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Defining and Coping with Residence International Retirement Migration to Spain¹

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Abstract: this paper seeks to make a contribution to the empirical study of international retirement migration by exploring the meaning and the scope of residence, a phenomenon related to issues around integration and belonging. The study is based upon a national survey addressed to foreign European retirees (pensioners aged 50 years or over) of 16 nationalities living in Spain for more than three months per year. The article points out the extent to which residence is a multi-dimensional or complex and polysemic concept that transcends its merely administrative aspects. Residence is more than official records, and not all its dimensions develop with the same intensity. The research also reveals that certain public policies could promote both the presence and the consolidation as residents of European elderly movers

Keywords: residence, international retirement migration, gerontomigration, Spain, European Union

Resumen: este artículo busca contribuir al estudio empírico sobre la migración de extranjeros jubilados examinando el significado y el alcance de la residencia, un fenómeno que toca cuestiones de integración y pertenencia. El estudio se basa en una encuesta estatal dirigida a los jubilados europeos extranjeros (pensionistas de 50 años o más) de 16 nacionalidades que viven en España más de tres meses al año. El artículo subraya el grado en el que la residencia es un concepto multidimensional o complejo y polisémico que trasciende sus aspectos meramente administrativos. La residencia es más que registros oficiales, y no todas sus dimensiones se desarrollan con la misma intensidad. La investigación también revela que ciertas políticas públicas pueden promover tanto la presencia como la consolidación como residentes de los mayores europeos móviles

Palabras clave: residencia, migración internacional de jubilados, gerontomigración, España, Unión Europea

Residence is an act and a place. It has to do with living. One person may have a primary, habitual, ordinary, or principal residence, and a second home or holiday house. The former is the place where he or she routinely returns to after visiting other places. When the latter is abroad, it has not to do with residence but with tou-

1. The author is indebted to Kelly Hall and Charles Betty for their helpful suggestions in the preparation of this article. The research has been financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (project CSO2008-06458-C02-01, developed under the direction of Vicente Rodríguez at the Spanish National Research Council, Madrid), and by the Spanish regional government of Andalusia (research team SEJ-267, directed by Mayte Echezarrreta at the University of Málaga, Málaga).

rism. International retirement migration or gerontomigration² has nonetheless blurred the boundaries between tourism and migration (O'Reilly, 2009). Spain is among the countries where the phenomenon is taken place to a high extent. Certainly, Spain is a tourist country. Throughout the late 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, it has also become a country of immigration. For many of those foreigners settled in this country, Spain has become a European retirement place.

Throughout the last decades Spain has evolved as the prime destination for elderly individuals reorganizing their daily lives by relocating to particularly coastal areas in southern Europe. Most of them come from Northern and Central European countries. Most of them come from the fifteen older European Union (EU) Member States and to a lesser extent from the countries of the European Free Trade Association. According to the last official data at the disposal of researchers (the 2013 Spanish population register), European foreign seniors ageing 55 or more and residing in the country amount to more than half a million.

Politicians, economic actors, and the media in Spain use the term 'residential tourists' to refer to the whole set of lifestyle or leisure-oriented migrants (Gustafson, 2001; Benson and O'Reilly, 2009; Huete, Mantecón and Estévez, 2013). However, neither all of them are tourists, nor most of those who live in Spain more than three months per year³ feel themselves as tourists. Many of them are peripatetic movers (who go back and forth in erratic or patterned ways), seasonal visitors (who spend the winter in Spain and the rest of the year back home), returning or temporary residents (who live in Spain and escape back to birth country during the heat of the summer), and full or permanent residents, who less regularly return to it (see also Huete and Mantecón, 2012).

