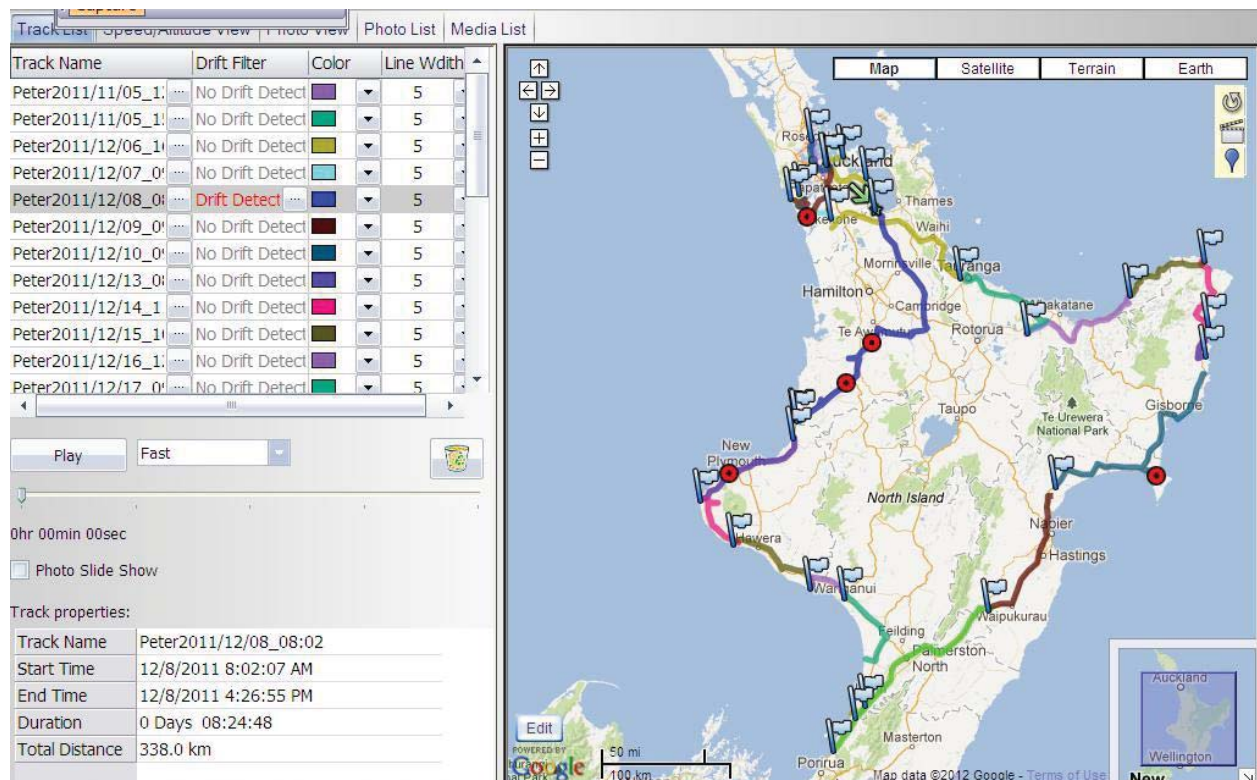


FIGURE 11 PETER'S TRIP SHOWING INDIVIDUAL DAYS.

distance of 338kms over nearly 8.5 hours with only 5 stops including three detours, one at Waitomo and one at Lake Arapuni and one down a side road with no name in the Taranaki area. He stayed at Mokau until the 13th when he travelled for 131kms down the coast stopping in Waitara, in New Plymouth and Oakura before stopping for the night at 3.20pm on Coast Rd which is as its name suggests, right on the coast, near Pungarehu. He left there at 11.15 the next morning, making two detours down no-exit roads before stopping for the night at 1.24pm where a river meets the sea on the South Taranaki Bight. There is no name for this place on the map.

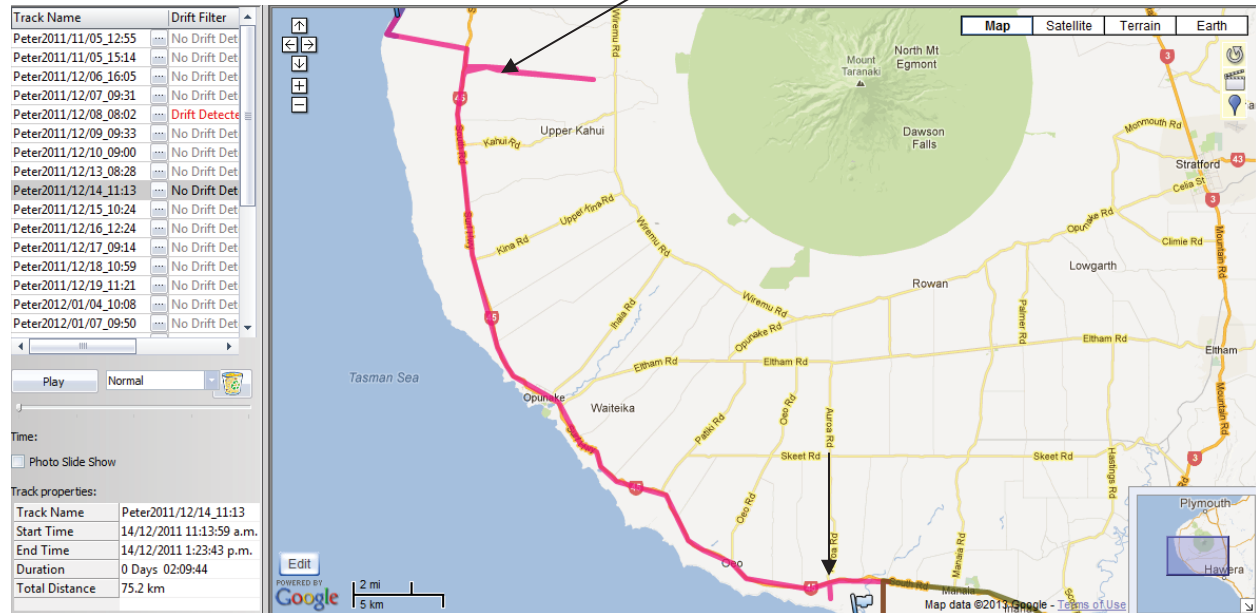


FIGURE 12 ZOOMED IN TO ONE DAY’S JOURNEY MARKED BY A FLAG AT THE START AND END AND ARROWS MARK THE SIDE ROAD DETOURS.

The next morning he left at 10.25am and stopped just after 12pm travelling 85.8 kms. He stopped twice on the way before arriving at the small settlement of Waimu Beach, again on the coast. The next day he only travelled 47kms but took 3.5 hours, stopping in Whanganui just before 4pm for the night. The next day he travelled for less than 1.75 hours, stopping at Himatangi Beach just before 11am. The following day he moved down the coast to Otaki Beach, stopping there at 11.40am for the night. He stayed around this area as far south as Paraparaumu before starting his return journey north on the 4th January 2012. He left just after 10am and travelled 198 kms for over 5

hours to Takapau, north of Norsewood, making 3 stops on the way, and stopping at 3.30pm.

After 3 days there he left at 9.50am and travelled 125 kms, making two stops on the way before reaching his destination at 12.40am at Tutira. He stayed there two days, leaving at 8.12am for a 253 km trip over nine and a half hours. He made a detour and visited Mahia Peninsula. He later said in an interview he went out there “but it wasn’t for him”. He made two further stops before travelling up the East Coast to Tolaga Bay, reaching there at 5.50pm. He stayed around Tolaga Bay and Anoura Bay for a couple of days before travelling 29 kms north to Tokomarau Bay. He stayed in the area for 3 days before heading up the coast for 85kms to just north of Hicks Bay, making a

detour near Ruatoria on the way. He stayed at Hicks Bay for 3 days before heading off again around the East Cape for 101 kms to Omaio Bay making two stops on the way and arriving at 2.08pm after travelling for three and a half hours. He left there the next day just before 11am, on the road for over six and a half hours and travelling 138 kms inland to Kawerau (which he found very accommodating he told me later) arriving at 5.39pm. Two days later he travelled to Tauranga but the following day left at 8.19 am and travelled 168kms for four hours to Onewhero, near Tuakau where he stopped at 12.30am. Many months later he told me that he found it easy to freedom camp in the East Cape area without any problems. He asked locals before stopping anywhere, but he always received permission even on Maori land. In contrast to this, the adjoining area, the Bay of Plenty, was difficult with many signs banning

freedom camping so he had quickly moved through to Onewhero. He stayed in the area for 3 days before travelling 61kms up the Awhitu Peninsula to Awhitu. He left there two days later and travelled 11kms across to the ocean side stopping on West Coast Rd for 3 days. He then moved across to the inner coast of the peninsula

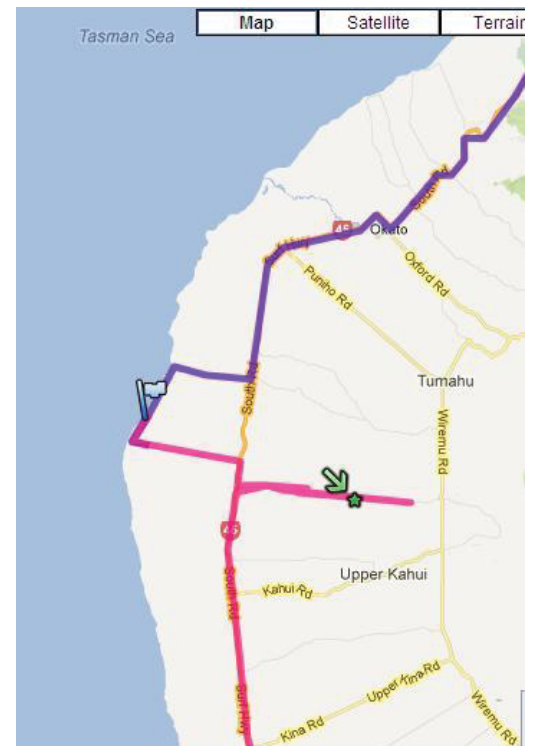


FIGURE 13 WHEN THE TRIP IS 'PLAYED' IT SHOWS THE FLAG GOING DOWN A SIDE ROAD.

overnighting just off Te Toro Rd at Pollock Wharf Rd before heading back into Auckland the next day, staying the night at Bucklands Beach then back to Murrays Bay on the North Shore on the 31st January to his ex-wife's house where I picked up the GPS.

This data may not be exciting in itself. However, it does reflect the day-to-day practices of movanners getting from A to B and reinforces certain statements made by movanners over the last few years. Many maintained they go “off the beaten track” and through the GPS track left by Peter I could see that indeed he did travel down many roads off the main route and then backtracked to continue on his journey. Nearly 80% of the time, he stopped for the night before 4pm reinforcing what I have been told by senior movanners and many of his trips were small, leaving plenty of time to explore the new place he had stopped at. The small trips are also sensible for a man aged 81 and are an example of an adaptation made to his former driving habits to lessen risks such as road accidents, getting lost or trying to settle in to an unfamiliar place in the dark. He often readily admitted to not wanting to travel for too long on any given day (as did Barb and many other informants), and here the GPS-as-tool, helped *not* to privilege mobility over inactivity as Bissell argues is often the case in mobile methodologies (2010:67) by effortlessly highlighting his stops and their duration as well as his journeying.

On the 18th April 2012 I met with Peter and he talked about his second journey, his trip north which he commenced on the 2nd of February, a couple of days after arriving back from his southern trip. He was interested to see the statistics of his own merged trips especially the total kilometres he travelled and the duration of the trips in total hours on the road¹⁸ but in our conversation he added a social layer to the physical data. As with Barb, Peter kept a daily diary so between the two of us we double checked each other's data and he could relate who he visited at stops along the track of his journey north, adding social meaning to the trace he left across the map.

