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Emerging tourism futures: residential tourism and its implications

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[1]CHAPTER TWELVE

EMERGING TOURISM FUTURES: RESIDENTIAL TOURISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Karen O'Reilly

North Europeans, particularly the British and Germans, have been migrating to Spain's coastal towns in increasing numbers since the 1980s. They have been attracted by the weather, the (especially relative) cost of living, and the pace of life. They are aided by portable pensions and the increase in expendable wealth experienced by some northern Europeans in recent decades. And the migration or mobility is eased by the existence and development of reasonably-priced and regular transport routes, cheap airlines, and a good local infrastructure that was developed initially for tourism. Key areas of North European settlement in Spain are the Costa Blanca, the Costa del Sol, Mallorca and the Canary Islands. These "immigrants" now form a large minority group. Officially, the largest groups of migrants in Spain are Moroccans (500,000), followed by Colombians, Ecuadorians, Romanians, then migrants from the United Kingdom (220,000), followed by Germans (120,000). However, it is almost certain that these figures, from the Spanish Institute of National Statistics, seriously underestimate the actual numbers of settled or partly-settled European migrants. Several experts have estimated (and our own survey confirms) that only about one in three settled UK migrants actually register as resident at their local town hall.

Fluidity

Of course, the term "migrating" makes one think of people who have moved, but the difficulties of separating tourism and migration in terms of contemporary mobilities are now well-rehearsed (Williams & Hall 2002). Where the term tourism was once used for temporary travel for business or pleasure, with a return expected within a year, migration was taken to involve nothing less than settlement in the destination. Tourism has been defined in terms of what it is not (not work, home and so on), as a change in scenery or lifestyle, or an inversion of the "normal"

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(Smith 1978, Urry 1990). Migration then becomes a new "normal" life. Contemporary forms of mobility have, however, undermined this distinction, and not least where north-south European migrants are concerned.

Researchers have used various forms of terminology to capture what they consider a new phenomenon and have therefore explored *retirement migration* (Casado-Díaz *et al*., 2004; King *et al*., 2000; Rodríguez *et a*l., 1998), *intra-European migration*, *second-home owners*, *residential tourists* (Aledo & Mazón, 2004) and *seasonal visitors* (Gustafson, 2001). With our focus on a community rather than on a trend, we identified four key migrant groups (who were not, or were something more than, tourists): *full residents*, who fit comfortably under the heading of migrants, *returning residents*, who return to their home country regularly, probably retaining a home in both countries, *seasonal migrants*, who live in the UK but seasonally move to Spain, and *peripatetic migrants*, who move back and forth between countries, often having a home in more than one place (O'Reilly 2000). In reality, though, people find ever more creative ways of living in more than one space at a time: migrating, circulating, oscillating and touring, altering migration patterns and legal status apparently at will.

Julie and Richard, for example, moved to Spain in 2003 when Julie was fifty and Richard was sixty years old and had recently retired. Richard had spent much of his working life as an expatriate, taking up international assignments for large employers. Julie was trained as lawyer and worked in the UK apart from when she took time out to move abroad with Richard. On Richard's retirement, Julie wanted to commit herself more fully to her career but Richard did not want to settle back in the UK. So, they bought a house in the countryside near Alhaurin el Grande (in Málaga province) from where Julie is able to conduct most of her work as a lawyer by email, post and telephone, returning to the UK from time to time for meetings and court appearances. Julie lives *de jure* in the UK and *de facto* in Spain, while Richard simply lives in Spain.

Charlie and Mary are a very different example: they moved to Spain with their two children in 2004 when they were fed up with the rain, the cold, and the lack of prospects in the UK. They had both worked as entertainers, Charlie as a comedian and Mary a singer, but they were finding it difficult to make ends meet and were worried about the future prospects for their children. "If we stayed in that town much longer the only thing was certain was Jody (their son) was going to get into trouble with the police," Mary told me. Like so many of these migrants, they see Spain as much safer for children and believe they will have more freedom as well as being less likely to grow up into a life of crime. They lived in a council house in the UK so had no property to sell and have simply rented a caravan near Fuengirola, in Málaga, where they now live full time. The children go to a local school and Mary is a "caravan-wife" (as she calls it). Charlie, on the other hand, goes to the UK and to other parts of Europe to work as an entertainer intermittently, perhaps for four weeks at a time, earning just enough to fund their

new lives in Spain.