Residence is more than length of stay. It has also to do with legal dispositions, as it is related to feelings and engagements. The rights and duties of foreign citizens settled in a given country are not the same depending on whether we pay attention to one dimension of residence or another. For instance, the rights and duties related to tax residence are not the same that the rights and duties related to healthcare or elections. On the other hand, dealing with residence is also to take integration into account. In view of that, the aim of this paper is to explore the meaning and the scope of residence, a complex and polysemic phenomenon, in order to better understand European retirees' linkage to the territory where they live abroad. What do we mean when we speak of residence? What link have retirees to their place of residence – beyond certain official registers – when this place is different from that of their nationality? The issue is a demographic reality of social, economic, cultural and political importance. It affects welfare and integration policies of citizenship, and it

2. The concept 'gerontomigration' was coined by the team led by Echezarreta (2005). To deepen the international retirement migration, see also King, Warnes and Williams (1998 and 2000), Williams and Hall (2000), O'Reilly (2000), Warnes (2004), and Rodríguez, Casado and Huber (2005).

3. Three months is the legally established period to distinguish tourism from other types of stay.

also affects the quality of democracy, which is local democracy in this case. It finally affects economic development and environmental sustainability of retirement localities and beyond.

In 2008 the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Spanish National Research Council) together with seven Spanish universities started a representative, large scale, multi-method research project called MIRE3i (Migración Internacional de Retirados en España: Impactos, Identidades e Integración/International Retirement Migration in Spain: Identity, Impacts, Integration). MIRE3i investigates the multiple facets of European retirement migration to Spain. The interdisciplinary research has been carried out in the most important Spanish regions for retirement migration (Andalusia, Balearic and Canary Islands, Catalonia, Murcia, and Valencia) by means of a standardised questionnaire addressed in Spanish, English, German and French to 720 foreign European retirees (pensioners aged 50 years or over) of 16 nationalities (those of the EU-15 plus those coming from Norway and Switzerland) living in Spain for more than three months per year. The face-to-face questionnaire survey was conducted between April 2010 and February 2011. It is the first national survey addressed to such a multinational population in Europe. Before dealing with formal and informal dimensions of residence, we will describe the socio-demographic profile of our study population.

Socio-demographics of Retirement Residence

According to the MIRE3i survey, 41 per cent of the retirees decided to move their residence to Spain before reaching the age of 65, whilst only 11 per cent did so after the age of 75. Almost half of them (47%) took the decision of moving to Spain before retirement. The same percentage of European gerontoimmigrants (EGI hereafter) had already retired when decided to move. The average age of both setting in Spain and retirement is also the same – 57 years. EGI are therefore relatively young at the beginning of their retirement *in the sun*, as titled in the early work of Williams, King and Warnes (1997).⁴ And they enjoy a health status that allows most of them ample personal autonomy – 94 per cent say that they are capable of doing housework (cooking, washing, ironing, etc.), 96 per cent can move inside the house, go shopping or for a walk, and 98 per cent do not need help for personal care (eating, washing, dressing, etc.) or for help directly linked to health (preparing or taking medication, etc.).⁵

28 per cent of retirees in this study live alone. Households consist of two people in most cases (67%). While a quarter have no education or have just completed the basic

4. Among the pioneering works, see Cribier (1980) and Warnes (1982), and, in Spanish and on the Spanish case, Gaviria (1974 and 1976), and Jurdao (1979).

5. For a deeper and geriatric account of foreign retirees' personal autonomy, see Marín et al. (2005). For a paper dealing with the lived experiences of vulnerable, older members of the British community as they age in Spain, focusing on those who are in serious need of help and support, see Hall (2011).

school cycles, the rest have completed secondary or professional education (57%) or even have a university degree (19%). Three quarters of them were employees, and the remaining majority were self-employed (17% of total) or, to a lesser extent, employers with more than six employees (7%). Compared to 35 per cent who say they belong to a household whose monthly income is less than € 1,500, most EGI recognises a net monthly income benefit up to 3,000 euros (39%) and even higher (26%).

47 per cent of the sample are British or Irish. However, more than three quarters of the respondents name English as one of the top three languages they speak, either as their mother tongue or as a foreign language. German is spoken by 36 per cent of EGI, even though Germans, Austrians and Swiss represent least than 29 per cent of the sample. In the same vein, 22 per cent of EGI can manage in French, which is also a percentage higher than the total of French and Belgians (10%). Disaggregating their domain of Spanish, 40 per cent can express the basic things of everyday life in the host language, and 31 per cent have trouble even in that scenario. They are the third and fourth options in the four-level competence-scheme offered in the survey. Asked about their listening comprehension in watching TV, listening to the radio or in daily life, both percentages drop to 34 per cent and 26 per cent, respectively, for the benefit of the first option ('I understand almost everything when listening to conversations and discussions', 17%) and second ('I understand a lot but it is not so easy to understand all the details on the telephone', 22%).⁶ Finally, reading comprehension skills go down in the advanced levels (16% and 19%, respectively), and increase in both the third (35%) and fourth level (30%).