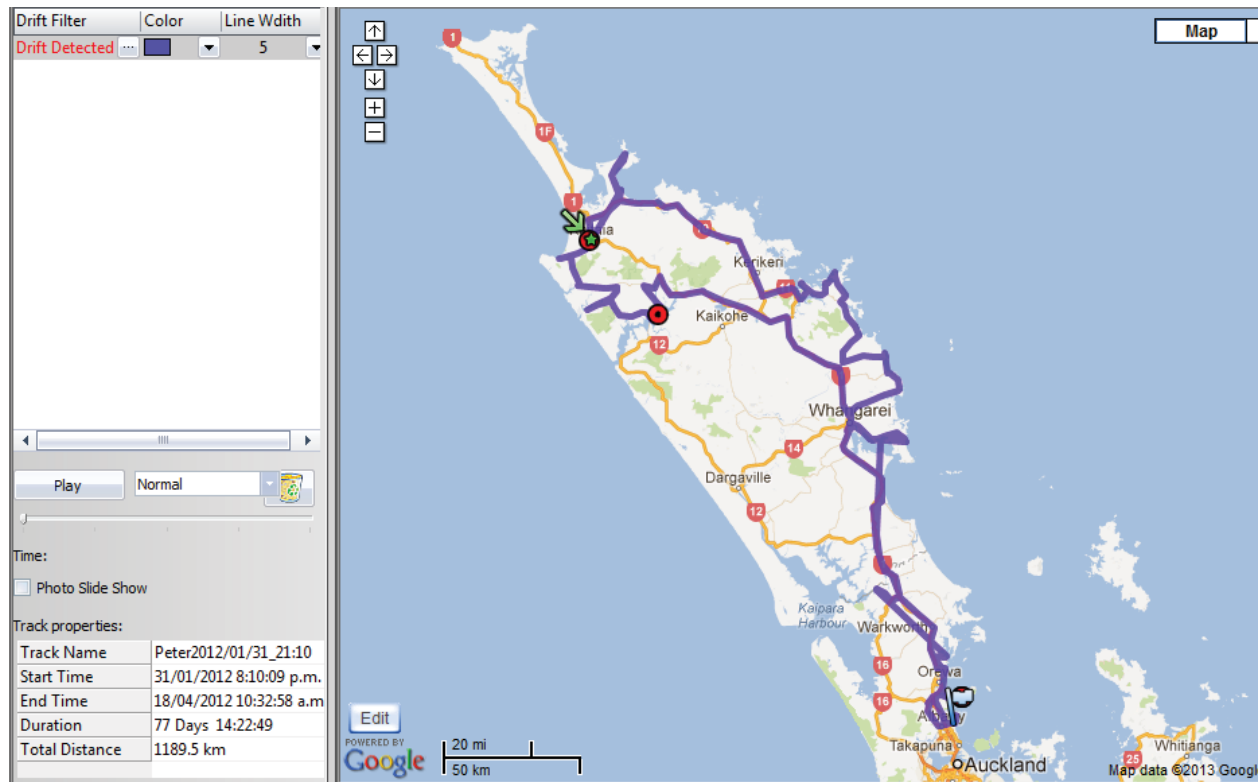


FIGURE 14 PETER'S NORTHERN TRIP MERGED

¹⁸ This is not 100% accurate as it depended if he turned the GPS unit off close to the time he stopped for the night.

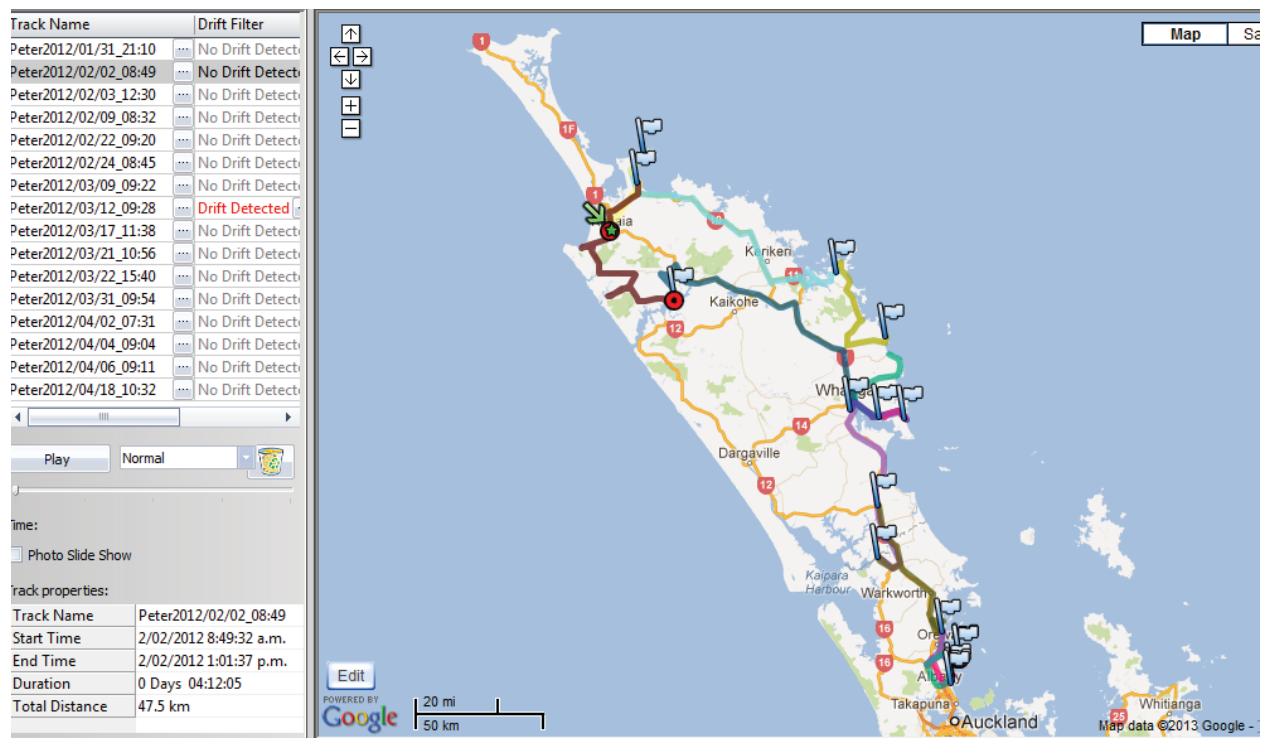


FIGURE 15 PETER'S NORTHERN SUMMER TRIP SHOWING DAYS

He left Long Bay Park on the 2nd February 2012 at 8.49am making a long stop at Dairy Flat where he visited a friend's widow, then continued to Gulf Harbour making a stop in Silverdale and Manly on the way before arriving at 1pm. The next day he left at 12.30am and travelled for less than an hour to Mahurangi where he stayed 3 days with a friend. He moved from here across to Port Albert arriving on the 7th and leaving on the 9th. He had not remembered to turn the GPS on during his trip from Mahurangi to Port Albert but had the dates written in his diary. On the 9th he left at 8.30am heading for Ocean Beach, stopping in Waipu and Whangarei and at the Parua Bay pub as he knew his friend was always there¹⁹. At this point we both had a laugh because I could see just how long he had stayed at the pub from the GPS data. This inaction in terms of his mobility was not passive however, but constituted socialising, eating and drinking. More importantly, the space/time of inaction was not missed by this researcher

¹⁹ In September I drove to this pub and indeed his friend, whom I recognised by Peter's description, was having a pint in the corner of the public bar just as Peter had maintained so I introduced myself to him and told him what I was doing.

because of the GPS data and what could be perceived as a ‘gap’ was then given meaning by Peter’s narrative of what had occurred in the pub and whom he had been with. He arrived at Ocean Beach just before 4pm after travelling 128kms. He stayed at Ocean Beach for 12 days until the 21st of February.

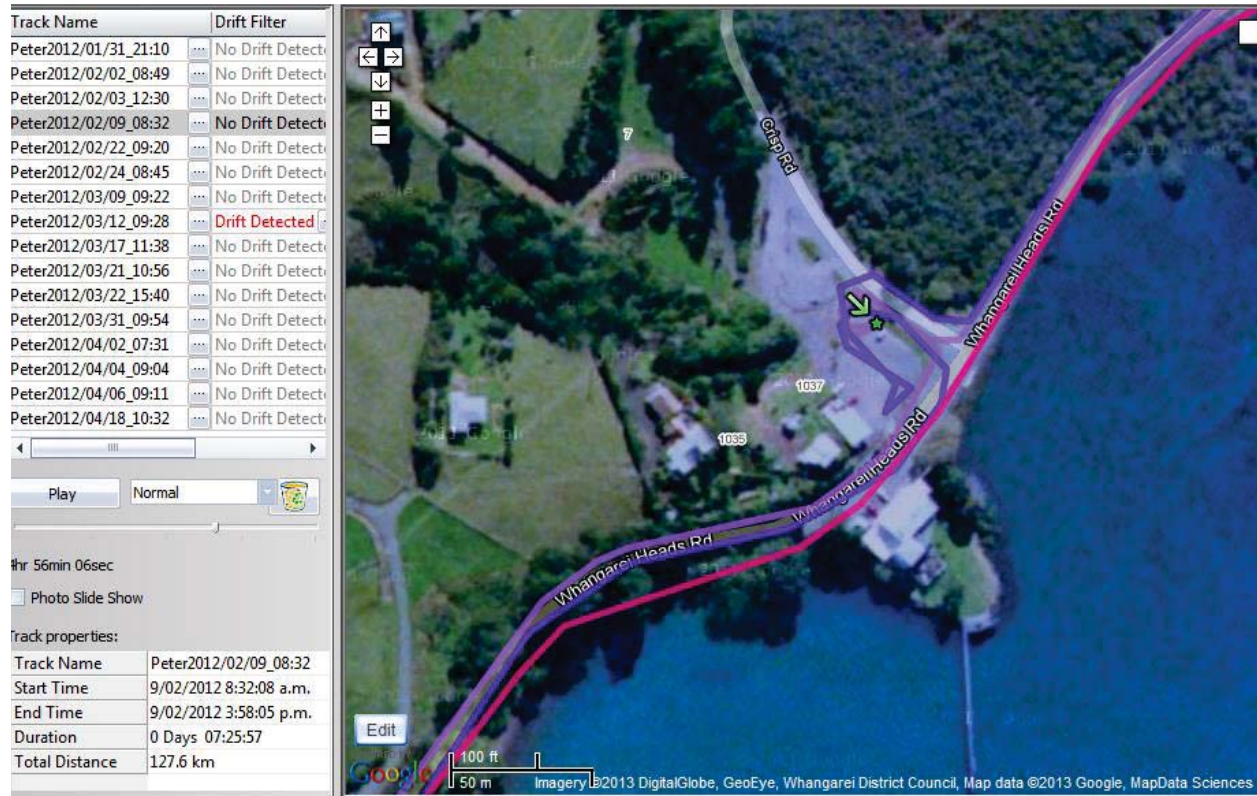


FIGURE 16 THE GREEN ARROW SHOWING PETER PARKED NEAR THE PARUA BAY TAVERN ON THE 9TH FEBRUARY 2012.

Ocean Beach is a regular stop of Peter’s where he stays for days at a time for free and had often told me stories about the ‘place’ and the eccentric owner, Zac. The property is well set up for mobile people with a shed, cooker, fridge, freezer, power points, water and even a library of books. His mobile visitors stay there at the owner’s pleasure.

Continuing with his journey north, he spent the night of the 21st February



FIGURE 17 ZAC OUTSIDE THE SHED AT PARUA BAY

in the Parua Bay Tavern car park, leaving there at 9.20am, stopping in Whangarei for supplies and arriving at Whananaki North Doc camp via the coast road through Tutakaka where the GPS went off at 12.38am but he would have arrived at Whananaki in the early afternoon. He stayed at the DOC camp for 2 nights then left at 8.45am and went north to Rawhiti via the coast road, going to the end of a dead end road before backtracking and staying nearer Rawhiti arriving at 4.55pm. He stayed there until the 9th March leaving that morning at 9.22am, visiting Russell then Pahia, where he got supplies and stopping at Mangonui for fish and chips at the famous shop before arriving at the Kari Kari peninsula at 2.24pm. A journey of nearly 157kms. On the 12th March he left at 9.29am and went to Kaitaia, where he had a tooth fixed, but on the way he firstly diverted to Ramp Rd (I had told him about Ramp Rd) to check it out, before returning to the main road and his journey on to Kaitaia from which he retraced his route and stayed the night at Ramp Rd, arriving at 2.38pm.



FIGURE 18 GREEN ARROW SHOWS PETER HAVING A LOOK AT RAMP RD ON HIS WAY TO KAITAIA. THE LAKE WHERE BARB SWIMS IS SHOWN IN BEHIND THE BEACH.

He liked Ramp Rd he told me and freedom camped there for 5 days leaving on the 17th March at 11.39am. He detoured on the way at Ahipara and then I saw from the track that he had also detoured to Whangape; he told me he looked at the harbour out of

curiosity, before retracing both trips and finishing at KohuKohu at 7.04pm at the property of a friend's mother. He was stuck there for 3 days he said because of very bad weather before leaving on the 21st at 10.56am where he stopped at Kawakawa especially to look at the Hundertwasser toilets before heading to Whangarei when his starter motor blew up and he had to spend the night in the yard of the auto electrician.

This is not an uncommon story. Many senior movanners told me they have been forced to overnight in the yards of the various repair people who are working on their vans in a reciprocal arrangement of mutual benefit; the tradespeople receive their commerce and they have a safe place to spend the night in a van that is often



FIGURE 19 THE POP WHERE PETER STAYED.

immobile anyway from the work being undertaken, or through waiting for spare parts to arrive from a major city. Other opportunity structures seized on by senior movanners for practical benefits included staying in car parks of businesses they shopped at, asking to fill their water tanks

when buying diesel at petrol stations, buying a morning tea in a coffee shop in

order to use the free wifi to send emails, playing a round of golf then staying the night in the club parking area and of course using public toilets. At such roadland sites information is disseminated, usually *from* movanners *to* young tourists who often have the same motivations to be at that location and sometimes share the same leisure activities like walking, cycling and site-seeing, but lack the knowledge that movanners have acquired through fellow movanners and the NZMCA.

The next day he also repaired his leaky back window and then set out for Ocean Beach again, stopping at the Parua Bay Tavern on the way. He arrived at Ocean Beach at 4.47pm on the 22nd of March. He left there on the 31st March but only travelled 13kms down the road to the Parua Bay Tavern, where he had dinner that night and stayed the

night at the yacht club there by the sea which is a POP.



FIGURE 20 TOWN BASIN IN WHANGAREI, A POPULAR STOPPING PLACE FOR SENIOR MOVANNERS.