However, not only is this a very flexible migration trend, it is also difficult to disentangle migration and tourism here: many people were tourists first, prior to settling a little more permanently; they settle in holiday places; they spend time on a daily basis with holiday-makers; most go "home" during the year for weddings, funerals, or to visit the family (which seems more a return to the normal than an inversion of it); a huge majority have visitors spending time with them throughout the year for the purposes of a holiday; many live on urbanisations—concentrated developments of holiday homes or second homes—and they share social spaces, newspapers, magazines, shops, and even workplaces with tourists (O'Reilly 2003).

"Residential tourists"

Here it is proposed to develop a way of conceptualising these migrants (in the dictionary sense of the word migration, which is to move from one place to another) that recognises they are part of a broader trend of people moving from affluent to less-affluent parts of the world. This might comprise : Northern Europeans moving to Spain (Rodríguez et al. 2005), including British (O'Reilly 2000), Germans (Aledo 2005; Schriewer & Jimenez 2005), Finns (Karisto 2005), Norwegians (Helset *et al*. 2005), Swiss (Huber & O'Reilly 2004), Swedes (Gustafson 2001) and Scandinavians in general(Casado-Díaz 2006); North European retirement migrants to Malta, Italy, Portugal, Greece and Turkey (Ackers & Dwyer 2004; Casado-Díaz *et al*. 2004; Warnes *et al*. 2005); European and US second home owners in Croatia, especially Istria and Dubrovnik (Božić 2006); British people moving to France (chapters Bruillon, Geoffroy, Puzzo & Smallwood, and Geoffroy 2006); the Dutch in France (Ginet 2006); Europeans in Romania; North Americans migrating to Mexico (Rojas & Thankam 2006); Europeans, especially French, going to Marrakesh (Bousta) and Québécois to Florida (Tremblay & O'Reilly 2004).

The examples listed above are capitalising on the differences in property prices and cost of living between home and host countries, in search of a better quality of life, and are moving either part-time or full-time, temporarily or permanently, to places that have previously been developed for, or signify, tourism and leisure. I propose the term *residential tourism* as a way of distinguishing a key aspect: the affluence that enables them to turn tourism, to some extent, into a way of life, and to construct fluid, leisured lifestyles betwixt and between places, and in which even when they ostensibly try to settle they still remain in some ways outside or above the community they have moved to. "Residential tourism" is a term being used increasingly by estate agents and council officials in Spain, by the Spanish tourist board, local newspapers and some Spanish academics (Aledo & Mazón, 2004; Casado-Díaz, 2004). It remains to be adequately defined but generally refers to

property ownership and short-term residence of North-Europeans in tourist areas, residence that falls short of full migration. I have criticised the use of the term in the past, because its association with the leisure and temporary aspects of tourism mean that the more permanent or long-term impacts and implications of this tourism-related migration are overlooked. However, I think it may offer potential in the fact that it is, and describes, an oxymoron.

Explaining residential tourism

Residential tourism is the result of a convergence of factors, so that explanation has to separate the historical and material preconditions enabling the phenomenon from what migrants want to do—the motivations for migration—and how this is achieved in practice. To look firstly at the historical and material conditions, this section draws on the "migration systems theory" approach, which has emerged in recent years in response to failings of traditional uni-dimensional migration perspectives, by attempting to cover all dimensions of the migration experience and which views migration as the result of interacting macro- and micro-structures (Castles & Miller 2003).

The relevant historical developments and material conditions for residential tourism can be summarised as follows: globalisation, increased interconnectedness and the increased sense of the world as a single place; the development of mass tourism, in which more people visit more places than ever before, and now the travel, fluidity, flow and flux that arguably characterize modern life (Urry 2000; Papastergiadis 2000); the spread of mass communications, and time-space compression (Giddens 1990); rising living standards and unprecedented rises in property values in some parts of the world, especially relative to other parts; flexibility in labour markets, the ability to live and work in different places, and with these, increased leisure time in affluent societies, extended holidays, early retirement, and flexible working lives; and finally migration chains, in which, through the construction of networks, migration movements, once begun, become self-sustaining social processes (Castles & Miller 2003). We must also acknowledge the role of intermediaries—estate agents, financial institutions, mass media—promoting and enabling migrations. In other words, citizens of northern and western countries, or relatively affluent peoples, are more free to move than ever before, are more aware of the world as a single place, have more opportunity for travel and more free income to fund such a move than ever before. They are more likely to retire early or to manage extended holidays or to work flexibly, and therefore to have time to spend in holiday or second homes, to visit friends and family who have settled elsewhere, consolidating the international networks, and to be able to communicate rapidly and cheaply with home, family or work while doing so.