The Local Population Census (Padrón) as a Residential Register

No official record comprehensively covers the total of foreigners living in a country. Nor does any register account for the total amount of foreign retirees. The municipal register of inhabitants (*Padrón*) is the Spanish census closest to the reality of this population settlement. That is why social-scientific studies have it as the main source of information and why the previous section has been built on it. Registering is an obligation, even though not standardized in the national level. Those who register can enjoy certain rights and some economic benefits, for example municipal discounts on issues as diverse as the municipal property tax (IBI in Spanish), the consumption of water, or the use of sports facilities. Registering is also being promoted by town halls given that public funding (via regional and national budgets) depends on the legal population, i.e. enrolled population.

6. Spanish competence is higher among the Germans than among the British, and it is three points higher among the rest of nationalities taken as a whole. Only 7.5 per cent of British retirees say they understand almost everything when listening to conversations and discussions in Spanish (e.g. on the radio, on television, in a bar...). The percentage goes to 23 per cent among the Germans. Over a quarter of EGI, with no significant difference among nationalities, only understand a few words.

Whatever the utilitarian component of registering (namely, the formalisation of residence for convenience), there are foreign residents who are not registered. Surveys conducted around the turn of the century showed an underregistration of around a third of the actual population (see Paniagua, 1991; Durán, 2005a). The MIRE3i survey showed underregistration to be just over 13 per cent. The reduction could be due both to municipal campaigns promoting enrollment and to methodological reasons.⁷ The main point, nonetheless, is to understand the reasons argued by those who do not register (see Rodríguez, Lardiés and Rodríguez, 2010). This allows an insight into the nature of residence and, in proactive terms, it helps proposing incentives to registration, that is, measures to bring the official residential data closer to real ones.

MIRE3i included a multi-choice question on why some retirees do not register. More than a third of them (36%) consider they do not live in Spain sufficient months per year as to justify the registration,⁸ and less than half that amount avoid registering because they prefer to be anonymous (17%) and/or because they do not want to lose voting rights in their country of origin as a consequence (16%).⁹ A large number of EGI claim to have no knowledge of registering (27%) and/or state they do not need to be registered insofar as they are EU citizens (43%). Insofar as the latter are two issues affecting up to almost three quarters retirees,¹⁰ City Councils could take them into account for the benefit of an increase in registration. Town halls could also take into account that more than three-quarters would not have registered a) because of ignorance or excessive administrative burdens (21% and 14%, respectively); b) because it is not necessary in their country of birth, so it is out of their habit (22%), and/or c) because of language difficulties (21%). Finally, nearly half EGI say not having registered because it does not derive benefits from the effort (29.5%) and/or for no special reason (18%).

On the other hand, some factors arise as statistically related to the registration – the overall calculation of the annual length of stay (the EGI register more the longer they live per year in Spain), nationality (the British register to a greater extent than the Germans, who in turn do it to a greater extent than the rest), and less strongly in statistical terms, the sense of identity (see table 1). Table 1 also shows that the probability of registering is greater among those who feel themselves as Spaniards or expatriates, and lesser among those who feel as tourists, as expected. It is not critical feeling as an immigrant, a foreigner or a European citizen. Finally, no predictive

7. Unlike other surveys, MIRE3i did not include people who spent up to three months in the country throughout the previous year.

8. 70 per cent of those who do not register live up to six months a year in Spain.

9. The European Commission adopted a Recommendation to Member States on 29 January 2014 for them to 'enable their nationals who make use of their right to free movement and residence in the Union to demonstrate a continuing interest in the political life in the Member State of which they are nationals, including through an application to remain registered on the electoral roll, and by doing so, to retain their right to vote' (2014/53/EU).