He did not turn the GPS on the next day but was able to tell me from his diary that he moved to Town Basin for the next night and the following day travelled to Port Albert again and stayed there the night of the 2nd April. The next day he headed for Wenderholm arriving at 11.38am and stayed the night of the 3rd there for \$7.00 before leaving just after 10am on the 4th and visiting his friend's widow at Dairy Flat again. Then he visited his mate at Manly again, (he "always visits him and we have a long yarn") before finishing at Gulf Harbour again at 3.42pm. He stayed there two nights then went back to Dairy Flat to see the man who looks after his motorhome in the mechanical sense, then on to Long Bay at 5.44pm where he spent the night on the 6th before heading 5 kms down to Waiake Beach to his house-sit.

Peter does not record as many social meetings as Barb does. He doesn't make a note of people he meets on the road, just the dates and the geographical locations he stays in. He maintained to me in August 2012 when we discussed freedom camping in the South Island that women are more sociable, so if a couple is travelling there are more opportunities created to socialise because of the presence of the woman in the van. He observed that it is usually the woman who started to talk to strangers when they

stop, rather than the male. He mostly keeps to himself he said and sometimes feels like an outsider because he is on his own. He feels that the couples are friendly but are often travelling with other couples, they know each other and they stick together. He said if he had someone travelling with him he thinks it would make him more approachable. In contrast, Barb initiates connections wherever she stops.

Peter was away from the 2nd February 2012 when he left Long Bay Park until the 7th April when he returned to his house-sit at Waiake Beach. This was a total of 64 days during which he covered more than 1189.5kms and drove for at least 14 hours and 22 minutes, although it was more than this as he occasionally left the GPS off. On his northern trip Peter stopped 71.4% of the time before 4pm and using the days he actually travelled on the road, which is 17, meant he averaged 70 kilometres per day, not long trips. He was stopped for 47 days; the stays of the longest duration were at Ocean Beach, Rawhiti and Port Albert. Most interestingly, the beginning of his journey mirrored the end of his journey as he repeated his track but in the opposite direction: He stayed at Long Bay Park and Gulf Harbour on the way up and back, visiting the same two friends both times, the detour to Port Albert both times, Whangarei, Parua Bay and Ocean Beach on the way up and back. Interestingly, empirical evidence of this mirroring reoccurred when I analysed Barb's journeys.

We have seen that network capital as defined by Urry means sustaining social relationships with people who are not near, combined with the technological capacity to realise this practice which results in practical benefits (Urry 2012:27, Elliott and Urry 2010:59). This network of friends and places where Peter can stay, this knowledge, is his network capital, built up over many years travelling in his motor home and it enables him to successfully travel without too much cost or stress. Network capital acquired by both my key informants provided important practical solutions, ranging from van repairs and free water to knowing a safe, free overnight parking place. It is worth noting that Peter left Ocean Beach on the Whangarei Heads on the 31st March and didn't arrive in Torbay until the 7th of April, a journey of over 7 days in duration. I would cover it in 3 hours. How Peter moved from A to B is representational of what

many senior movanners told me and my own observations. It is significant because they move slowly, stopping often, stopping early, visiting family and friends and people who are important for their mobility. Building and maintaining network capital takes time and utilises technologies. Sometimes technologies on the van fail, which disrupts the journey but network capital means most of my informants already knew someone who could fix the problems. Barb has a network of repair people and many informants related that when technological problems struck, the experiences of fellow movanners diffused through stories and letters in the NZMCA magazine, were helpful in getting the right repair people in a strange town.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF BARB'S JOURNEYS THROUGH PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION: KNOWING THE ARCHIPELAGO

To continue with this theme of repeating tracks and network capital I will now deconstruct a journey with my other key informant, Barb, but this time I was in the van travelling with her. Being on the journey with her made me realize how familiar she was with the landscape she travelled through, not only its geographical characteristics but more importantly its social characteristics and that such knowledge can only be gained through taking time and repeated traversing of the same route. By travelling a route over and over she acquired and extended her network capital. I accompanied her, living in the intimate space of her van as she travelled north on her familiar route, witnessing the proof of practical benefits resulting in a successful mobile ageing life, as she both called on and extended, her network capital.

FAR NORTH: ISLES OF SUN AND SEA

Saturday 10th September, 9.30am to Monday 12th September 5.30pm 2011

Barbara and I had arranged via texts that she would pick me up at 10am at my home in Browns Bay. She had already done a shop and had been at the 'Bin Inn' in Browns Bay that morning buying low priced ingredients from which she makes her fresh muesli

and cleaning soda²⁰. Barb was on her way to North Pataua where her son and his wife lived with their little boy. She was really looking forward to seeing her grandson and in fact he had already rung Barb on her mobile phone that morning, wanting to know when she was coming. She was so happy to know she would soon be with him and showed me his photo displayed in her van. However, we had only travelled for about 20 minutes when we made our first stop on the Whangaparaoa Peninsula, to visit a lady Barb will be house-sitting for from mid-October to mid-November while she and her husband are travelling through India. The owner, who is also in her 70's, made us a cup of coffee and served muffins and a lemon slice with it, while she discussed details with Barb. Much of the discussion was about technologies, specifically the comprehensive burglar alarm system in the house, including perimeter alarms all along the ranch sliders that opened onto an expansive deck looking out to sea. Barb is planning to sleep in her van, not in the house and will probably choose to cook her meals in her van, not the kitchen. The van will be parked on a forecourt inside a thick wall with electronic gates making it safe from the main road. The owner is extremely security conscious because her home has been burgled twice in her absence and she lives on her own for months at a time as her husband works on a supply ship off the coast of Western Australia. They travel to Asia often, so the security of having someone living in the house enables her own mobility, but highlighted the responsibilities of home ownership which must be managed.

We left there at 11.20am and headed through Orewa to Mahurangi Regional Park where we were going to stay the night. We arrived at 12.05pm. It is a beautiful spot and there were quite a few motor homes and picnickers already parked there. She immediately went to two other motor homes²¹, one to see if it was her friend's van and another who we parked next to, to see where they were from and if they were staying the night. The booking phone was not working but a note pinned to it said if you were an Auckland Council card holder, just to park up. Barb is. Later that day, in a common area around the parked vans there was a discussion about the current state of the

²⁰ She adds this to the grey water tank to dissolve any fat which may go down the sink.

²¹ Their doors were open indicating they were happy to be disturbed

Auckland Council parks, and the new cards and new system implemented by the new Auckland Council. Even some of the other New Zealand movanners were unaware of the new connection between the right to a card and the Self-containment status of one's van. This has only recently become a regulation and I could see how confused many movanners were by the new situation. Barb however, had already applied for and picked up her new card, so valuable to a full-timer and was able to inform the other movanners how it worked. This was a physical zone of contact where valuable knowledge was exchanged between the senior movanners on the control structures that seek to legislate on how long they can stop for and how much it will cost them. In this case that structure was the Auckland Council but it could be DOC or another regional or city council. It also highlighted the *access* to the mobility systems and infrastructure of cheap Auckland Council and DOC parks, being dependent on the ability to own a certified self-contained van. Even a self-contained house truck would be excluded if it were not certified.

We had a late lunch and then a walk up the hill behind the camp to find cell phone coverage so I could text or ring my family. Barb had done this before; she knew there was cell phone coverage at the top of this hill and I successfully contacted my husband. After returning to the van, Barb prepared the dinner she had planned, mince and vegetables and lots of fresh garlic and a tomato Bolognese sauce. She left it simmering and then we went for another walk in the opposite direction. So far, I had done more walking than I usually do at home. On this walk we met another movanning couple from West Auckland who were staying the night at Sullivans Bay. He was a train driver and told us what had happened the previous night at the RWC²² opening game when the trains failed.

We returned to the van just in time to see another single lady in a motorhome pull in to Sullivans Bay. It was just on dusk by this time and all the day picnickers had departed. Barb went to the newcomer's van door, initiated a conversation and invited her over to

²² Rugby World Cup

our van for a drink after she had settled in. We met some tourists outside; a Canadian couple in a Kea rental van and answered questions from them about good places to see and where to stop up north. Barb rang 'River'²³ on her mobile to let him know we were coming tomorrow. She has a phone list of the Freewheelers. River said "no problem", and filled her in on where some of her other Freewheeler friends were. She stays in touch by text with other Freewheelers so she knows roughly where they are, and they know where she is, and to find out where they are going and where they will be, so they can meet up if they wish. Then the single lady movanner came over for a glass of wine so we will change course briefly and voyage with Flow.

FLOW'S STORY

Flow is in a small van for two people, but does not yet have her 'wings' displayed as she had just joined the NZMCA that very day. She is not a full-timer but is heading for Cape Reinga for three weeks holiday. Flow usually doesn't do Happy Hour if she is on her own, but was happy to join us for a social chat. As discussed, 'Happy Hour' is a tradition among movanners in New Zealand involving coming together around 4pm to share a drink, to talk and to meet strangers who are parked at the same spot.

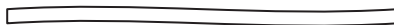


FIGURE 21 HAPPY HOUR

²³ A fellow FreeWheeler with a property at Waipu who I will call River.

Flow has never been married; she works as a nurse in a hospital and wants to get away from people for the first few days of her holiday as she is feeling a bit stressed. This is her second motor home and it measures 6 metres end-to-end. Her first motorhome rusted and failed its Warrant of Fitness so she went upmarket to a campervan with a cooker, fridge, toilet and a self-containment certificate but she fears it will not pass NZMCA self-containment certification and she is nervous about starting the certification process. Barb explained about the NZMCA self-containment certification process and suggested she go to a certain individual because he is “not a nit-picker”. The two female movanners had a conversation about internet plans although currently, Flow does not connect her laptop while in her van. Both women have done computer courses but Flow said “computers move on and you get behind again” and she feels she has a gap in her knowledge about “technical stuff”. However, Barb said she would not describe herself as having much to do with technology at home but being on her own (and I would add being mobile) “you have to do it yourself” and she figured out how to use her flash drive by trial and error.

However, Flow sometimes thinks a GPS device would be useful but then thinks, “No, I should be interacting with other people and having all the technology means I wouldn’t have to”. Barb said “You need people”. Barb did not let the opportunity go by to tell Flow about the Freewheelers (which she had heard of), and even offered that Flow follow us to Waipu the next day because she knew ‘the non-nit-picking’ Self-containment Officer previously mentioned was there. However, Flow missed this opportunity offered by Barb to make both important social connections with useful people, such as the Self-Containment Officer, and connect with useful physical places, such as the Freewheeler hub, during this journey as she did not follow us the next morning.



After Flow had gone back to her van, Barb was reheating our dinner when the gas bottle ran out. Barb was prepared for this as she makes a note of when she changes it

and she knew it was close to empty. She raced outside, me behind her holding the torch, unlocked the compartment and unscrewed the old one, turned it off, connected the new one, turned it on, which turned out to be a struggle as it was tight. Barb commented: “A man must have tightened this”, but she did it eventually and lifted it up into the compartment, secured it in with a leather strap, locked the door, then lifted the old one into a space at the back of a van compartment. The new full one was heavy (9kgs), but she wouldn’t let me help and said doing everything herself keeps her muscles strong. The physicality of the journey on the body as she went about her chores was evident. When movanners travel as a couple, many of my informants told me, the male tends to do the outside chores while the woman attends to the inside of the van, but a single Freewheeler has to attend to everything. She finished heating up the dinner and after we had eaten, we played a card game.

The next morning my phone battery was flat so I plugged it into the inverter which converts from the battery to allow plug-in devices and charged it up. Barb turned a switch so the gas would heat some water. We stopped along Highway 1 to buy free range eggs. Barb had been there before so she knew she could turn the van around at the end of a long, narrow driveway and she knew the woman owner well so had a catch up with her for a few minutes before turning the van and we left. We stopped at a café on the roadside where Barb immediately offered to take a photo of a group of French tourists (here for the RWC) on their camera. We visited the local Craft Market in Waipu where we purchased local fresh bread, cheese and ham before heading to the Freewheelers’ hub, indicated by a roadside sign for campervans with the symbolic wings of the NZMCA, and the shortened ‘POP’ (Park Over Property) which would mean little to other road users.



FIGURE 22 ROADSIDE SIGN AT THE FREEWHEELER'S HUB AT WAIPU

River cooked us some sausages for lunch and made us a cup of tea and we contributed our bread, ham and cheese. Usefully, he fixed Barb's radio at the kitchen table while they caught up about where the other Freewheelers were at that moment. After lunch Barb showed me the rest of the property with some pride. There is a big kitchen and club rooms with a dance area, outside shower, parks for vans on a flat rock base and a gym. I fed the chooks on the property and Barb emptied her grey water in the Dump Station River has installed and we used his outside toilet, also especially installed for movanners.



FIGURE 23 MOVANNERS PARKED AT RIVER LODGE

Next stop was a few minutes down the road at Waipu Cove Motor Camp because Barb knew that three other Freewheeler friends were staying there waiting to head off on a fishing safari. One of these was a lady on her own I will call 'Del' and we had time to "anchor" and listen to her story.

