The Geographies of Lifestyle Mobilities: Exploring International Retirement Migration to Spain

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International Retirement Migration (IRM)

- **Traditional geographical/motivational focus of research**

  - How many, who, from and where to and why?

- **Shared characteristics:**

  - Relatively younger elderly couples, affluent and educated

  - The tourism-migration nexus

  - Search for a better quality of life

- **New research field: migrants' transnational social practices**

  - Social contacts and network connections of the migrants in both the destination and origin areas
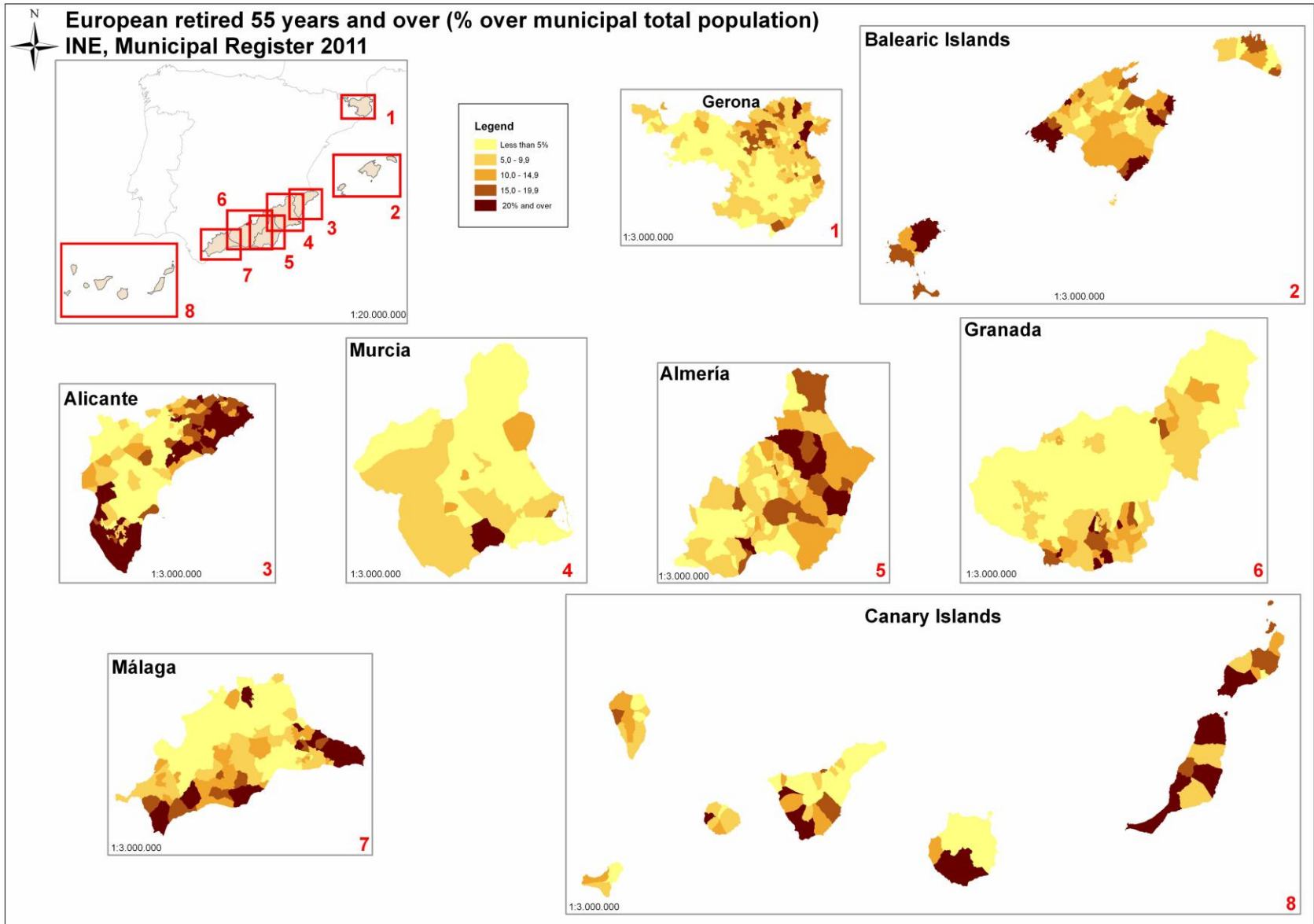
Scale of IRM in Spain /2011 Population Register