10. It is a multi-choice question in the questionnaire.

power is observed in other variables over which the authorities may act to increase the formalisation of the residence, except in the case of confidence in the Spanish healthcare system – the more confidence the more the likelihood of registering.

Table 1
Factors statistically associated with the registration of EGI

		Registered on population census	
		Yes	No
Gender ($X^2 = 5.542$)	Male	83.7%*	16.3%*
	Female	89.7%*	10.3%*
Nationality ($X^2 = 20.218$)	British	92.5%*	7.5%*
	German	85.5%	14.5%
	Another	79.2%*	20.8%*
Months in Spain (2009) ($X^2 = 137.189$)	4 thru 6 months	60.7%*	39.3%*
	7 thru 9 months	80.4%	19.6%
	10 thru 12 months	96.0%*	4.0%*
Identity feeling as resident in Spain ($X^2 = 19.984$)	I feel as a tourist	70.5%*	29.5%*
	I feel as an immigrant	83.9%	16.1%
	I feel as a foreigner	82.4%	17.6%
	I feel as an European	86.0%	14.0%
	I feel as a Spaniard	94.3%*	5.7%*
	I feel as an expatriate (expat)	93.7%*	6.3%*
	None of the above/Don't know	83.7%	16.3%
Property where living in before coming to Spain ($X^2 = 59.153$)	Yes	75.0%*	25.0%*
	No	94.9%*	5.1%*
Trust in the Spanish Health Service ($X^2 = 8.366$)	Not very confident	79.2%*	20.8%*
	Neither much nor little	84.2%	15.8%
	Very confident	89.8%*	10.2%*

Source: MIRE3i survey.

Note: Row percentage. Each cross between variables is significant at 95% (sig. < .05, for gender, identity and trust) or at 99% (sig. = .000, for the rest of variables). The asterisks indicate that percentages are significant at 95% (typified residuals > 1.96).

Residence as a Link, Census Apart

The MIRE3i survey was addressed to foreign European retirees who spend continuously in Spain more than three months a year. Tourists, who do not reside in the country, are thus excluded. A quarter of those who have settled in Spain live in the Mediterranean country from three to six months, while the rest (three quarters) spend from seven to nine months (7%) and even more (70%). In fact, most retirees live in Spain between 10 and 12 months (70%). Consequently, EGI are traditional immigrants (permanent residents) to a larger extent than transmigrants (temporary residents, whether itinerant or seasonal).¹¹

They are not tourists, but many of them were. The close link between tourism and retirement migration has been amply demonstrated in empirical research (see i.e. Williams and Hall, 2000). In light of the MIRE3i survey, 87 per cent of subjects in our study (90% in the case of the British) had visited Spain as tourists in more than one occasion before setting his residence in the country, and only three per cent had never done so. Once settled, they become a sort of tourism promoters: more than three-quarters (77%, the same percentage among the Germans, 81% in the case of Britons) receive friends and family from the country of origin who stay at home. And there are more EGI receiving visits from their own country than those returning there to visit: 26 per cent did not go to his country throughout the year before the survey, and 31 per cent went only once. Moreover, according to the survey of the European Observatory on Gerontomigration (OEG, in Spanish; see Echezarreta, 2005), 87 per cent of households in Spain are owned by retirees themselves, while nine per cent are rented, and four per cent belong to a friend. Their link as residents is even stronger given that 58 per cent (70% among British, 46% among Germans) do not own a property in their country of origin.

The fact that 68 per cent of EGI do not imagine any circumstances that could motivate future return to their country reinforces the material link just observed (see also Betty and Hall, 2013; Bartram, 2014). The sense of identity strengthens it as well. Being a multi-choice question in the questionnaire, only a minority of them (6%) feel as tourists with regard to their residential status abroad, i.e. in Spain. While those who feel themselves as immigrants – a kind of otherness – are even fewer (4.5%), the proportion of retirees who identify themselves as European citizens rises up to half of them (50%). According to this dimension, EGI residence would not be either local or foreign in nature, but rather transnational, that is beyond the frontiers, which continues to be a way of linking oneself to the territory and its inhabitants. But residence does not have to lead to the dilution of own national identity into the host society, whether retirees feel or not EU citizens. This is why some of them, either in a