DEL'S STORY – WAIPU MOTOR CAMP 3PM SUNDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER

Del owns a small van just right for one person. She is a full-timer and has been for six years. She and her husband sold their house to buy a business, however her husband became terminally ill and she had to sell the business at a loss. She nursed him, and

as he lay dying they had “an honest conversation” about the fact that she had to make a plan for “afterwards”. They already owned a little motor home and while she was nursing him she used to pat it and say, “Lucky I’ve got you”. One day her husband asked her to bring him a map of New Zealand. A week later he showed it to her, all marked with places where they knew people; friends and family where “she would never be far from a hug”. He was planning for her future by starting to build her network capital before she was even on the road. After he died, having already sold a lot of their “stuff” as she had been doing it for a while, she went on the road in the van. She went to the South Island for six months on her own and has been mobile ever since. Her grandchildren call her ‘Nana Wheels’. This was an example of a senior mover being forced to be mobile, although she still exercised a degree of agency by making her own choices and taking control of her situation. She and Barb had a discussion about security as single female full-timers on the road, especially parking at night. Del only freedom camps when other vans are present, whereas Barb feels comfortable freedom camping without other vans as long as there is cell phone coverage so she would be able to dial 111. Del has a room in the home of another Freewheeler at Kaiawa as a base and she does house-sitting jobs regularly like Barb. She and two friends were on a Fishing Safari with 36 vans in total.

Back on course, our next stop was only 20 minutes up the road, at Uretiti DOC Camp to visit a couple who are looking after the camp for DOC in the off-season. We were invited into their 5th Wheeler which has a permanent grey-water connection so they do not have to constantly empty their tank. The 5th Wheeler had pop-outs and was warm and roomy with a large flatscreen TV on which they were watching a RWC game. They had been asked to stay on to relieve the new Park Manager for a couple of days every few weeks. The couple negotiated a deal whereby they stay for free. DOC will install a permanent power connection and pay their power, install Wireless internet and provide fresh water and a private portaloos across the driveway from where they are situated. Greenblatt has called for attention to be paid to the structures of control accommodating individual agency to help explain the power behind mobilities (2010b:250–252). This is such an illustration, where the expectations of their temporary immobility were negotiated so as to benefit both DOC, who really held the power, and these particular senior movers in the context of the physical

environment of the park. We were offered hospitality in the way of refreshments and had a cup of coffee with them. Much of the discussion was about a motor home they had for sale, prices they were fetching and also family.

TOWN BASIN ISLAND

After we left there Barb filled her van with diesel and we used the toilets at the Gull petrol station, as you do whenever the chance arises on the road (the café, River's place, the Gull station and at Town Basin public facilities) and finally arrived at Town Basin in Whangarei at 5.45pm where we stayed for the night. This was later in the day than Barb would usually stop. The first thing Barb did was to go straight to a large house truck to say "hello" to the busker who lived in it. We named him 'Jimmy Longfinish'. They hugged and had a catch-up as Barb knew him from previously staying at that particular location as he often stays there for days on end. Over time, he has built a good relationship with Whangarei City Council personnel who check the site, and he can often circumvent the rules about restrictions on the number of consecutive nights one can stay at Town Basin through cultivating connections with individuals of this local structure of control, although at times he is moved on. When this happens, he moves on gracefully, unwilling to damage the network capital he has acquired and continues to build, because after a couple of nights elsewhere, he returns to Town Basin. Although Jimmy Longfinish, is not a mover (he is a house trucker) his presence made Barb feel safer because he is known to her from previous encounters at that site, and trusted as a fellow traveller. The physical site is transformed from simply a car park to a social roadlands 'place' enabling the practices of social pleasantries, the renewing of important connections and reducing the risk to a woman travelling on her own.

Jimmy Longfinish came over just as we were finishing up our omelette dinner. He brought his glass of wine with him. He then invited us over to his house truck which we were both keen to see as it is so different from a motor home. It was tidy and clean inside and rather beautiful, with a high curved ceiling, a large zebra skin complete with horns pinned on the wall (he later told an entertaining tale about its acquisition), dim

lighting and a little marine pot belly adding to the cosy atmosphere. We brought a bottle of wine over to share with him. He is very anti the NZMCA for reasons that were unclear but involved the non-self-containment of his house truck and Barb said he had talked about this on a previous occasion too. We ended up having a sing-song as he played his guitar and we left at about 9.30pm after inviting him over to our van in the morning for breakfast of bacon and eggs as we suspected he wasn't eating that well. We had interacted with a variety of other travellers on the road that day, tourists and house truckers, although the other movanners at Town Basin that evening had not come out of their vans.



FIGURE 24 EMPTYING THE GREY WATER AT A DUMP STATION

Although I knocked on his door and called out to him the next morning, Jimmy Longfinish didn't come for breakfast. We did our ablutions in the public toilets at Town Basin then wandered around the marina, speaking to visiting 'yachties' and inspecting the facilities there. Our mobile day started with a trip to VTNZ so Barb

could get a warrant and then a registration for her van. We emptied our grey and black water at the Dump Station; these are social roadland sites of 'meetingness' between senior movanners as they are the only places to legally empty waste water. We waited behind the van of another movanning couple; the man emptied his grey and black water while the woman sat in the van and never came out. Many informants had told me emptying the cassettes was a man's chore. Then a single man in a motorhome pulled in behind us while we were emptying and told Barb "you can turn around up there".

ISLE OF GENDER

I felt a surge of indignation at this: although he thought he was being helpful, it was still a little patronising; he assumed that she would not know that already. Barb knows Whangarei well and knows what she is doing. She talks to everybody but men try to tell her what to do all the time. She told me she replies, "I'm all right; leave me alone, I'm ok". The women travelling on their own, whether full time or part time, are engaging in a life not only unusual in terms of the general population, but certainly in terms of the lives of most elderly New Zealand women. They are actively reconstructing their identities which differentiate them from more traditional older women, historically sedentary and often confined to the domestic sphere. The women I interviewed did less housework in their vans than at their houses; for example many told me they place their dirty clothes in a covered bucket before heading off for the



day's travel and it swishes around and washes through the motion of the van on the road. They rinse it and hang it up to dry when they arrive at their next stop.

The kind of cognitive thinking involved in the practice of a mobile life for an older person is beneficial to them to successfully age as argued by Rowe and Kahn (1998). Senior movanners do volunteer work at the parks where they stay, especially beach cleaning and maintenance work such as fence repairs and light construction work

§FIGURE 25 A FREEWHEELER WRINGS OUT HER CLOTHES

undertaken usually by the men. My male key informant told me many times how much he enjoys cooking for himself, he regularly tries new recipes which he downloads from the internet onto his computer and other female informants have said their husbands help more with cooking and washing up while mobile than when sedentary.

Barb and other single female movanners appropriated men's roles every day by driving their vans and dealing with the mechanical, technical and compliance aspects of them. The Freewheeler women break traditional links between gender and identity in the act of being mobile while on their own. Massey has criticised postmodern theorists for ignoring gender as an element of inequality "Differential mobility can weaken the leverage of the already weak" (Kaplan 1996:153) and Clifford discussed the lack of female mobility histories evident in ethnographic research because focusing on mobility resulted in privileging male travel. (Clifford 1997:5,6). I intended my focus on a single female key informant would create more balance to this thesis. My male key informant had observed the ability of women to generate conversation with others which created social 'places' on the road in marked contrast to what happened when women were absent. The number of single women movanners, many of whom were full-timers, indicated that gender is less a restricting category for older movanners than other factors such as ill health. Barb manages equally well as any man and she creates more social 'places' where she stops than the men do, adding to her network capital and her safety. Movanning may be an ideal mobility to attenuate gender bias as the developing technology makes the vans more user friendly to women and facilitates the hard, heavy work so less physical strength is needed for mobility.

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After leaving the Dump Station we filled the gas bottle at the depot where Barb has a frequent user card and then visited the bank, her daughter-in-law's workplace and then took our coffee to a park and walked down to the river, hugging a tree on the way. I had never visited this park before although I pass through Whangarei frequently. Next we parked the van on the roadside and within seconds had

exchanged mobility for the intimate interior of a public kindergarten. Finally she saw her grandson. He was having mat-time but the teacher let him go to her and she hugged him hard and lifted him off the ground. She had visited many times and some of the children knew her well. One boy climbed on her knee while the story was being read and a little girl climbed on my knee too. It was a site of pleasure and intergenerational meeting; an Island of Children in the Movanner Archipelago, where trust built from previous visits enabled the interaction at what is usually an impenetrable institution for non-parents or guardians. When we left, the children waved and shouted, "Bye Bye, Nana Camper" as we walked through the gate out to the road to resume our journey.

DESTINATION ISLAND

We next entered suburban streets to visit two friends who lived close by. The man was away but 'Lady Di' was at home. She is a movanner recovering from cancer who sold her van but now wants to buy another one to go on the road again, as she is feeling better. They hugged and discussed what they had been doing and who was where. Lady Di gave us some parsley and spinach leaves fresh from her garden which Barb accepted with pleasure. Many movanners spoke of "foraging for food", hunting, fishing, gathering shellfish, picking fruit, taking pride in preparing food that was in season and locally grown in the landscape they travelled through and which was described to me as 'fresh'. Finally, we headed to North Pataua which was about 28 kilometres from Whangarei along a windy, gravel road which Barb knows well. She showed me around the settlement; where she swims, where she parks up and around the houses where she knows many of the inhabitants. The cell phone coverage was intermittent but I managed to send a text to my husband who was picking me up. At her son's property (which is up a long, steep drive) there is a level parking area away from the house, about half way up the drive which is her base when she is there. Before ascending the drive Barb produced coloured balloons and string from the recesses of her van and we tied them to the letterbox as a sign on the road's margin so my husband would know where to turn off. She levelled the van on the blocks she has for the purpose and then we had lunch in the van and my husband, having recognised the meaning of the balloons as our signal, arrived just in time to share it with us. Her

son then came home and we were all introduced to each other. I had met her whole family that day; daughter-in-law, grandson and son but all at different physical sites on the Movanner Archipelago. The track of this archipelago may be imposed by the road itself, but the meetings and connections that were instigated by this movanner, in their turn, made that roadland social. The journey had transformed a road to a social roadlands through not only connections with many diverse people on the road, but also natural features in the landscape like trees that were hugged, institutions like kindergartens that were penetrated and even knowledge of the unseen transmission 'hot spots' between cell phone towers. It had taken us three days to arrive.

In stark contrast to my journey 'up' Mark and I left at 3.30pm and drove straight through. We were home in Browns Bay at exactly 5.30pm. We didn't stop and we didn't speak to another soul.

4.4 ANALYSIS OF BARB'S JOURNEY THROUGH GPS AND RETROSPECTIVE COLLABORATION

After her house sitting, Barb headed north again but this time I was not with her.

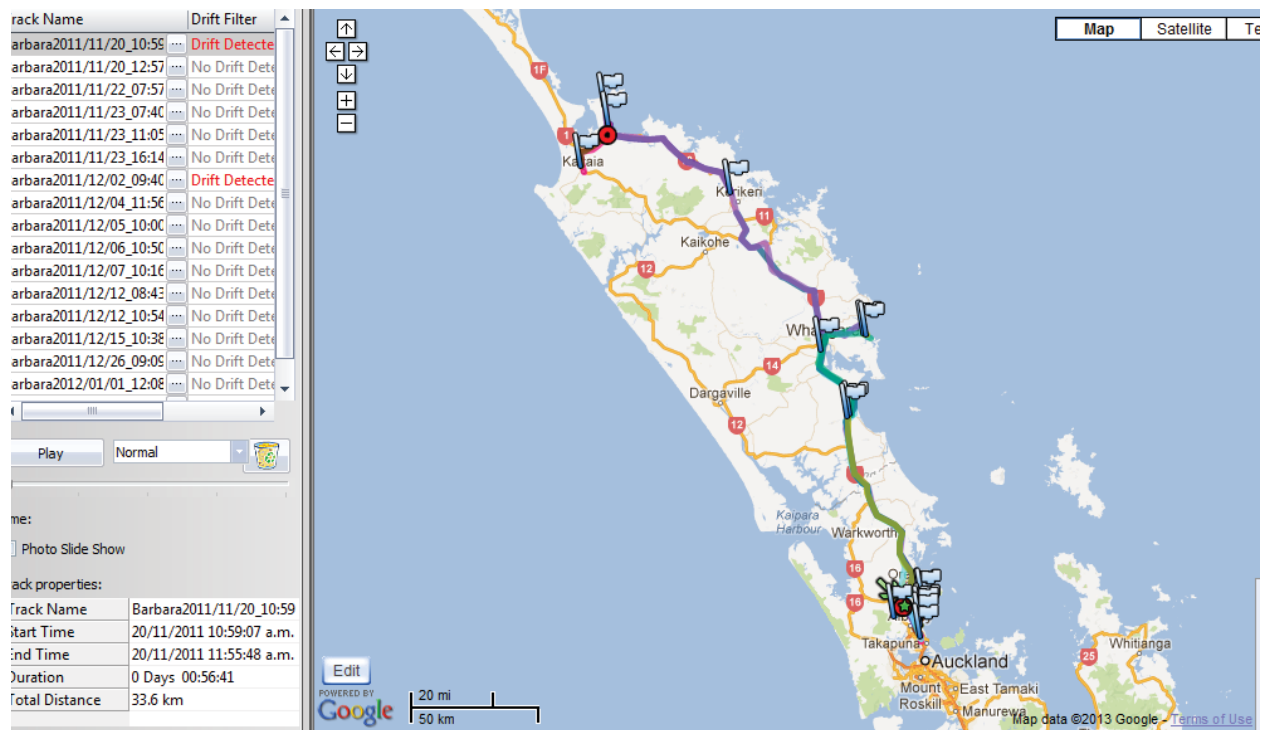


FIGURE 26 BARB'S NORTHERN TRIP

However, the GPS was activated and in January of 2012 Barb and I met and downloaded the data from her trip and she checked the device in her own way through her detailed diary. I read the data from the map, and she confirmed from what she had written. This was a good way to retrospectively relive the trip as she could fill in the quantitative data with what had occurred at the stops, who she had seen and why she had stopped. I relate some of the details below as it demonstrated her repetitive track and the maintaining of network capital. ‘Places’ and humans on the road reappear and sometimes intersect with those of my other single key informant. As before, she had called in to the Freewheelers unofficial base at River Lodge in Waipu and then had coffee at Uretiti with her friend and inspected her new van. She then did her shopping in Whangarei and went to Town Basin to visit Jimmy Longfinish in his house truck. She left about 1pm and headed for North Pataua where she passed her daughter-in-law on the road and had a swim before going up to her park at her son’s. After a few days she returned to Long Bay Beach where she often stays at the Auckland Council Park then stayed at the property of a friend’s son in Coatesville (the friend stayed in her van, Barb

in her van). Barb then drove to Kerikeri and stayed with friends there, before moving on the 7th of December to Ramp Rd, a favourite free camping site for movanners.

