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MIR-ES/3I

International Retirement Migration in Spain
Identity, Impacts, Integration

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2008 – 2011



PROJECT OUTLINE

International retirement migration (IRM) forms part of the spectrum of new migratory movements arisen from the global mobility conditions and the stabilization of a demography tending towards population aging. What characterises this movement is that it goes far more unnoticed than economic migration flows, yet what are not so invisible are its countless and varied effects on the territories and societies where the retirees settle. It affects relatively small volumes, but selective, predominantly formed by populations with specific demographic features, available financial resources, life expectancy and health, or family and social patterns of behaviour.

IRM tends to evolve more in developed countries, in environments that combine differentiated amenity conditions, prior tourist development, territorial and urban infrastructures fostering settlement and living conditions favouring a change at retirement. North America, Australia and Europe would be geographical paradigms, with Spain being the outstanding European point of reference. However, over the past few years, new horizons have begun opening in other geographical areas (e.g. Central America & the Caribbean, South Africa), making it necessary to embark on research projects to analyse specific mobilities.

The project has been organized to apply the methodological tools for extracting the complexity of the phenomenon of retired immigrants, as it is perceived that it will be in the immediate future. The objectives have been defined to address both traditional aspects (theoretical model, typology, secondary data analysis) as well as other more novel and essential such as the global geographic mobility model, the link between retiree migration and tourism, more detailed examination of the construction of identities, belongings and social networks, accessibility to social resources, sociopolitical involvement, legal empowerment and the recognition of rights, new experiences or the evaluation of public policies).

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

Without aiming to be exhaustive, the hypothesis or questions can be presented as follows:

- Is the social research able to define the types of mobile elderly in Europe?
- Is it possible to determine the volumes of these migrants as a sociodemographic planning instrument in different geographical areas?
- In which areas are they establishing their residence? How do their sociodemographic characteristics affect populations in destination regions?
- What are the economic, social and environmental effects of the behaviour, dynamics and territorial, residential and tourist strategies of retired people?
- What is their mobility model? Is this mobility in response to new trends and transnational behaviour, especially those in areas with greater tourist development? Is mobility a determining factor in their social behaviour?
- Does their mobility affect the implementation of their civil or social rights in Spain? Are Spanish public authorities aware of their mobility and able to respond to their needs based on resources designed for this?
- What are the processes for defining their identity in destination areas? Are these processes strengthened with the social forms created by elderly people? Do social forms affect their integration, political participation and access to municipal activities?
- Can they obtain capacities for strengthening their social participation?
- What are the public policies and business strategies on tourism and establishment of retired people?
- Are there local tourism and retired people tourism experiences that can be presented as key factors for sustainable and social economy development?

EXPECTED GENERAL OUTCOMES

- Implementation of **cooperative dynamics in the research** of retirement migration, essentially studied by several different scientific disciplines, both at the theoretical and the methodological level
- **Pooling and exchange of know-how and experiences** in research and management-related issues, that will serve to **establish the networks of scientific interests**
- Fostering research oriented to **diagnosing and resolving social problems**, identifying new research partners and parties who stand to benefit from the results expected
- **Ensuring quality research**, visible in Spanish and international scientific circles, by **disseminating the results** of the greatest scientific significance.