11. The 'transmigrant' concept was coined by Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1992) and applied to foreign retirees by O'Reilly (2008, p.52). See also Gustafson (2004 and 2008) and Favell (2009).

complementary or in an exclusive manner, feel foreign (13%) and/or expats (19.5%). A similar amount of them (16%) feel Spanish. In any case, as revealed by the OEG survey, all of them appears to be interested in the Spanish culture, and there are only a few (5%) without interest to practice their customs and traditions in Spain. The remaining subjects claim to alternate their customs and traditions with Spanish ones, whatever the equilibrium reached between both of them, on the one hand, and their will to know better the Spanish traditions or to practice more their own.

Interactions with the Spaniards (i.e. the native population) also allow us to calibrate the nature and intensity of the link derived from EGI residence. In other words, to what extent the Spanish municipalities where they enjoy retirement are the centre of their social and personal life. 27 per cent of those living in Spain for more than three months per year do not have Spaniards in their immediate social circle. Therefore, over 65 per cent have Spanish friends, and more than six per cent only have close relations with Spaniards. MIRE3i interviewees were also asked about the nationality of those offering them certain services: bakery, butcher's, hairdresser, maintenance of property (cleaning, gardening, etc.), personal assistance (help with personal hygiene, mobility and so on), bank and insurance, lawyer (legal assistance in general), and medical professional, dental care included. EGI were attended or serviced mostly by Spaniards in each of those services, except in personal care ones. In these services only 27 per cent said they had been attended by host people. However, it is noteworthy both that the highest percentage (64%) said not to use such services, and that no more than three per cent were attended by people who spoke their own language. There is only one service in which less than half EGI were attended by Spanish speakers: maintenance of the dwelling (45%), but 43 per cent claimed it was not among their expenses. In the remaining services, attention by Spaniards goes from 59 per cent (hairdresser) to 87 per cent (bakery).

Almost three quarters of retirees (72%) use healthcare provided by Spanish people. It is a particularly important service for purposes of determining foreigners' link with their place of residence, more so in the case of the elderly. In this regard, 17 per cent say they have never seen a doctor in Spain, and 14 per cent explain their visits to his/her country the year before, among other reasons, for medical consultations and/or checks up. That is, around 86 per cent go to a doctor in Spain when they need one, and 83 per cent have actually visited a doctor in Spain while residing there. It is also noteworthy that 60 per cent express great confidence in the Spanish healthcare system (compared to 44 per cent in his/her own country's system). On the contrary, 11 per cent express mistrust in the Spanish system (vs. 16.5 per cent in himself/herself). Marín et al. (2005, p.106) have found that EGI are sensitive to the need of care and of being adequately served. In studying the regional case of Andalusia, the authors also found that 91 per cent of OEG interviewees considered to have been served well or very well in the public health system. Actually, Spanish healthcare system is among the factors attracting foreign European retirees (Legido-Quigley et

al., 2012). It is therefore among the interactions with both the host society and the host administration that tighten the relationship with the place of residence. In other words, healthcare is one of the many dimensions of the residence as link.

Being aware of that multidimensionality and being able to specify it does not only allow us to know the degree of integration of a given community. To consider residence in its multidimensionality is even more useful given that residence is not only related to issues such as taxes or both social and health rights, among others. It has also to do with lesser known issues, issues that use to be more absent from the public debate. For instance, sentences related to EGI and decided on private cross-border cases such as inherited property and/or taxes at death. In such cases, Judges decide once stated residence, and this uses to rest upon informal inputs, that is, inputs other than census.

Residence as Civic Engagement, no Matter Whether there is or not Registration

Insofar as residing involves being part of a place and a community, residence is also participation in the public space. With the exception of nationals of Switzerland and Liechtenstein, EGI have been recognized the right to vote in Spanish municipal elections.¹² And all of them can, in any case, exercise the rest of civil and political rights of participation. While EGI's electoral turnout is below that of native citizens – as use to happen with immigrants everywhere (Messina, 2007; Bird, Saalfeld and Wüst, 2011) – their rate¹³ is also characterized by being superior to that of other foreign residents both of the same age and of the same identity group or group of nationalities, which in turn is higher than non-European voters' turnout (see Durán, 2005b; Janoschka and Durán, 2013).