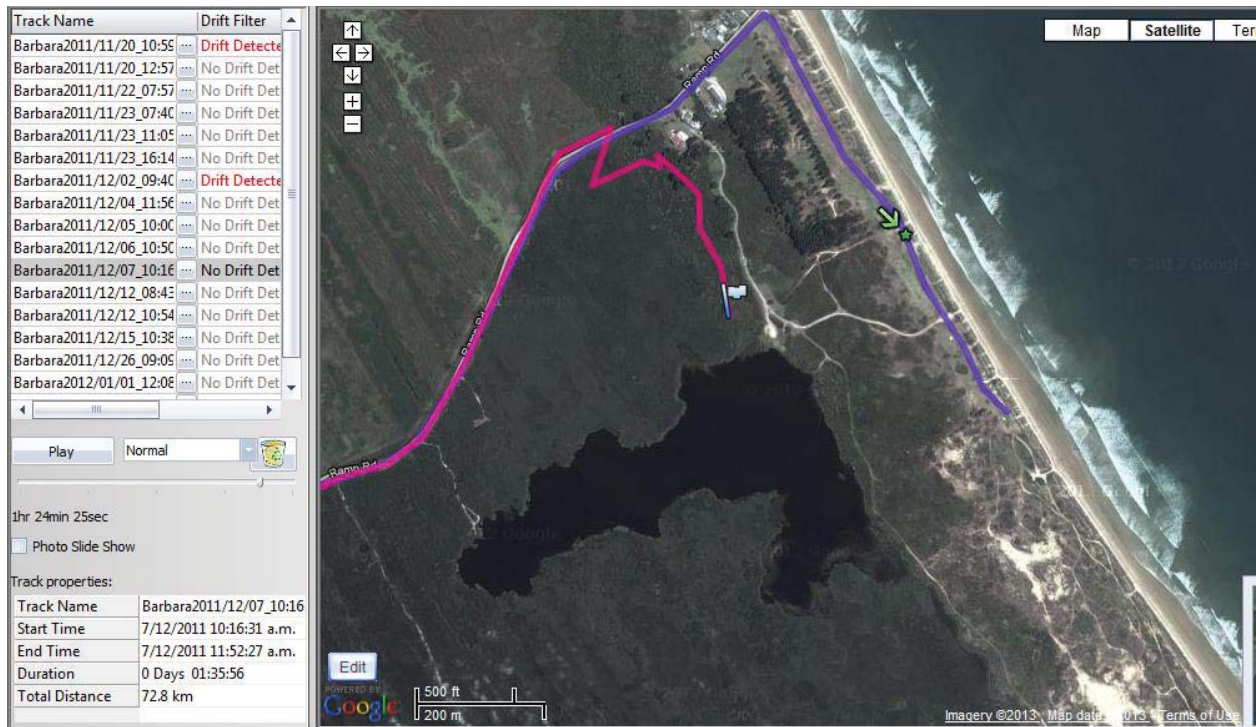


FIGURE 27 GREEN ARROW SHOWS BARB PARKED BEACHFRONT AT RAMP RD ON THE 7TH DECEMBER 2011. THE LAKE IS SEEN BEHIND THE BEACH.

She walked and swam there over the next few days, as more and more movanning friends arrived. They collected shellfish, went boogie boarding, and swapped stories of significant happenings: for example, a friend had been housekeeping for an elderly man in Kaitaia who died and left her the house and a brand new 4- berth campervan. Barb had made a note in her diary that there were “11 vans at Ramp Rd now”. There is a fresh water lake behind the beach at Ramp Rd and Barb and her friend went skinny dipping (with a German tourist, who when he saw them skinny dipping, stripped off too). One day Barb got lost in there and had to wade through gorse and swamp and flax to get out. Her friend caught snapper and shared it with Barb, so Barb cooked everyone’s fish on her bbq and one night she taught them all to play Rumyo, her favourite card game. During these days she had written self-musing paragraphs in her diary such as “lucky to be living this life” which she shared with me. She had recorded in her diary the eclipse of the moon on the 11th December 2011 but it was too cloudy to see it. She caught rain water in a bucket as she was running short. One movanner

brought her steamed mussels one day and another invited her over for coffee and naan bread on another day. On the 12th she washed her hair in the lake and went to her friends at Whatuwhiwhi where she filled her water tank and put a clothes wash on, even though her friends were not home. She visited their neighbour (who she has got to know) while she waited for her friends and then she had dinner with them. On the 14th she went to bowls at Coopers Beach with her friend and “met lots of nice people there”.

On her way back down the movanner archipelago she called in to Hikurangi and saw ‘Hu’ who fixed the satellite dish on the van as the wind had damaged it. This was the only detail Barb had forgotten to record in her diary that my track reminded her of. At first she said “no” she hadn’t been there but I showed her the GPS track and the stop-time in Hikurangi and she remembered. She immediately got a pen and updated her diary to record this stop. She had then returned to North Pataua. Her diary details when and where she empties her cassettes, does her texting and shops for supplies.

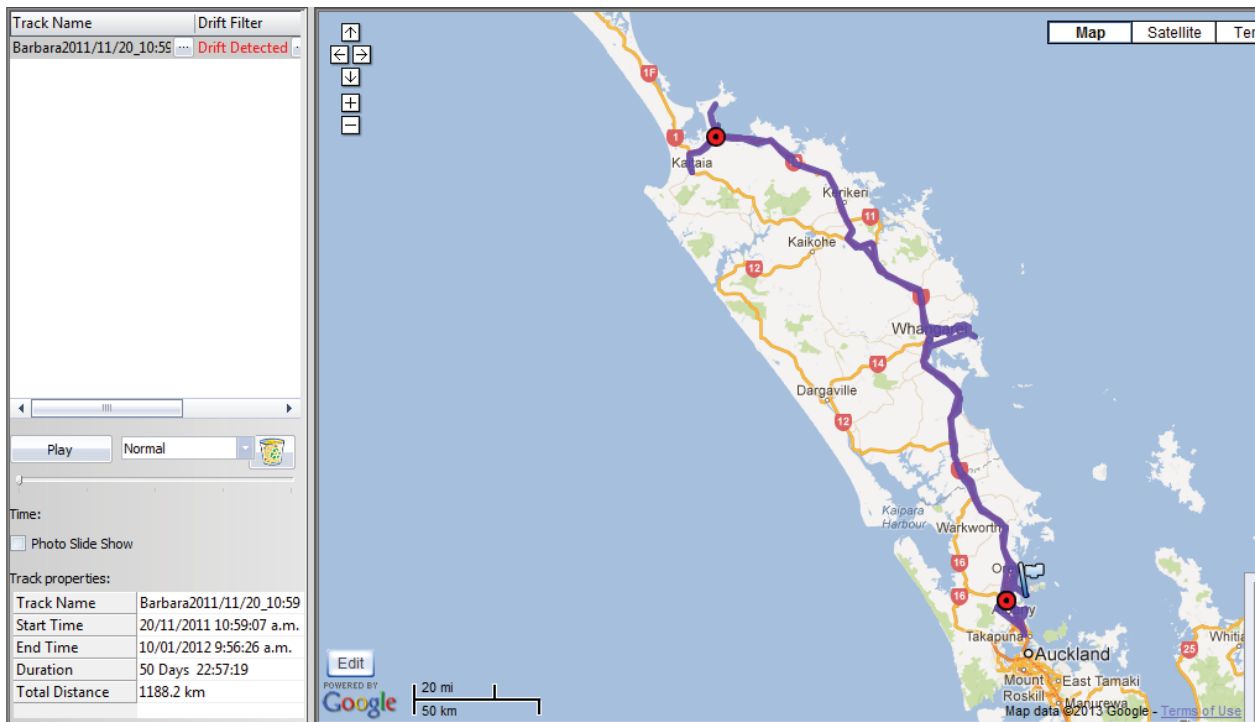


FIGURE 28 BARB'S NORTHERN TRIP MERGED INTO ONE SHOWING DISTANCE OF 1188KMS OVER 50 DAYS

Her journey often mirrored my journey with her a few months earlier. She stayed at the same sites and made sure she caught up with the same people but she also met new people. She interacted with tourists and house truckers, stayed in her own van even when visiting her family and close friends, and engaged in positive activities which satisfied the criteria of ageing wellbeing involving engagement with life and high cognitive functions. Her technologies of self-containment allowed her to freedom camp for five days at Ramp Rd and she knew the people to fix technologies when they failed. She practiced both hospitality and reciprocity at Ramp Rd, sharing food, labour, knowledge and receiving food, water, facilities and hospitality back from others. She finished this trip back at River Lodge (after spending Christmas Day with her son) for Boxing Day/Christmas celebrations with the Freewheelers. She stayed a few days and then went back to the Whangaparaoa for another house-sit at the same house she had been at before. While she was sedentary she had repairs done on her van and I was able to give something back by helping with her mobile connection to the internet. In March when she called in she related that she had done her first internet banking while on the road; she paid the mower man who mows the lawn of her rented house.



FIGURE 29 SIGN ON THE ROAD WITH THE WINGS INSIGNIA WELCOMING MEMBERS OF THE NZMCA TO PARK ON THE PROPERTY.

4.5 ON A COMPLICATED TRAJECTORY

In May 2012 I arranged for my two voyaging key informants to rendezvous at my house for lunch. The flow of knowledge between them and the sheer logistics of their journeys was impressive. As we saw, Peter had stopped at Ramp Rd after I told him about it (with Barb's permission), and he had liked it and had stayed a few days and he told Barb about places up north where *she* had not been. They exchanged a variety of information, surprising at times, including: good spots to go for food and to stay the night undisturbed, where scallops came in on the beach in a blow so you do not have

to dive for them, good caves to visit, good second-hand bookshops. They discussed their vans and Barb was especially intrigued that Peter does not have a fridge. He manages with fresh vegetables, dried milk, eating his meat quickly and Barb could see how this was possible but Barb said hers was “packed full of stuff she uses for cooking”, here Peter replied, “Yes, he cooks but he just chucks everything in anyway, doesn’t have to be in the fridge, uses curry”. They both laughed out loud at this admission and agreed they use the same dish 3–4 nights in a row then “chuck in the curry on the 4th night”. Peter said he didn’t go to rallies and Barb talked about the Freewheelers and about River Lodge at Waipu and Peter talked about Zac’s place at Ocean Beach. They both have a similar ‘place’ and exchanged useful information as Peter can stop at Waipu through knowing Barb and be welcomed, and Barb could meet Zac and be welcomed to his ‘place’.

They then discussed other ‘special places’ in the landscape. Peter has special spots he always stays: Gulf Harbour which has a Dump Station and you can stay as long as you like. Many senior movanners told me they have changed their behaviour to conserve water and power. Clean water has to be obtained on the journey to fill the tanks and when it is used it must be dumped but has to be carried as grey or black water, until a Dump Station is reached. For these reasons they are aware of, and constantly monitor, the amount of water they consume, because it is quantifiable, and all make good use of public toilets on the road. Peter also stays regularly at Wenderholm and Mahurangi where he has a friend, Port Albert (“breaks up the journey, toilets and out of the way”) then Ocean Beach to Zacs. Barbara has: Sullivans Bay (AC), Town Basin, she can stay the night there, do a shop at Pak n Save first thing in the morning and then head out to her son’s “laden up”. Ramp Rd is a regular stop and various clubs where campervans act as security. There are lots of parks on the way to Ocean Beach they both said, Urquats, McClouds Bay, Parua Bay pub/Yacht Club where Zac can always be found and Peter has built relationships with locals. Beaumont St in the city is another place where Barb stays; she “meets characters there and gets down to nitty gritty of what NZ is”. This is a site where movanners interact with itinerants as they also use the site to sleep in their cars. They both have a network of friends, but said it was “more than people”; they discussed fish and chip shops, where the freshest fish can be had, boat ramps

where you can stay and hot pools. A single lady, who had just lost her husband, came to Freewheelers in a hired van. Now her home in Matamata is a contact for Barb. They both agreed they had a “network of friends” and places and that it was “good to have contacts all the way around NZ”.