- □ **EU migrants aged 55 or more living in Spain in 2011: 464,535**

- □ **Main countries of origin: United Kingdom, Germany and France**

  - ❑ **United Kingdom: 189,827**
  - ❑ **Germany: 83,580**
  - ❑ **France: 20,904**

Mapping IRM, 2011 Municipal Register

European retired 55 years and over (% over municipal total population)
INE, Municipal Register 2011

MIRES Project: purpose of the study

- **Contribution of MIRES Project:**

  - First major **multi-national** and **multi-case study** survey

  - **Interdisciplinary** research team

- **Explore the travel patterns and international social practices of EU retirees living in Spain**

- **Social Capital** as an umbrella for explaining the migrants' sociability both in their home country and receiving communities

  - 'a social resource that is derived from the formal and informal relationships between the members of a community' (Portes 1998)

MIRES Conceptual framework

☐ **How to sustain international social capital?**
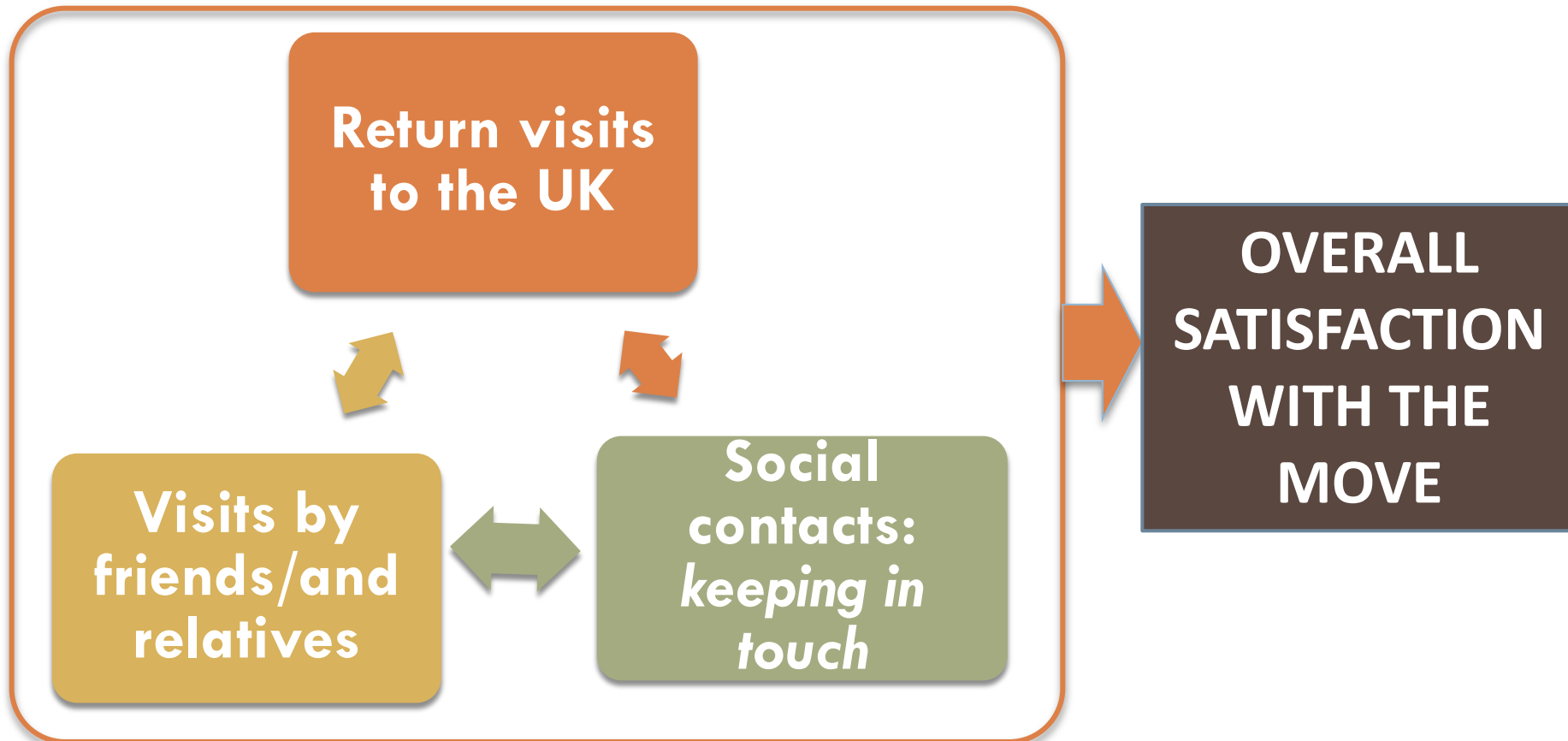
MIRES Methodology