When asked about their interest in political issues related to different territories on a scale of 0 to 10, rates are higher among those who are very interested (7-10 range) in the affairs of both the area and the town in which they reside (respectively, 54% and 52%). By being the interest of EGI always greater than their disinterest, and distinguishing the positions 0 to 3 and 4 to 6 on the scale, high interest rates for other territorial areas range from 50 per cent. very interested in political issues related to Spain, followed by their country of origin (47%), to 39 per cent, very interested in the European Union. These are higher rates than the Spaniards' around the same

12. EU citizenship gives every EU citizen the right to vote for and stand as a candidate in municipal and European Parliament elections in whichever EU country the citizen resides, under the same conditions as nationals (see Shaw, 2007). Norwegian and Icelandic has the right to vote in Spanish municipal elections by bilateral agreements.

13. According to the MIRE3i survey, only 34 per cent EGI exercised their right to vote in the 2007 local elections. The figure is higher than in previous elections, but it is also the national rate of abstention in the following elections (Spaniards and foreigners of all ages over 18 included), and only two points below overall abstention in 2007 (see electoral data at official web <http://www.infoelectoral.mir.es/min/home.html>).

time – only nine per cent admitted in late 2009 to be very interested in politics in general, and the number did not exceed 34 per cent including those who said they were somewhat interested.¹⁴

Over two-thirds (67%) agree or strongly agree with the statement that their political participation brings benefits to the municipality in which they reside. However, neither the interest expressed in what happens in their place of residence nor the belief that their political engagement would benefit it results in informal political participation higher than electoral one. Quite the opposite – always according to MIRE3i survey – an average of 89 per cent EGI have neither contacted a politician or the local government in order to make a complaint, to submit a proposal, a reclamation or recommendation (86.5%), nor have contacted the media in order to express their opinion (93%). In the same vein, they have neither expressed their political opinion in blogs, emails, or other electronic media (95%) nor have taken part in an official forum of participation in their municipality (95%). They do not work actively in a political party (95%) or participate actively in a citizen's initiative (87%), even though 27.5 per cent is member of a club or association, and 24 per cent of the latter are members of more than one. Any way, most of them have neither supported a petition, or another protest campaign like – for example, collecting signatures, or distributing information brochures (79%) – nor have taken part in a public demonstration (81%) or boycotted certain products for political reasons (89%).

Nonetheless these data, more than two thirds disagree (32%) or strongly disagree (37%) with the statement that they should not participate in local politics insofar as they are not 'from here.' Thus most EGI reject foreignness as related to otherness or strangeness. Their lack of engagement has probably more to do with political disaffection in consolidated democracies (see Putnam, 2003; Montero et al., 2005). Their apathetic political participation – larger in informal politics – would be to some extent only the expression by a particular group of population residing in particular places (Durán, 2005b; Collard, 2010; see also Janoschka, 2010) of something common to the whole population in consolidated democracies. 49 per cent express little confidence in the Spanish parties,¹⁵ but the percentage is the same when asked about their country's parties. Similarly, while just 24 per cent say they have a lot of confidence in the City Hall of the municipality of residence,¹⁶ the percentage in relation to the local government of their country of origin only rises by two points. And the

14. Research Study of the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS), number 2,823 (November-December 2009). According to the CIS # 2,860 Study (January-February 2011), only 25 per cent recognized being very or somewhat interested in politics. And the number responds to increased interest since the mid-decade, but especially during the Great Recession (Pérez-Nievas et al., 2013, pp.26-27).

15. Positions 0 to 3 on a scale of 0 to 10.

16. Positions 7 to 10 on a scale of 0 to 10.

rates of those who have neither much nor little confidence in each of them are similar as well (respectively, 50% y 51%).