For the purposes of this chapter (though not for all purposes) we can treat residential tourism as a single whole phenomenon, and can then place one of its representatives at the centre of the discussion to exemplify the phenomenon. Residential tourism in Spain has been subjected to more studies than any other tourism-related migration, is perhaps the most important trend numerically, and is indicative of the broader trend in terms of material conditions. While Spain was, at the beginning of the twentieth century, a country of net emigration, still contributing 2.2 million Spaniards between 1960 and 1970 to the massive labour migration of that decade, by 1975 it had become a country of net immigration, with return migrants and immigrants from the economically less-developed countries of Africa, Asia and South America contributing to a net positive migratory balance (King & Rybaczuk 1993). This immigration continued to grow during the 1980s and was increasingly supplemented by the migration of Europeans to Spain. Here, we cannot ignore the role of the development of mass and package tourism during the 1960s and 70s, in which Spain was a favourite destination, and the consequent development of certain coastal regions specifically for mass tourist consumption (Burkart & Medlik 1974). The phenomenon of the all-inclusive, package tour was critical in this growth of mass tourism and its Europeanisation during the 1960s and 1970s (Shaw & Williams 1994), while the success and spread of tourism are partly explained by the simultaneous increase in real disposable incomes of northern Europeans, the increase in leisure time and paid holidays experienced by workers across the social scale, and developments in transport which made travelling long distances cheaper and more comfortable.

After Franco's death in 1975, more and more North Europeans visited Spain's coastal areas and islands each year as tourists, some staying longer, returning, and eventually buying businesses and homes there (King & Rybaczuk 1993). Later, the development of the European Community and the European Union and the subsequent, 1992, shaping of legislation which made it easier for Europeans to purchase property, to reside, to work, and to move freely within Spain, have been major contributory factors. We cannot ignore the active encouragement, during the 1980s and 1990s, on behalf of Spain's administration, of foreign purchase of land and property in order to compensate for the seasonal and regional nature of tourism (Valenzuela 1988); the relative cost of property and land in Spain; and massive growths in the property market in the UK and other European countries (at different periods in this history). They combine with longer holiday entitlements and the growth in early retirement in some North European countries, encouraging longer stays and retirement to the homes bought relatively cheaply. For later waves of migrants, the existence of a settled and informed community made a move easier and smoother, and offered employment opportunities for newcomers. This was followed rapidly by the growth of intermediary individuals, institutions and organisations facilitating more and more flexible migration trajectories by offering a full range of services and products for the European migrant. These factors

continue to be supported by the more general developments associated with globalisation and outlined above: increased interconnectedness, mass telecommunications, cheap air travel, and increased mobility. These conditions both enable and promote the increased mobility of certain affluent groups, and the phenomenon in various forms is being developed in several parts of the world.

Motivations for migration

The motivations for residential tourism are clear in many pages of this book (chapters, pages), and in our own research (see research note below). The main reasons these migrants give for moving are: "quality of life"; a slower, relaxed pace; the climate/ sun (which enables health and relaxation); the cost of living, cheap property (enabling early retirement and/or a better lifestyle); a business opportunity (to fund a better life); a better life for the children; the culture (which includes community, respect for the elderly, safety, and less crime); closeness to home, and other ties and connections; the desire to leave their home country (because of high crime rates, and too many immigrants!, or to escape the rat-race, failing businesses, unemployment, or the political situation); and to go somewhere where "you can be yourself".

Overwhelmingly, respondents in our research projects cited quality of life, a relaxed way of life, or a slower pace of life as reasons for moving. It is difficult to be sure what they mean by this. Rodriguez and colleagues (1998) summarize it as "the relaxed and informal way of life". Respondents in our ethnographic studies phrased it as follows:

> "I would definitely say there is less stress here." (Alice, retired, sixties)
> "(It's) a better way of life I suppose, but that sounds so vague, it doesn't mean anything. Really I mean a more relaxed way of life." (Jane, part-time working mother, forties)
> "It's more relaxed here. Even if you've got to work, it's easier." (Lyn, self-employed, thirties)
> "The Spanish way of life, really. Yes, they're very laid back here." (Annie, retired, seventies)
> "I think people come here because they want to get away from it all, start a new life." (David, working, fifties)

A review paper that pulls together research projects on North European retirement migration in Tuscany, Malta, the Costa del Sol and the Algarve (Casado-Diaz *et. al.* 2004), notes that four out of five migrants cited the climate as one of their top reasons for migration. However, in the expanded comments collected qualitatively, references to climate are enigmatic, with interviewees referring to health, lifestyle, morale and even financial aspects as if these are somehow connected to the

climate. The Mediterranean life (encapsulating cuisine, wine, a slow pace of life, and outdoor living) was also commonly cited, along with the cost of living. For Rodriguez *et al*'s (1998) European respondents the most common reason for moving was also climate, then lifestyle, followed by cost of living, and then geographical proximity to home. Madden's business owners on the Costa del Sol, when asked why they moved, listed climate, quality of life and lifestyle before business opportunities: "to many of the business owners, opening a business in the Costa del Sol is also a way of funding a different lifestyle." (1999: 33) Catherine Puzzo's British emigrants to France explain their migration in terms of escape from a hectic way of life, to a better pace of life and better cost of living (chapter X). The relative cost of living comes up over and over again.