4.6 CONCLUSION

Through my own journeys with my husband, experiencing the movanner life through travelling with Barb, interviewing many senior movanners, analysing the GPS tracks of both Peter’s and Barb’s journeys, and retrospectively collaborating about what occurred on these tracks, I believe that senior movanners in New Zealand have created a social roadland. It is a mobile margin where an unusual lifestyle is performed by older New Zealanders as they travel what I have termed the Movanner Archipelago. The movanners have created a social roadland by appropriating the roadside structures and the opportunities they created for their own uses, created safe harbours at day’s end linked by well-known causeways which enabled their successful mobility. They have exploited the ‘opportunity structures’ of the New Zealand roadlands for their own benefit and to ease their mobility. These marginal meaningful places escape the notice of most other road users. They have hidden practices, meaningful scapes, beneficial networks and physical zones of contact and exchange on the margins of the road. They constantly connect with other mobile people and with sedentary people at fixed places who can smooth their journey with knowledge, food, advice and temporary accommodation while they, in turn, pass on their knowledge. It is the connectedness, not in the physical sense but in the sense of regular communications and repetitive tracks on which recurring encounters happen, that helps construct the social roadland of the senior movanner in the New Zealand landscape.

The chapter has demonstrated how senior movanners generated and maintained their network capital through their practices while traveling from A to B and in turn created the roadland as a social space. I intended the ethnographic descriptions to be evidence of the way the methodology has worked to tease out the different threads including

network capital, meanings, practices, way of moving, ageing wellbeing, socialisation and problem solving from both key informants. Some of their stories were told as they themselves like to tell and retell their own stories, and the stories of others, to highlight what the life means to them. The slowing down of the journey in order to maintain network capital and enjoy the landscape and the people they encountered was evident in their GPS tracks and their own narratives and the methodology ensured I did not miss the 'gaps' when/where they were immobile. The repetition and mirroring of journeys was also evident as was the use of technology to enable the freedom of using the cheaper resources of DOC, AC, POP's and NZMCA overnight parking sites as the vans were not only mobile homes but the technology they carried which made them self-contained, granted freedom. I observed movanning men discussing new technologies to improve their van's performance but not spending much time doing actual maintenance on their mobile homes as 'yachties' have been reported as constantly doing by Kleinert (2009) so movanning is a more useful mobile culture for an older person. The control structures that sometimes impact on senior movanners (and other mobile people) and the varied outcomes like having to move on, were highlighted. Tracks and roads may "impose a habitual pattern on the movement of people" (Jackson 1989:146) but conversely the mobile movanners by their own movements make the roadlands; "for every path or track shows up as the accumulated imprint of countless journeys that people have made" (Ingold 1993:167).

Feelings of happiness and pleasure, both during the trip and in re-telling the experiences retrospectively using photos, diaries and little mementos came through strongly from many informants. The element of adventure was a continuing theme; Peter, recounting his South Island trip said, "it is an adventure, not worrying about anything but looking to where you are going, which is exciting, adventurous but the hardest thing when solo is to let go the mooring line for the first time". The brief connections with other senior movanners, especially fellow members of the NZMCA, create a feeling of safety at the overnight parking place, whether it be freedom camping situation or in a park, and many mentioned they like to park "near someone" and there is "safety in numbers" and "someone will hold a glass up about 4pm" as a signal for Happy Hour to begin and the real social engagement commences. They

often 'help' tourists who are motor homing because their routes and freedom camping frequently intersect with senior movanners and these tourists are often young people facilitating inter-generational 'meetingness'. Living this mobile life created sites of social wellbeing, involved high cognitive function and constant interactions with technology, people and the environment. A different way of living is possible which keeps senior people looking at the road ahead rather than behind them, creates a pathway for excitement and future possibilities, whether it is the next beautiful scenic spot, the next rendezvous with friends or indeed the next problem to be overcome on the road.

CHAPTER 5 FAMILY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

It is not solely the 'baby boomer bulge' (discussed in the introduction), shaping our future population patterns. It is also the timing of childbirth and the smaller family sizes of those born after the early 1960's compared with the cohort born just after WW11 (Statistics New Zealand 2009a:3). A greater percentage (15%) of those born after the early 1960's did not have any children because they delayed childbirth for education, travel, or employment opportunities, and because of infertility and a lower incidence of adoption as adoption became more difficult (Statistics New Zealand 2009a:5). If we look, for example, at the cohort born in 1965 they will likely have more parents surviving into their 90's, who will need support but there will be fewer siblings to do this; an average of 5 adults compared with 6 adults supporting the post WW11 cohort (Statistics New Zealand 2009a:5). At the same time as caring for aged parents, they are also more likely to be helping with grandchildren, a balancing act previous cohorts of 65+ seniors were less likely to have experienced (Statistics New Zealand 2009a:5). A potential outcome of this childlessness and the further childlessness of their own children, is that 1 in 5 will not have any biological grandchildren (Statistics New Zealand 2009a:6). Around 2050, when this cohort reaches their 80's a significant proportion, 1 in 7 will not have any children to call on for support (Statistics New Zealand 2009a:6). One of the changes that has been recognised may be a move to non-typical living arrangements such as flatting, living with siblings or communal living with shared resources, as other financial, emotional and social factors impact on their differing expectations of ageing and health, leisure, security, housing options and family connectedness (Statistics New Zealand 2009a:6, Friedan 1993).

As senior movanners, especially those who choose to go on the road full time, are not the sedentary centres of family life (Elliott and Urry 2010:101) that typified previous cohorts, but are part of the mobile world, it raised the question; how are they interacting with their families? The voyage to answer that question began with full-

timers dealing with the practicalities associated with the decision to go on the road (which usually did not include seeking approval from their families).

5.2 LEAVING THE HOUSE AND SELLING BELONGINGS: A FULL-TIMERS PERSPECTIVE.

In late August of 2011 I visited Barb at her house in Auckland. She was living in her van parked in the driveway of her own property while she cleaned and tidied the house ready for new tenants. She said about four times “she couldn’t wait to get away” and planned on leaving the same day the new tenants shifted in. She was hoping they would shift in earlier so she could leave even earlier. It had been stressful dealing with insurance companies, tenants, real estate agents, cleaning up the garden and she had many bills to pay relating to the house. Her previous tenants had left the house in a dirty state, ruined the floors in the lounge and bathrooms and left the walls and light fittings greasy and dirty. She was more stressed than I had ever seen her, the van needed a Warrant of Fitness which could prove to be expensive, but she never begrudged spending money on her beloved van, she was however, resentful of all the money she had had to spend on the house.

Many of my full-timer movanning informants reflected this view of their previous houses and the ‘stuff’ they had acquired over the years. One had a base; a granny flat but their daughter was in it. Another said she couldn’t wait to get away when she sometimes had to house-sit. Another said she owned a house in Christchurch but never went there. Another full-timing couple told me they started out with a trailer towed behind their motorhome for storage of items they saved from their house, but after a while they sold this trailer and sold all the stuff as they “got good at cutting down”. Counts and Counts found that “Full timers also share their memories of getting rid of their things” (2001:105). My informants shared their stories of preparing for their full-time status, relating asking their children to take what they wanted, having garage sales to sell the rest, or storing their belongings before realising they would never need, nor visit, their ‘stuff’ again and eventually selling or dumping it. Some

said they cleared their houses out when they sold and threw most of their belongings out. Counts and Counts described giving up house and possessions as a rite of passage for many full-timers, signifying they were indeed starting a new journey and that it is a transition filled with emotion that can take some time to complete (1992:177). One couple told me in an interview that they were “Too scared to do it, but sold the big house, we felt queasy and scared but as soon as we drove out, felt fine”. Another said she had a double garage full of “stuff” but she closed the door and left it as it was “stuff you don’t need”, but it took her the first 3 months of travelling to get over selling the house. Yet another woman has kept only her antiques but was now thinking of selling those because she realises “when you die your kids will send it to be sold anyway”.

Many said they can manage financially while living on the road using the income from renting out their house and maintained they were not going to leave their money to their children but were going to use it.



FIGURE 30 NUMBER PLATE OF MOVANNING COUPLE AT BLAND BAY

From their new full-timer perspective many could see clearly that their previous lives (their words) contained stressful and burdensome elements. The expenses and responsibilities of home-ownership experienced as uncontrollable rises in electricity and rates, and on-going maintenance, was mentioned often, therefore, the meaning of their mobility as escape and freedom was inextricably linked with their previous local fixedness. Stressful work and business situations that threatened to manifest as physical ailments and disease were the other main motivations of the people interviewed (Green 2010:38-42). Lastly, there were those who had no choice but to go on the road as they had lost their houses. Many movanners who were not full-timers changed their status by moving from fixedness to mobility in a constant loop. Although they have a house as their base, they were still experts in movanning and knowledgeable about the infrastructures of movanning: the dump stations, free camping sites, POPs and other available resources, and also had networks such as small clubs made up of people with similar interests or whom they have known a long time inside the NZMCA. They can be on the road for extended periods, especially on trips to the South Island and so be apart from family members who live locally. Whether full-timers or part-timers, however, mobile movanners visit family members as they travel.



FIGURE 31 THE VAN OF THE RALLY MARSHALL AT THE TEMPORARY RALLY SITE

5.3 HOW ARE THEY VISITING THEIR FAMILIES?

Both my key informants visit their families on a regular basis. Barb visits her son every time she travels north, calling in both on her way 'up' and coming back 'down'. She stays in her van, never in the house. She usually stays for about a week and leaves whenever she wants. Her grandson 'visits' her in the van and sometimes stays the night. She also said her grandson sometimes goes with her in the van a few kilometres down the road to the beach and stays overnight when she parks in a spot right by the harbour mouth. My other key informant, Peter travels across to Waiheke Island to visit his son who lives there permanently. Peter takes his van across and stays in it, not in his son's house. While travelling around the South Island, Peter described visiting the graves of his great-grand-parents in Ashburton, his old school and the crib²⁴ his family used to own and phoning a distant relative in Dunedin. This is an example of

²⁴ A crib is another term for a small holiday house. In the North Island the term is usually 'bach'.

nostalgic travel. A turning inwards, or increased interest in a spiritual focus, has already been discussed as occurring in some individuals as they age as part of the adaptation to their ageing as they seek meaning in life (Moody and Sasser 2012:23).

When both my key informants met for the first time they maintained it was useful to have contacts all the way around New Zealand, including relatives. When I asked about family they said they stayed with cousins, nieces and nephews. Barb said she was “over” being the centre of her family and both agreed that now the reverse had happened and they come and go as they please and do not have to put up with kids all the time. Peter said his family were “pretty fixed in their ways too” and on Waiheke Island his grandchildren have now got their own friends. Barb is making the most of her grandson now while he is still really interested in her but her son rings on Saturdays and Barb texts him two to three times a week, then he rings back. Recently, Peter’s son has become more concerned and is now in contact about once a week, either Peter rings him or he rings Peter.

Another informant, who was at a POP when I interviewed her, said she used the motor home to visit her children and grandchildren who all reacted positively when informed she was going fulltime on the road. A group of movanners I interviewed at length while they were wintering over at Matauri Bay in Northland discussed the reaction of their families when they started movanning and all agreed their families were positive about what they were doing. They do go to visit their children/grandchildren where they live. One said a little sadly, “We left the grandchildren but they can live without you”. Another movanner present said their grown-up children wanted to know who would “look after their kids” (grandchildren) insinuating they were losing a babysitter, and the movanner recognised the accusation, but didn’t care. Another informant was a lady in her 70’s whose husband died about five years ago. She said they used to take their grandchildren away with them all the time and found it a bonding experience. Another couple said their family was fine with what they were doing as long as they can contact them. Their daughter calls them regularly, at least 3–4 times a week and she knows where they are and that they may be out of range. A couple who are not full-timers

said they have taken their grandchildren away with them and they visit a great-granddaughter who lives in Rotorua once or twice a year in their motorhome. In March 2012, I interviewed a movanner couple parked at a boat-trailer park. There were two more motor homes parked on the esplanade overlooking the beach, but this motor home had its door open which was a signal they didn't mind being disturbed. They had spent the night before in their motorhome at one child's home in West Auckland and they were heading over to Half Moon Bay later in the day to spend the night with another child before travelling to Mt Maunganui to visit a third child. They said they like to have their own accommodation when visiting friends or family so they did not "put anyone out". Virtually all movanners I interviewed said they stayed in their motorhome when visiting family and conversely when it came to their vans most people reflected a view voiced by one informant: "The kids don't borrow it, they bring a tent". The walls of the van of the two movanners at Urititi DOC Camp, (mentioned previously) were almost obscured by photos of their family members from respective previous marriages and they both have children living in Australia so they are going to do a cruise there to visit them all. Another senior movanner was visited by his parents as he attended a rally at Shakespear Bay.