Hence, participation in the public space, namely in the local polity, is not a relevant dimension of the EGI's link with their retirement places. But it could be. It could be a dimension of the residence to be strengthened by local institutions, especially so given EGI's political interest and their sense of belonging. Municipal authorities could implement public policies to promote civic engagement of these neighbors in particular and everyone, including Spaniards, at large.¹⁷ Following this proactive reading of the data, and although the statistical association is very weak the MIRE3i survey also shows that EGI are more in agreement with the statement that they should not participate for not being 'from here' the less confidence they have in the Town Hall of their municipality of residence, and viceversa.¹⁸ The logic is the same, but now with significant statistical association,¹⁹ between the agreement or disagreement with the statement and the interest in political issues of their municipality of residence – the more the interest they express, the greater the disagreement that they should not be involved because of their foreignness.

Table 2
EGI's foreignness and political participation

		Attitude before the statement 'We are not from here, so we shouldn't participate in local politics'		
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree/Strongly agree
Months in Spain (2009) ($X^2 = 10.832$)	4 thru 6 months	29.6%*	36.5%	34.0%
	7 thru 9 months	36.2%	19.1%*	44.7%*
	10 thru 12 months	39.4%*	32.3%	28.4%*
First year living in Spain ($X^2 = 35.199$)	Before 1991	53.4%*	32.0%	14.6%*
	1991 thru 2000	41.6%	28.3%	30.1%
	2001 thru 2005	32.5%	38.3%*	29.2%
	After 2005	28.4%*	28.4%	43.2%*

17. National reforms could also foster electoral mobilization. For instance, by avoiding EGI to have to enroll in the electoral census to exercise their voting right once they have registered on the *Padrón*, a second administrative task that native fellow-citizens have not to accomplish. Or by allowing voters to choose among candidates when voting, and not among lists of them or candidatures, that is by opting for an open-list system (see Østergaard-Nielsen, 2010).

18. The asymptotic significance of the Pearson's chi-squared test (X^2) is greater than .05 (see contingency table 2).

19. Asymp. Sig. = .000 (see table 2).

		Attitude before the statement 'We are not from here, so we shouldn't participate in local politics'		
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree/Strongly agree
Spaniards as the people closest to him/her in Spain ($X^2 = 78.135$)	All of them	63.2%*	18.4%	18.4%
	Some of them	40.1%*	37.7%*	22.2%*
	None of them	23.9%*	20.7%*	55.4%*
	Don't know	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
Spanish competence: faculty of speak ($X^2 = 76.932$)	I can take part in complex conversations and debates on various topics	71.1%*	14.5%*	14.5%*
	I can take part in everyday conversations with Spaniards without major problems	46.7%*	34.2%	19.2%*
	I can express the basic things of everyday life in Spanish	34.0%	36.9%*	29.1%
	It is not easy for me to speak in Spanish even if it is basic things	22.1%*	31.9%	46.1%*
Spanish competence: listening comprehension ($X^2 = 55.516$)	I understand almost everything when listening to conversations and discussions (e.g. on the radio, on television, in a bar)	60.0%*	21.8%*	18.2%*
	I understand a lot but it is not so easy to understand all the details on the telephone	44.4%*	31.8%	23.8%*
	I understand some of what I hear but it is hard for me to understand all the details	31.5%*	37.9%*	30.6%
	I only understand a few words	22.8%*	31.6%	45.6%*

		Attitude before the statement 'We are not from here, so we shouldn't participate in local politics'		
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree/Strongly agree
Spanish competence: reading comprehension ($X^2 = 54.560$)	I can read the daily press and official documents without any difficulties	64.1%*	18.4%*	17.5%*
	I understand most of what I read	35.3%	40.6%*	24.1%
	I understand some of what I read but it is hard for me to understand all the details	34.9%	34.9%	30.2%
	I only understand single words and sentences, for example the menu in a restaurant	26.0%*	31.0%	43.0%*
Identity feeling as resident in Spain ($X^2 = 81.829$)	I feel as a tourist	20.9%*	25.6%	53.5%*
	I feel as an immigrant	40.7%	33.3%	25.9%
	I feel as a foreigner	34.9%	30.1%	34.9%
	I feel as an European	46.3%*	37.8%*	16.0%*
	I feel as a Spaniard	34.4%	26.6%	39.1%
	I feel as an expatriate (expat)	25.0%*	18.3%*	56.7%*
	None of the above/Don't know	20.0%*	42.5%	37.5%
Trust in the communal government of the municipality he/she lives in ($X^2 = 7.291$)	Not very confident	30.4%*	32.7%	36.9%*
	Neither much nor little	37.6%	32.4%	30.0%
	Very confident	42.4%	33.3%	24.3%
Interest in politics regarding the municipality he/she lives in ($X^2 = 42.446$)	Not interested	25.5%*	28.4%	46.1%*
	Neither much nor little	27.1%*	33.9%	39.0%*
	Very interested	46.9%*	32.1%	21.0%*

Source: MIRE3i survey.

