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Grey Suit or Brown Carhartt: Narrative Transition, Relocation and Reorientation in the Lives of Corporate Refugees

ABSTRACT

This article examines relocation stories of people who leave behind corporate work culture, relocate from metropolitan areas to small towns and rural places and attempt to reorient themselves to work and family obligations. Decisions to start over take place within the context of moral questions about what makes a life worth living and what does not through a process in which geography has bearing. For these migrants, a choice about where to live is also one about how to live. Choices of how to live one's life are made of more than simple economics, they are also moral. The restructuring and corporate downsizing that defines the contemporary workplace has led some workers and their families to challenge assumptions of the American Dream that promises future reward for loyalty to an employer, hard work and self-sacrifice. These life-style migrants relocate in their attempt to find potential selves and idealized families in new places.

KEYWORDS

Post-industrial economic restructuring; career change; urban-to-rural migration; work and family studies; narrative analysis

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