An informant I had previously interviewed, told me in conversation in December 2012 that he and his wife had taken their granddaughter away for three days in the motorhome and she had loved it. He had been amazed at the number of full-timers he had met on that trip and volunteered the information that he meets more people in the motor home than he does when sedentary at his house. He also said surprisingly that he was now "stuck" at home because his son is coming over from England for the Christmas holidays to visit them which means they can't go away in the motorhome. He repeated the word 'stuck' forcefully three times in our conversation in reference to having his mobility stopped while his family visited.

5.4 STAYING IN TOUCH

Senior movanners used their mobile phones as positive, network-enhancing devices which enabled them to live a mobile life and appeased concerned family. The reduction in cost of mobile phones and the increasing number of diverse plans available created more opportunities to cheaply connect with family at home and to tailor a plan to suit that preferred connection, whether it be texting or phoning. This meant few senior movanners were excluded because of cost from the benefits of contact with family. Moreover a permanent address is not necessary for cell phone ownership and movanners can have plans rather than prepaid because they can pay bills on the move on the internet banking system. My conversations with Barb over the past few years are punctuated with references to her texting or ringing her son, daughter-in-law and grandson. On an early morning walk at a beach up north she: “missed a call from her daughter-in-law about her grandson doing well at school so she texted back” and then later “Rang, free calls on Saturday! Read out his report, excelling, and friendly and helpful”. Barb also emails her family but said emails no-one else really. (Although that changed a little as she emailed me a few times).

Castells says it would be interesting to know how elderly people use the mobile telephone and how it affects family ties in different societies (Castells 2006:89). Mobile technology diffusion “strengthen[s] networks of interaction, whether among families, peer groups, friends or selective personal relationships” (Castells 2006:97). This reflects the way senior New Zealander movanners have embraced and used this technology to build networks with family and friends. It enables their children, concerned at their ageing parents’ mobility, to monitor them as they travel with one movanner maintaining, “Children expect to be able to get hold of you”. His children were annoyed when he and his wife parked at a remote bay for three weeks with no cell phone coverage. This was an interesting reversal in mobile phone usage between parents and children and turned the usual notion on its head. Movanners became like children, kept tabs on by their own children acting as concerned parents. They spoke of having to ‘check in’ with children and being checked on, but like children and teenagers, senior movanners gained sought-after independence from family through

having mobile phones and being able to use them with a suitable plan. Autonomy and safety combined to create the freedom to roam conveniently with support and infrastructure provided by mobile telephone networks. It meant the subject of communication had control over their own communication process (Castells 2006:247).

Mobile phones are a relevant and practical device for senior movanners. Barb told me once when she was house-sitting; "I saw a freewheeler friend drive past in her little van while I was walking up the road. I texted her to tell her I had just seen her and invited her for coffee in about 20 minutes. She came; she had been at a 'Red Hat'²⁵gathering". The mobile phone is essential for practical purposes for a mobile life: "Getting low on water. Rang K and W to visit them and get water soon". Barb also uses the phone to text to organise the logistics of her house-sits. One couple who are members of the 'Vantrampers' said they like the flexibility of friends phoning or texting to meet them at a specific location to tramp together. Barb sent me a text saying she was heading towards my home by bus after collecting her mobile phone which she had inadvertently left in her van while it was being serviced and was I going to be home. I texted back "yes call in for cuppa" so she did. Barb thought she had lost her phone and did not sleep all night as she was so worried about it. She said it was "her lifeline". She had also referred to it as her "lifeline" when she left a message on my land line. For reasons of safety, when freedom camping, Barb has 111 already dialled on her phone so she just has to push 'send' and she always parks facing an exit point to drive off; this is a practice many of my informants mentioned.

Most senior movanners I interviewed did not own smartphones. Traditional multiple cascading screens can be more confusing than the new iphone/ipad technology of single screens open only (Chen 2011:129,130). This single screen technology may be easier technology for seniors than the internet due to its ease of use. Sometimes it is not the mass of information but the interface used to access the information that is

²⁵ A club for single older women to meet and engage in fun activities as a group, such as going to the theatre.

confusing, a single–screen interface may suit seniors and their iphone may be more useful to them than their computers which uses cascading screens opening one on top of the other and includes irritating ‘pop ups’ which have been shown to disorient senior computer users more than younger users (Chen 2011:130). The ipad interface also uses larger fonts and bigger icons and the use of hands and fingers to touch with, rather than a mouse or keyboard (Chen 2011:130) .

5.5 CONCLUSION

Movanners in New Zealand do not see themselves, nor act as, the sedentary centres of extended family life. This does not mean they do not have regular interaction with their families, but that the practices of how and when they see their families are usually on their own terms. They visit family but stay in their vans and leave when they are ready to move on. Their families use mobile phones to check on them and they use mobile phones to stay in touch with their sedentary families. Mobile phone usage empowers senior movanners, however the uptake of the smartphone with its potentially more elder–friendly features and design could bring added benefits. Castells says “self–constructed networks of shared social practice” have been developed by young users as they have appropriated mobile phone use for their own autonomy and constant connectedness (Castells 2006:245). She maintained older users have been left out of this ‘always on’ society, perhaps reflecting a perceived lack of relevance to an older person’s life which has been shown to inhibit learning new technology. However, mobile technology *is* relevant to senior movanners lives and their use reflects this relevance. The ability to text and phone friends and family who are both on the move and sedentary has enabled the development of a networked community of like–minded people in the New Zealand roadland. The seemingly conflicting elements of mobile phones to enable both autonomy and safety are exploited by senior movanners and are especially conducive to being a female and/or travelling on your own. Using mobile communications now makes it feasible for senior movanners to freely roam the country in a safe manner whilst maintaining connectedness to their families.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

The disembarkation port of this voyage of alternative ageing around the movanner archipelago has almost been reached. This study, emphasising the cultural and the social, aimed firstly, to determine whether senior movanners in New Zealand constructed a 'social roadlands' in the process of their mobility and investigated how they achieved this and secondly, whether traditional family relationships were reconstructed in this mobility process. The three cornerstones of the thesis were firstly, the new turn to mobilities in the social sciences, secondly the importance of ageing wellbeing and thirdly the technology that facilitated the lifestyle and symbolised freedom and adventure rather than decline and decay. Technology is crucial for both the 'new mobilities', as seen in micro technologies of communication for example, and for ageing wellbeing, so its uptake, continual development and infrastructure were always crucial linking elements back to the important subjects of this thesis; senior movanners ageing well in their mobile world. A little unexpectedly, the methodology became a dominant feature because of the use of GPS and its ability to not only generate useful quantitative data, but also the qualitative data which added meaning to the 'silent' longitude and latitude intersections that revealed my key informants' tracks.

My original contribution to scholarship in this field is the evidence of the way senior movanners have constructed a social roadland in New Zealand by their day-to-day practices and their network creation which generated the network capital they needed to ease their mobility and be independent from, and enable a different relationship with, their families. How the evidence was gathered, using retrospective corroboration/collaboration over GPS generated maps and data which overlaid the statistics with meaning, was another unexpected contribution to the knowledge of useful mobile methodologies which I turn to now.

6.1 FINDING 1: MOBILE METHODOLOGY USING GPS AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PRACTICES

This project was undertaken to research the increasing number of senior New Zealanders finding either full-time or extensive part-time mobility in a motor home a rewarding practice in their ageing years. I wanted to understand their day-to-day practices, the meaning of their mobility to them and the way they travelled from A to B, in order to determine whether a social roadland existed on our roads. Methodologies to study the mobile, whether it is human or non-human, are currently receiving attention from across disciplines as 'mobility' moves to the centre of many human sciences' studies, rather than simply being one element, despite the challenges of different theoretical and methodological traditions:

Nevertheless, there is a powerful transformative and 'therapeutic' potential for social science in the interferences generated where these studies meet and gather emergent empirical sensitivities, analytical orientations, methods, and instruments to examine crucial social and material phenomena. (Büscher et al. 2011:3)

GPS has often been used to study mobile subjects but I found that in combination with traditional anthropological methods of participant observation, researching the life from the perspective of the locals, 'walking with' them and spending valuable time in the field/road, its usefulness increased exponentially. In short the combination was more effective than the sum of its parts had initially indicated. I believe that this was because it involved the subjects of study in their own research. By looking at their journeys on a map with accurate data of times, dates, distance travelled and seeing their whole journey 'replayed' back, they became engaged participants in reliving journeys, checking data, adding meaning to otherwise 'silent' coordinates and telling stories.

Another benefit was found in the 'gaps', the 'stop times' that the GPS track exposed. These gaps on the track were in reality filled with socialising, eating, drinking, meeting friends, visiting sedentary friends and family, undertaking repairs, getting water, using

facilities, Happy Hour, visiting educational sites, scouting potential camping sites or simply having a drink at a well-known pub and re-encountering the locals. This was very pertinent evidence in relation to my question regarding the construction of a social roadland exclusive to senior movanners, passing unnoticed by other users of the road. The GPS devices made these gaps obvious, without them I may have missed these important stops. The social process involved in using GPS as a tool and the meanings highlighted by the GPS devices, also reflected why technology was a crucial theme through this thesis, linking methodology, theory and the empirical data gathered. The close relationship of technology and the social helped make the roadlands of the movanner archipelago a heterogeneous place, shaped and textured and filled with diverse objects and subjects (1993:154) representative of Ingold's belief that technological practices are embedded in the social and should not be separated (1993:158).

This proved valid not only for the field(road)work data which the relationship uncovered but in the research experience itself. My quantitative research using GPS certainly had an element of the qualitative embedded in it, which I was unaware of at the beginning of the empirical field(road)work. As well as the meanings extracted, which I discussed above, the time I spent with key informants explaining how the device worked, where it should go in their van, retrieving the device from them, and meeting them to give it back emptied of coordinates and ready for their next trip, built relationships and set up opportunities for reciprocity as I helped them with other technology such as phones, TVs and internet connections on the move. My key informants had 'ownership' of their device as they were carrying them in their vans, so again they self-identified as an important part of the research process. The question was asked earlier how to research on the move, subjects who are also moving, and I think that collaboration about technology is a way. Working out how things were going to work, solving potential problems and learning new software together, built a team of successful researchers, some of whom happened to be key informants. I will now examine the other significant findings.

6.2 FINDING 2: NETWORK CAPITAL

Network capital was shown to be crucial for sustaining a mobile life that was relatively stress free and my ethnography highlighted the ways in which senior movanners, both full-timers and part-timers, built and maintained their network capital through examples observed from my fieldwork. Building network capital takes time and for senior movanners it was all about the journey. Although they were driving fast, complex vehicles they were paradoxically the champions of slow travel. They enjoyed the environment they were passing through and connected with the physical, non-human landscape and the people populating it, whether sedentary, mobile, or in between the two, to create network capital. The destination was not the goal and time constraints were banished to the margins of importance, creating opportunities to make connections on the road and make a social, meaningful roadland. The constant process of acquiring and sustaining mobile network capital demanded of senior movanners many of the skills necessary for another element of this thesis, successful ageing, as “to live a life beyond local fixations and to develop an individual culture and practice of ‘uprooting and re-grounding’(Ahmed et al.2003) demands a lot of discipline, concentration and mental strength.”(Kesselring and Vogl 2007:173).

In particular, high cognitive function, engagement with life and the need to maintain social networks as we age, constant elements in theories of successful ageing, were apparent as movanners met at physical zones of exchange and contact as they travelled about the movanner archipelago. They took time to forge connections with people and places along the archipelago who/which could ease their mobility and used ‘cool’ technologies such as mobile phones and GPS devices to achieve these encounters on a regular basis. Thus the process of acquiring network capital also linked to the other cornerstone of this thesis; technology use by older people. Communications technology, GPS and the technology of self-containment proved vital to maintaining connections with the human and non-human while mobile.

Although they are mobile, both full-timers and part time movanners have to live in the world, which necessitates doing the normal day-to-day chores of modern life. They have to manage their financial affairs, comply with governmental and regional regulations, look after their health and the maintenance of their vans, shop, stay in touch with friends and family, plan and find their way around. I described how Barb spent a morning in Whangarei travelling to the VTNZ, where she gained her Warrant of Fitness after paying her Registration, to the gas company to fill up the van's gas bottles, the Dump Station to empty the grey and black water, and the bank to organise finances associated with renting her house, before we moved to the socialising practices; visiting her daughter-in-law, her grandson, and her friend who has cancer. If they had not built network capital they would find chores such as these more difficult and time consuming. Although gender was not a major part of this thesis, many problems caused by lack of physical strength that could hamper such a life as Barb and other single women senior movanners now lead, were attenuated through technologies of mobility and mobility structures. This particularly affected a single woman's potential to be successful at living as a senior movanner. Women usually took more opportunities on the road to build their social network capital than men.

Senior movanners' use of mobile phones was an example of mobile phone practices among the elderly rather than teenagers or elite travellers. The mobile phone was essential for creating and sustaining their network capital and was therefore relevant technology which explained its uptake and resulted in both practical benefits and reduced the risk of being on the road. They used different plans to exploit the cheapest means of staying in touch with friends and family who were on the move or sedentary. Senior movanners' usage of mobile phones enabled a lifestyle which serendipitously combined autonomy and safety, appeased family members, enabled



FIGURE 32 BARB WASHING HER HAIR WHILE FREEDOM CAMPING

independence from them while lessening the risks associated with being on the road for ageing, single people, women, and especially single women. Its usage constituted an unusual situation of children monitoring their parents and highlighted new family connection mechanisms. This ability to be independently mobile enabled by relevant technology gave a sense of purpose and meaning crucial for ageing wellbeing. By connecting the seemingly disparate areas of elderly people, complex technology, freedom and modern vehicles all of which constituted the movanning lifestyle, the wellbeing of senior movanners became apparent.