Some are looking for sun and others for the rural life. King *et al* (2000) separate out, among their retired British migrants in Southern Europe, those who are looking for a relaxed life in the sun from those who seem more motivated by the search for the *rural idyll*. Andreas Huber and Karen O'Reilly (2004) note how this search for the rural idyll includes a search for *heimat* (home, belonging and community), the perceived loss of which marks contemporary western lifestyles. Nearness to home remains a common theme. Rachida Saigh Bousta (chapter X) argues that the attractions of Marrakesh, for its European residents and second home owners, are its nearness to Europe, followed by its infrastructure (which has been developed for tourism), its heritage, the weather, and relative cheapness. The search for the rural idyll and a new home, or somewhere not too far from home, includes a gaze in which the new community is exotic and strange. Gustafson (2002: 9) demonstrates the way his seasonal migrants had a tendency to "construct Spain as idyllic, exotic and at times a bit backward when compared to Sweden".

Finally, it is common for residential tourists to describe their reasons for moving in the context of comparisons with the home country. In other words, they will outline what the new place has to offer that their own country has not. So, Finnish migrants escape high taxes, high prices, unemployment and a poor climate (Karisto 2005); Germans in the Balearics obtain a more peaceful and more secure quality of life than they had at home (Salvá Tomás 2005); Norwegian migrants talk of how they do not want to grow old in Norway (Helset et al 2005); and British residential tourists describe their move in the context of escape, from stressful jobs or the threat of unemployment, but also from high crime rates, run-down inner city areas, and dangerous neighbourhoods. They worry about their children's futures and want to give them a better start or they are anxious about the quality of retirement that was looming ahead. They express doubts about the real value of UK pensions, or the ability to rely on sickness or unemployment benefit in times of difficulty, and expected to gain better quality of life for less money in Spain (O'Reilly 2007). Many residential tourists use language like "getting out of the trap" or making a "fresh start" and "new beginnings". It is not difficult to see the connections between these motivations and the theme of the rural idyll, so common

in counter-urbanisation literature, but also the themes of leisure, pleasure, refuge, escape from the banal and routine, and the idea of journey or pilgrimage in search of the authentic (or some imagined past) that are so common in the field of tourist studies.
leave for now

The growth and spread of residential tourism

It is important to examine patterns that are developing in order that we might foresee how these will impact on the future. At the time of our initial research into what we are now calling residential tourism it was a fairly new phenomenon affecting parts of Spain, Portugal, France and Italy, and it was sensibly captured with the terms "retirement migration" and "second-home ownership". Now the phenomenon is growing, it includes younger migrants with families, and in Spain is moving inland as people search for cheaper properties and the rural idyll they can no longer find on the coastal strip. There is some irony in the fact that the very people who have encouraged massive over-development of some of these tourist areas are now complaining that they are too crowded or spoiled. One British man living in Spain told me he is looking to move elsewhere, perhaps Croatia or Romania, and said without apparent irony: "there are too many Brits here now". But the appetite for cheap, pretty, warm places where life is simple seems insatiable, and more or more Northern Europeans are now settling, or buying property and investing in emerging property markets, in places such as Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia and even Morocco and South Africa, while in the US residential tourism spreads ever further south.

The search for possible future scenarios includes the following proposal. Residential tourism begins with a few people buying second homes somewhere where there are regular cheap flights, a pleasant environment and some tranquillity —probably somewhere they, or someone they know, or perhaps the property developer or estate agent, has previously visited as a tourist. As they become more settled so others visit and decide to join them. Those who are less brave will prefer to go to places that have been tried and tested to some small degree. These first migrants are probably seasonal visitors or retirees, but as time goes on and a community of residential tourists becomes established, so other, younger, migrants decide to go and offer services for the tourist and residential tourist, thus funding a lifestyle they could not have afforded without work of some sort. The more who move to the area, the more crowded it gets, the more polluted, the more traffic on the roads and the less remote and exotic it feels. At the same time it becomes less and less easy to integrate socially and culturally with the local community as the migrant community becomes increasingly visible. As more people are attracted to the area, so property prices rise and then other prices associated with the general cost of living rise too. Eventually the perceived simplicity, remoteness and

tranquillity of the place are lost, the crime rate rises with the population rate, and residential tourists are no longer attracted to the area. Those who are there want to move on. What happens to the place that was initially developed for tourism remains to be seen: Marbella (in the Costa del Sol) has retained its elite status and high prices, while Torrevieja (in the Costa Blanca), with plummeting house prices and rising crime rates, has become somewhere people are desperate to leave.