- **Research methods:** Survey and in-depth interviews

  - **Self-administered questionnaire** (in English, German and French) to a sample of EU retirees aged 50 or more living at least 3 months a year in Spain

- **720 valid questionnaires: report of preliminary findings**

- **Topics**: decision-making process, everyday life in Spain, **travel patterns, social networks,** social and political participation and identity and belonging issues

- **Case-study areas:** regions with highest numbers of EU retirees

  - Alicante, Malaga, Almeria, Granada, Balearic and Canary Islands and Girona
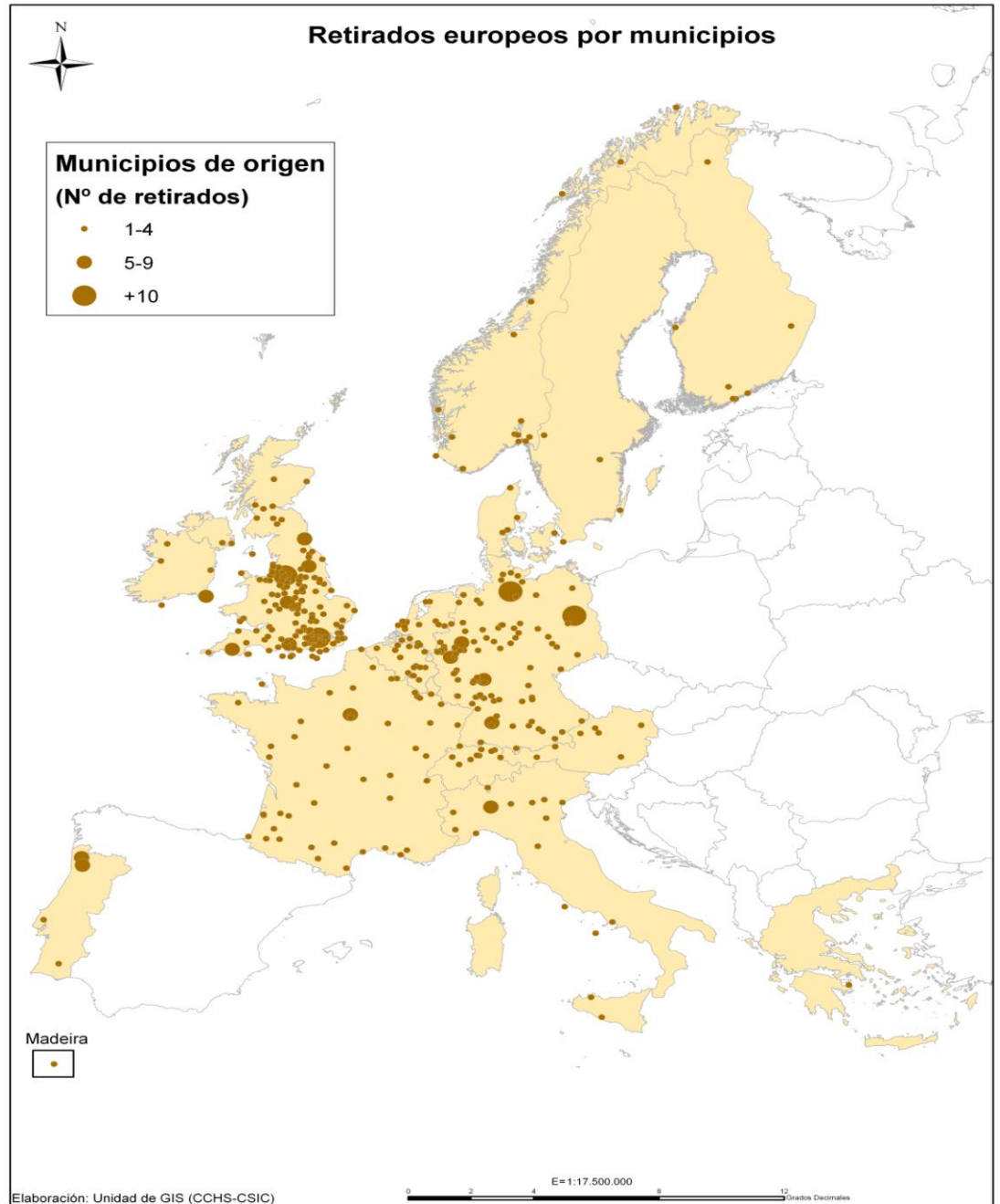
MIRES Sample

Where do they come from?

Retirados europeos por municipios

Municipios de origen
(Nº de retirados)
· 1-4
● 5-9
● +10

Madeira

E= 1:17.500.000

Elaboración: Unidad de GIS (CCHS-CSIC)

Table 1a. Main Characteristics (data in percentages)

	UK	Germany	France	Other	Total
Age group (years)					
<65	**50.0**	33.0	32.7	35.5	41.1
65-74	37.5	**50.3**	**46.2**	**53.3**	45.0
>=75	12.5	16.8	21.2	11.2	13.9
Average age	65.1	67.3	68.7	66.5	**66.2**
Mean value	1.62[1]	1.84	1.88	1.76	1.73
		F statistic (p-value) 4.96 (0.00)			
Household size					
Single person	20.0	**37.4**	23.1	34.3	27.9
Two persons	**75.0**	**57.5**	**69.2**	**61.5**	**67.1**
Three or more persons	5.0	5.0	7.7	4.1	5.0
Mean value	1.85[12]	1.68	1.85	1.70	1.77
		F statistic (p-value) 5.90 (0.00)			
Highest educational level					
None/Primary school	**34.2**	9.5	23.1	20.7	24.1
Secondary school	**53.3**	**63.1**	**57.7**	**55.6**	**56.6**
University	12.5	**27.4**	19.2	23.7	19.3
Mean value	1.78[12]	2.18	1.96	2.03	1.95
		F statistic (p-value) 15.77 (0.00)			

Notes. 1 British different from Germans. 2 British different from Other nationalities. All differences between the group means significant (p<0.05) by the Scheffé test (equal variances) or the Tamhane test (differences in variances. Mean scores calculated according the value attached to each category . *Source:* Authors' questionnaire survey.

Table 1b. Sample characteristics (data in percentages)

	UK	Germany	France	Other	Total
Marital status					
Single	5.3	7.3	7.7	7.7	6.5
Married/with partner	**75.9**	**59.2**	**75.0**	**62.1**	**68.5**
Widow/er/Divorcee/Separated	18.8	33.5	17.3	30.2	25.0
Pearson X^2 (p-value)		20.73 (0.00)			
Household income					
Less than 1.500€	**33.9**	37.2	33.3	35.6	35.0
1.500,- to under 3.000,-€	26.5	**49.3**	**43.1**	**50.3**	**39.1**
More than 3.000,-€	**39.6**	13.5	23.5	14.1	25.9
Mean value	2.37[1][2]	1.80	1.94	1.83	2.07
F statistic (p-value)		14.78 (0.00)			
Visits to Spain before relocating					
Never	3.5	2.9	2.0	2.4	3.0
One time	6.6	10.5	12.0	13.8	9.6
More than one time	**89.9**	**86.6**	**86.0**	**83.8**	**87.4**
F statistic (p-value)		0.49 (0.69)			

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Table 2. VFR tourism (1)

	UK	Germany	France	Other	Total
Visits to the country of origin					
None	23.8	29.1	15.4	31.0	26.2
One	29.5	25.1	**44.2**	**35.1**	30.8
More than one	**46.7**	**45.8**	40.4	33.9	**43.0**
Mean value	2.23	2.17	2.25	2.03	2.17
F statistic (p-value)		2.39 (0.07)			
Length of the stay					
Four weeks or less	**56.8**	36.1	27.3	**50.0**	**34.4**
Five to twelve weeks	21.6	15.6	13.6	22.4	19.7
More than twelve weeks	21.6	**48.4**	**59.1**	27.6	32.4
Mean value	1.65[12]	2.12[3]	2.32[4]	1.78	1.85
F-statistic (p-value)		13.24 (0.00)			
Reasons for the visits					
Visit friends and/or family (X^2=8.7, p=0.03)	**70.0**	**57.0**	**67.3**	**65.1**	**65.4**
Leisure (X^2=4.5, p=0.21)	8.1	8.4	7.7	13.6	9.4
Work/administration (X^2=35.7, p=0.00)	6.6	18.4	32.7	11.2	12.5
To access medical services (X^2=37.1, p=0.00)	5.9	**23.5**	**21.2**	10.1	12.4

Table 3. VFR tourism (2)