The process of the uptake of relevant technologies occurred as a necessary practice for network creation, sustainment and mobility for senior movanners and technological elements were often central to their interactions with others as they learnt of the existence of new technologies and how to use them. The process of negotiating technology uptake reinforced their community and their self-view that they could be a part of this fast changing world. The positive view of technology developed (in most cases), may prove useful to aid uptake of beneficial devices as senior movanners move into the category of the “old old”. Their ability to utilise technology meant they had agency when coming into contact with powerful councils and government-controlled sites, through complying with self-containment regulations which enabled using low cost facilities. This access to mobility networks and systems was shown to be important in sustaining network capital. Lack of access to networks of mobility and mobility systems can be indicative of new social inequalities but senior movanners successfully defend and constantly work to improve theirs through their association the NZMCA²⁶. Urry (2010) describes the elite as having access to devices, being constantly mobile, and being pampered during their mobility which results in power opportunities, but senior movanners, not the most powerful people in our society, also exploited up-to-the-minute technologies of mobility to create networks that served them efficiently. With their day-to-day plurality of practices, modes and sites they

²⁶ Monday 14th January 2013, a television news segment on TV3 reporting on the NZMCA taking the Westland District Council to court in Greymouth over their proposed freedom camping restrictions. The NZMCA spokesperson said they were doing it on behalf of their members.

reflected what Kesselring and Vogl discovered when analyzing the life of a journalist who personified the mobile elite: “He lives the network, and he gives life to it”(2007:173).

There are signs along our roads that are meaningful signals to senior movanners. Some denote the presence of a Dump Station for easy removal of black and grey wastewater and many proclaim a safe or low cost camping site for members of the senior movanners’ association, the NZMCA. A powerful mobile symbol on the roadland of the archipelago of senior movanners is the meaningful insignia of the red wings that is displayed on every member’s motor home; acknowledged with a wave as they pass each other and often an invitation to Happy Hour at day’s end. The ‘yellow towel’ is another meaningful signal on the roadland’s margin that help is needed, and will be forthcoming. There was power in the knowledge that other trusted members were on the roadland with them if a problem arose, which lessened the risks associated with their mobility and helped constitute the social roadland. This empowering knowledge bestowed stability and exclusivity to their community, differentiating them from other mobile people such as tourists and house truckers and created a cultural identity as senior movanners.

It is a community known only to each other when they climb into their vans and drive. Then the wings are seen, representing a hybrid of person and van forming a community revealed in the practice of mobility but unrecognised even by other members, if they are not near or in their vans. They are human-machine hybrids; cyborgs revealed as they move and live only with the “compound agency” of what they are doing, driving their motor homes (Ingold and Vergunst 2008:12). They produce knowledge in their mobility but although I witnessed and heard testaments of knowledge shared with overseas tourists, I did not witness the kind of blogging and ‘chat rooming’ that seems to characterise other mobile travellers. They do not need or desire this ‘watch us wander’ type of collaboration. In fact they actively keep their mobile network knowledge secret from others, for example the contents of their Travel Directory. However, Molz has argued that there is a shift from the personal to a more social, collaborative mode in the relationship of knowledge to mobility (Molz

2011:100) and this may develop in the senior movanning community as more New Zealanders, used to this type of communication technology, reach this ageing category and commence movanning. They may desire to have immobile others participate in their journeys, as recently one of my informant's did; his grandchildren watched his journey on-line.

6.3 FINDING 3: MOVANNERS' NOTIONS OF 'PLACE' AND 'HOME'

Many movanners interviewed over the last three years told me the costs of a motorhome are more easily quantifiable and controlled than the costs associated with living in a house where charges increased out of the control of the house owner. Many kept detailed records of expenses related to specific journeys in their vans which were not only their much-loved 'homes' but were micro-techno environments which could be examined to quantify costs of literal movement and related conditions like vehicle maintenance, and the costs associated with self-containment regulations. As we have seen, it is now nearly impossible to separate place and space and technological networks, as the activity in cyberspace increases and 'place' is a new space which is local and mobile at the same time, however "wireless communication does not eliminate place. It redefines the meaning of place as anywhere from which the individual chooses or needs to communicate"(Castells 2006:174). The boundaries of what constitutes home or work or play are becoming blurred (Castells 2006:82) therefore a well-worn journey of a senior movanner could be thought of as a social 'place', made up of individual practices and networks of communication and connectivity which redefine space and indeed 'home'. Through connectivity movanners carried their whole world with them, not only in terms of their physical shelter but their social world of contacts (Castells 2006:175).

The social roadland constituted by movanner practices and networks is their 'place' and along with their vehicle forms their 'home' when they are mobile. This 'place' is composed of multiple components mostly social and technological but with an increasing presence of the virtual. Senior movanners' arrangement of these composite elements into a hybrid life created their potential mobility, gave logic to the network created and demonstrated their competencies and skills (Kesselring and Vogl

2007:174) which again linked to habits necessary for ageing wellbeing. Sometimes this complex network failed. However, from my observations this was not catastrophic because firstly, they have developed solutions for potential problems such as the 'yellow towel' signal on the roadland, and the program of recruiting a fellow member to drive your van if necessary, and secondly, the wider network capital they had built provides solutions.

The NZMCA constantly works to maintain an exclusive feeling of community, of a 'home' on the roadland while senior movanners are driving, enabling them to realize their plans in later life without the downside of potential disaster, maintaining their enjoyment and maximizing the full potential of their mobility. The leap in membership seen in the graph at the beginning of this thesis, I suspect, is because the NZMCA utilised the developing technologies of communication in the 1980's and 1990's transforming the way knowledge about the lifestyle and community was produced and disseminated. The NZMCA created the mobile community through strong values and practices embedded in its origins from early in the 20th century but the connectivity generated from new communication technology, then spread the culture to many other people who embraced the lifestyle and quickly became embedded in the existing networks. Suddenly, this mobile community had connections, interactivity and a structure of stability in the NZMCA which constituted the road as a new social, mobile 'place' for seniors who travelled on it.

6.4 FINDING 4: INTERGENERATIONAL 'MEETINGNESS'

In connection with place and family, another finding that emerged from the research was that senior movanners generated intergenerational meeting places through their own mobility and therefore had greater interaction with younger generations than they would have had being sedentary. This was true whether a full-timer or a part-timer as they both interacted frequently with young travellers. It has been lamented that many of our communities and planning zones have created separate 'boxes' where we play, work and meet our families in isolation (Salmond 2012:A26), removing opportunities

for senior people to meet other generations on a day-to-day basis in the natural way they go about their lives. The archipelago of movanners disrupted this phenomenon; the fluidity of the lifestyle reformed the 'boxes' in creative ways that enabled greater intergenerational meetings and different ways of structuring family relationships in old age.

In Chapter 5 frequent family visits conducted on senior movanners' own terms were evident. They stayed in their vans during family visits but saw children and grandchildren whenever they wanted and many took their grandchildren away in their vans with them. As many had children and grandchildren living all over New Zealand, senior movanners' mobility enabled more intergenerational meetings than they would have experienced being sedentary and far from family. They may not represent the traditional sedentary model of extended family life centred around the family 'home' but they are interacting with their families on their own terms and in many instances they see more of them than they would if they were not mobile.

6.5: 'HOVE TO'

The mobility of senior movanners enabled an increased capacity to examine their priorities from the point of view of an ageing person heading to the end of their lives thus re-assigning their houses and their 'stuff' to a less important category, particularly for full-timers, while simultaneously reimagining their relationships with family. These new relationship mechanisms worked well to accommodate encounters with their families, controlled by senior movanners. They were users of technology on a daily basis but such technology did not label them as old or deteriorating or was seen as an assistive device for those in decline; on the contrary it symbolised the potential for freedom and independent living, something most old people aspire to. Technologies both old and new enabled this lifestyle for many un-extraordinary older men and women, single and couples. The huge, practical benefits of technologies of mobility, access to structures and systems of mobility, and the building and sustaining of their network capital helped them navigate a complex mobile life. Their

association, the NZMCA was an integral part of their ability to live a full-time or part-time mobile life on New Zealand roads.

Although the Argonauts of Aotearoa may not be heroes in the mythological sense of Jason and his followers, their quest for new goals in this life stage is, in its way, a quest for the (G)olden Fleece of ageing wellbeing. The archipelago they have constructed has created a safe passage to a different way of living. The experiences they have in life make sense to them and they have plans and goals, making them navigators of their own lives (Kesselring and Vogl 2007:173). To reflect the depth and authenticity of their chosen lifestyle this thesis used grounded research strategies so as not to over-theorise, potentially leading to “a failure to describe a world whose reality would be recognized by those who spend their days living in it” (Brody 2001:289). Senior movanners are people who spend their days living in a mobile world of their own creation. Their pace is slow and their status is that of transition into old age on the wheels of a motor home; their isolated appearance as they drive past you is an illusion, they are driving a social roadland; the movanner archipelago.



FIGURE 33 SUNSET AT KAI IWI LAKES

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INFORMATION SHEET

Mobility and New Technology: A Study of Senior Single Movanners

Information Sheet

Hi, my name is Kim Green and I am undertaking research for a Master of Arts in Social Anthropology at Massey University, Albany. My topic of study is “Mobility and New Technology: A Study of Senior Single Movanners”

What I am trying to understand is how new technologies are affecting, and facilitating, the lives of single movanners. It is a study of the relationship between new technologies, older citizens, and mobility, through a case study on single movanners. My focus is specifically on the way older singles are using a range of new technologies to enable a degree of freedom and manage the associated risks and thus achieve a better/healthier way of life in their latter years.

To do this, I want to interview, or have conversations with, about ten single movanners to ask about the technology they use in their motor homing lifestyle and what sort of issues they deal with while on the road.

I would like to invite you to participate in one of these conversations. I expect the interview to take approximately an hour. I would like to record the interviews but will cease at any time during the interview if you wish the recording device to be turned off. If you agree to be interviewed, I will write up my research in a way that protects your confidentiality (unless you would prefer to be identified by name).

I want to thank–you for agreeing to be interviewed and for helping me with my research. You can contact me or my supervisor at any time should you have any questions or concerns.

My contact details are: Kim Green

10 Valley Rd

Browns Bay

Auckland

Ph (09) 4796880 or 021 827884

Email: kimmark05@gmail.com

My supervisor is Dr Graeme MacRae. He can be contacted by email at

G.S.Macrae@massey.ac.nz

Please note that this project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the research(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz".

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW FORM

Mobility and New Technology: A Study of Senior Single Movanners

My name is Kim Green and I am undertaking research for a Master of Arts in Social Anthropology at Massey University, Albany. My topic of study is “Mobility and New Technology: A Study of Senior Single Movanners”

It is a study of the relationship between new technologies, older citizens, and mobility, through a case study on single motorhomers.

I appreciate you helping with my research by undertaking this interview. Your identity, answers and comments will be completely confidential. Thank-you for your time, effort and help in my research.

Technologies

1. What technologies do you use on a daily basis? Do you access the internet, how many times per day/week
2. If you went away in/owned a boat before you owned a Motor Home how are the technologies similar?
3. What technologies do/did you use in your home? Would you describe yourself as always having a lot to do with technology?
4. What sort of Motor Home do you have? Manual/auto?
5. How many Motor Homes have you owned? Have you upgraded, downgraded, changed the style of your second or third Motor Home?

6. How much notice do you take of time? Do you wear a watch/have a clock in the motorhome? If you stop for the night “around 4pm” is that by the clock or by your own reckoning of what the time roughly is, i.e by the sun etc?
7. Who uses what technology in the vans? Men v Women, outside v inside technologies, and what purposes are the technologies selected for use in the van, serving?

Relationships

1. Are you a full-time Motor Homer?
2. How did your families react?
3. Do you use your Motor Home to go to see your children or grandchildren where they live?
4. Do you strive/struggle to stay in touch with family/extended family/banking and who takes responsibility for it?
5. How long and in what time chunks do you travel in your Motor Home?
6. Would you describe yourselves as having been part of a fairly traditional couple when it came to dividing up chores at home.? (e.g. woman does most of cooking, cleaning etc, male does outside chores)
7. Do you meet up with other motor homers deliberately/regularly?
8. How long do you stay together as a group?
9. Do you join in the Happy Hour with other Motor Homers?
10. Do you tend to go to the same places regularly or somewhere different every time?
11. Do you help other single movanners to do their taxes? Fix their vans? Etc
12. Recognize injured or ill single movanners?

House v Van comparisons

1. Do you think it is cheaper to be on the road than to run/maintain a house?

2. Do you keep track of your expenses while on the road?
3. What happens to your house while you are on the road?
4. Do you do more/less housework/cooking/washing/cleaning than at home?
5. Do you enjoy using technologies you wouldn't try at home?

Outcomes

13. How do you feel when you are on the road? (free, independent)
14. What are the main problems you experience on the road?
15. Have you handled problems successfully?
16. Have you ever felt unsafe?
17. Do you regard what you are doing as leisure? How would you describe it?

I give consent for the interview and for the information obtained to be used in the Thesis.

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the research(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz".