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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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