Integration

Residential tourism raises several questions, especially in relation to its fluidity and flexibility. How sustainable is this sort of fluid movement at the level of individual lives? Can people cope with such fluidity? Can governments and apparatuses of state cope with it? In a recent paper we looked at the extent to which people who had moved to Spain more permanently could be considered integrated in the new society (O'Reilly 2007), taking integration in as broad a way as possible to include social, cultural, political and economic integration. What we found, for some people, was exclusion. Social exclusion is generally seen as a combination of adverse social situations, for example unemployment, unfavourable market situation, low earnings, poor health and/or living conditions, plus the inability to build social networks. Or, indeed, social exclusion is "the dynamic process of being shut out … from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society." (Walker and Walker, 1997: 8)

Our research revealed extensive evidence of British migrants working in the informal economy, paying no income tax or national insurance contributions, relying on emergency state health provision or inadequate private insurance, who are confused about what they are supposed to do to be legal residents, who are neither registered with their town hall nor have residence permits, who do not know who to turn to in times of difficulty, who cannot speak the language adequately and come unstuck when they need to call the police or an ambulance. There are those who, having moved to Spain, no longer have the right to use the National Health Service in the UK, have severely reduced their entitlements to UK pensions and social service benefits, yet are not addressing this through private or Spanish provision. Many migrants do not know whether their homes in Spain are legally built, do not have deeds to their homes, or bought land with planning permission which was later refused. There are families with children in private, international school who struggle to afford the fees, families with children in Spanish school who are not managing to learn the language or integrate, and families with children who are not even in school. These migrants are trying to live the good life in the sun that wealthier migrants are managing, but have stretched their finances a little too thinly in the process and at the same time are victims of

the contradiction and tension between tourism and migration that impacts residential tourism so effectively (O'Reilly 2007).

Other futures

Research needs to explore the impact of these migration trends on the migrants and on the local communities, and to consider environmental and social sustainability. We also need to explore the links and interactions between these migrations/mobilities and others. For example, Polish people are now migrating to the UK in large numbers in search of what UK citizens consider low-paid work while, conversely, British people are buying up the cheap houses in Poland that the Polish cannot afford. Here, researchers would benefit from employing the concept of the stratification of mobility. There is also an entire potential research programme in "new fluid living patterns", because while some residential tourists are giving up and going home, others successfully manage flexible lifestyles. While some areas deteriorate, or are abandoned, others remain buoyant with high property prices and tourism, residence and residential tourism coexisting peaceably. There ought to be research undertaken on questions of integration, on the impact of residential tourism on local communities (especially the impact of high property prices), and researchers need to have a keen eye directed towards the places that are now becoming affected by residential tourism.

Finally, we need to ask how theories and conceptual developments are helping in this research programme. What use can we make of the concepts of transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, neo-colonialism, globalisation, mobility, or even world systems? We agree with Beck (2006) that a cosmopolitan vision is needed, to look beyond borders and boundaries at what is happening across and between, but often theories and empirical research do not go hand in hand. Research must keep an eye to movement and change but also to structures and constraints and their ability to reproduce and re-create themselves and to keep certain people in and others out.

Research note : The author's research in Spain has spanned nearly fifteen years. In 1993 to 1994 she undertook fifteen months intensive ethnographic fieldwork with the British community in Fuengirola and Los Boliches, in the Province of Málaga, and conducted over 300 informal interviews. Between 1994 and 2002 she made return visits to Spain of between two weeks and six months duration. During this time she became a second home-owner in Andalusia and later a peripatetic migrant to the area, for four years living part of each year in Spain. Between 2003 and 2005 she conducted a new project exploring issues of integration for British and other north-European migrants in Spain (funded by ESRC grant R000223944).

This involved fieldwork in Alhaurin el Grande, Mijas, Fuengirola, Cártama and Coín in the Málaga province; a 53-item questionnaire survey of 340 migrants; qualitative interviews with 65 (mostly British) migrants and Spanish individuals who have regular contact with European migrants (ten of these interviews were with children aged between 11 and 16 years); eight group interviews—two with migrants and six with children of mixed nationalities—and the collection of 48 student essays on the topic of living in Spain, from children of mixed nationalities aged between 12 and 14 (O'Reilly 2000, 2003, 2007).

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