Note: Row percentage. Each cross between variables is significant at 95% (sig. < .05, for months) or at 99% (sig. = .000, for the rest of variables), except the cross with variable 'trust' (sig. = .121). The asterisks indicate that percentages are significant at 95% (typified residuals > 1.96).

Similarly, statistical relationship is observed between the attitude regarding the assertion at stake and the amount of months EGI use to reside in Spain per year. The relationship is stronger when accounting for the number of years they have been living in Spain, no matter whether temporarily or permanently.²⁰ The association is even higher when taking into account the presence or absence of Spaniards among the people closest to them in their place of residence – they are more opposed to the assertion the more Spanish is their immediate circle of friends, and viceversa. It is also high the statistical association with the dominance of Spanish language they claim to have. In this regard, the higher they assess their Spanish competence the less they justify their absence from the public space due to their foreignness. Identity feeling as residents in Spain is no less important: whilst more than half of those who feel as tourists or expats agree or strongly agree with the statement, the percentage drops to 16 per cent among those who feel European citizens as residents in Spain.

Conclusions

It follows from the empirical evidence that European gerontoimmigrants spend most of the year in Spain. Most of them, actually, no longer have a home in their country of origin. By understanding residence as accommodation, EGI's linkage to retirement places is greater given that most of them live in dwellings of their own. The majority of them visit their country of origin at least once a year, but retirees receive more visits from friends and relatives than visit them there. That is, without losing their link to *home*, they mostly materialize such a link in their retirement place, which is residential and not tourist in nature. The strength of their settlement is such that most of them cannot even imagine a situation in the future that could induce him/her to give up his/her life in Spain completely and make return to his/her country of origin.

Although some of them feel strange within the host society, either as tourists or immigrants (the least) or as expatriates or foreigners, most profess a common sense of identity with the native: that of being European citizens. Identity has to do with belonging, and we can enrich the concept of residence as a sense of belonging by accounting for EGI's large interest in the culture and current affairs of the area where they have settled. Residence as link to the retirement place is greater in view

20. In crossing the attitude regarding the assertion with the months that EGI spend in Spain per year, $X^2 = 10.832$ and Asymp. Sig. = .029. Both statistics are 35.199 and .000 (at the 99% level of confidence) in crossing with their years of residence. Thus the probability of disagreeing with the assertion is greater the more years they have been living in Spain. Furthermore, it is high the probability that the observed data match the population.

of retirees' interactions with the host society, whether close or contingent. It is coexistence (i.e. living together) as an additional dimension of residence. EGI, in other words, are not only registered. They are more than a number on a census and more than part of the landscape in retirement places. Besides, they also make use of their services, which are also mostly provided by Spaniards. In this regard, the scope and intensity of residence is higher the higher is both EGI's relationship with the locals and the higher the former's possibility of communication – from a linguistic point of view – with the latter.

Politics is the dimension of residence that EGI display to a lesser extent. Nonetheless, they are citizens more politically interested than the host society itself. On the other hand, their civic engagement (a variable affecting the quality of democracy) could be fostered by local authorities through campaigns and incentive mechanisms for EGI's participation not only from an electoral point of view, but thinking of political participation as a whole, namely by fostering residence understood as involvement in the public space.

Thus linkages to the territory by foreign retirees in Spain, as elsewhere in Europe, are many. It is clear that residence is a multidimensional or complex and polysemic concept that transcends its merely administrative aspects. Residence is more than official records, and not all its dimensions develop with the same intensity. The research has also pointed out that certain public policies could promote both the presence and the consolidation as residents of European elderly movers.

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