	UK	Germany	France	Other	Total
Visitors from country of origin					
Yes	**81.2**	**77.1**	**71.2**	**71.6**	**77.2**
No	18.8	22.9	28.8	28.4	22.8
F statistic (p-value)		2.34 (0.07)			
By children and/or grandchildren					
One visit	33.1	41.9	37.5	43.8	37.8
More than one visit	**66.9**	**57.0**	**62.5**	**56.3**	**61.9**
F-statistic (p-value)		0.55 (0.65)			
Visits by other adult relatives					
One visit	37.7	**54.0**	29.2	44.1	41.7
More than one visit	**62.3**	46.0	**70.8**	**55.9**	**58.3**
F-statistic (p-value)		2.23 (0.08)			
Visits by friends or acquaintances					
One visit	34.0	40.0	**52.6**	**51.3**	40.8
More than one visit	**66.0**	**60.0**	47.4	48.7	**59.2**
F-statistic (p-value)		2.45 (0.06)			

Table 4. Social contacts with country of origin (%)

	UK	Germany	France	Other	Total
Contacts through phone calls					
Frequently	**72.0**	**75.4**	**66.7**	**70.4**	**72.1**
Not very frequently	23.9	21.2	25.5	20.7	22.6
Never	4.1	3.4	7.8	8.9	5.3
		F-statistic (p-value)	1.35 (0.26)		
Through text messages (SMS)					
Frequently	**42.8**	17.9	12.0	37.1	33.1
Not very frequently	18.3	22.0	26.0	18.0	19.7
Never	38.9	**60.1**	**62.0**	**44.9**	**47.2**
		F-statistic (p-value)	13.81(0. 00)		
Through Internet calls (Skype)					
Frequently	**34.5**	18.5	19.2	30.7	28.5
Not very frequently	8.1	9.0	7.7	7.8	8.2
Never	**57.4**	**72.5**	**73.1**	**61.4**	**63.3**
		F-statistic (p-value)	5.57 (0.00)		
Through E-mail					
Frequently	**54.5**	**46.1**	19.6	**46.1**	**47.9**
Not very frequently	14.4	12.9	11.8	10.2	12.9
Never	**31.1**	**41.0**	**68.6**	43.7	39.3
		F-statistic (p-value)	9.85 (0.00)		

Table 5. Satisfaction with VFR and social contacts (%)

	UK	Germany	France	Other	Total
Visits to the country of origin					
Very dissatisfied	8.0	2.3	1.9	3.6	5.1
Somewhat dissatisfied	12.8	12.2	1.9	12.6	11.8
Somewhat satisfied	**25.2**	**45.9**	**36.5**	**37.7**	34.1
Very satisfied	**53.7**	38.4	**50.0**	**45.5**	**47.7**
	F statistic (p-value) 7.89 (0.00)				
Visits from friends /relatives					
Very dissatisfied	1.9	2.3	2.0	1.2	1.8
Somewhat dissatisfied	9.9	8.1	8.0	14.3	10.4
Somewhat satisfied	**24.5**	**46.8**	**28.0**	**29.2**	31.3
Very satisfied	**63.4**	42.2	**56.0**	**55.4**	**55.7**
	F-statistic (p-value) 4.60 (0.00)				
Decision to move to Spain					
Very dissatisfied	3.8	4.0	2.1	1.2	3.1
Somewhat dissatisfied	8.4	5.1	6.3	4.8	6.6
Somewhat satisfied	14.7	27.8	20.8	26.8	21.2
Very satisfied	**73.1**	**63.1**	**66.7**	**67.3**	**68.8**
	F-statistic (p-value) 1.97 (0.12)				

Notes. 1 British different from Germans. 2 British different from French. 3 German different from Other nationalities. 4 French different from Other nationalities. 5 German different from French. All differences between the group means significant (p<0.05) by the Scheffé test (equal variances) or the Games-Howell test (differences in variances). Mean scores calculated according the value attached to each category (1=Very dissatisfied, 2=Somewhat dissatisfied, 3=Somewhat satisfied, 4=Very satisfied). *Source:* Authors' questionnaire survey.

Some conclusions

Potential of the concept of social capital for the analysis of the social practices of international retired migrants

- **Close family and friendships ties in the country of origin:**

  - strong international social capital >> high satisfaction levels

- **Role of leisure travel and communication technologies in maintaining the migrants' international social capital:**

  - relevance of bidirectional VFR tourism flows

- **Future areas of research: studying the heterogeneity of IRM**

  - Examining types of social capital: Bonding vs Bridging, local vs international