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*Review Article*

**Migrating to a new country in late life:  
A review of the literature on international  
retirement migration**

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## **Migrating to a new country in late life: A review of the literature on international retirement migration**

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### **Abstract**

#### **BACKGROUND**

In the last few decades, a substantial number of older adults have migrated to new countries around the retirement age to raise their quality of life, a phenomenon that has been labeled as international retirement migration. The scattered body of research on this type of migration across disciplines has made it difficult to get an overview of why retirement migrants move and how they fare in their destination countries.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

This paper accumulates findings from research on international retirement migration from different disciplines to obtain a comprehensive picture of the field. We do so by (1) evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of methodological approaches, (2) reviewing empirical findings, and (3) discussing future research directions.

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## **METHODS**

We carried out a systematic literature search of peer-reviewed studies in the English language on Web of Science and Google Scholar published between 1998 and 2021 with the keyword search “international retirement migration.” From an initial pool of 148 articles, we excluded articles focusing on the return of retiring labor migrants, internal retirement migrants, and seasonal retirement migrants. We conducted a literature review on the remaining 90 articles about retirement migration.

## **CONTRIBUTION**

Our review shows that the unbalanced nature of methods and samples used in the retirement migration literature offers challenges for future research. In particular, it remains important to assess whether the current accounts are representative of the wider retirement migrant population and to systematically test hypotheses that arise from this basis. We suggest methodological improvements and future research directions.

## **1. Introduction**

Since the 1970s, a growing number of older adults have moved abroad upon reaching the retirement age, a phenomenon known as international retirement migration (Warnes 2009). There are different views as to what entails international retirement migration, as the meaning might change depending on what one considers “retirement” or “migration” (King, Cela, and Fokkema 2021). One of the ways retirement migration has been categorized is by considering whether retirees move to a new country or return to their country of origin (Warnes 2009). Some well-known examples of people moving to a new country around the age of retirement – the focus of this article – are British retirees moving to Spain, North Americans retiring to Mexico, and, more recently, Japanese retirees relocating to Malaysia. This type of international retirement migration, sometimes referred to as amenity-led or lifestyle retirement migration, is often from high-income countries and fueled by a general motive to raise the quality of life by developing new activities and interests and improving or protecting health (Warnes 2009).

Although international retirement migration is a relatively small-scale phenomenon, its conceptual relevance is significant as it relates to broader societal changes such as aging populations, globalization, and individualization. In Europe, it is estimated that the percentage of those over age 65 will increase from 19% in 2020 to 30% by 2100 (United Nations 2019). Similarly, in the United States, the population over age 65 is estimated to be about 27% in 2100, compared to 16% in 2020 (United Nations 2019). Simultaneously, advances in communication technologies and cheaper international travel have led to greater mobility and have made it easier to bridge longer distances, either physically or

digitally. The presumed declining reliance on personal networks of family and friends for practical support and enhanced opportunities for bridging physical distances have made retirement migration an option in the “modern life course.”

In the past three decades, an increasing number of studies have investigated international retirement migration. However, the scattered body of research across disciplines, such as demography, sociology, and anthropology, has made it difficult to assess the relative importance of the findings: When do they contribute to understanding the general image of retirement migrants and when are they broadening the scope to include special cases? In that respect, it may be a good opportunity to take stock of the current state of research. To achieve this, we (1) evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of methodological approaches in studies focusing on international retirement migration, (2) review the empirical findings from these studies, and (3) discuss future directions for research.

Our review is limited to studies of international retirement migration to new countries. There are also studies of migrants who move to their countries of origin after retirement (return migration). However, return migration differs from migrating to a new country because of the preexisting ties to the migration country, the lack of language ability, and other cultural barriers in the migration country. Another type of international retirement migration includes people who move seasonally. However, the timing, mobility patterns, motivations for, and consequences of seasonal retirement migration are different than those for permanent retirement migration (Breuer 2005). Nonetheless, it is important to consider that some people may initially participate in seasonal migration and later decide to move permanently.

Previous research on retirement migration includes several important books focusing on the experiences of retirement migrants. For example, King, Warnes, and Williams (2000) studied British retirement migrants in four different Mediterranean countries (King, Warnes, and Williams 2000) and highlighted important differences between retirement migrants in different countries. O’Reilly (2000) offered an extensive ethnography of British retirement migration on the Costa del Sol and focused on self-identification. In another ethnography, Oliver (2008) investigated how British retirement migrants in the south of Spain manage and experience aging. More recently, Sloane, Zimmerman, and Silverback (2020) published their book about US retirees to Latin America, focusing on the social impact of retirement migration in destination communities and health care. These books offer in-depth knowledge about the lives of retirement migrants.

There have also been prior articles that reviewed aspects of retirement migration literature. For example, King, Warnes, and Williams (1998) provided an overview of retirement migration, mainly focusing on the European context; Casado-Diaz and colleagues (2004) reviewed the findings from six quantitative studies; and Pickering et

al. (2019) reviewed the literature on seasonal retirement migration, which is a subset of retirement migration. These reviews offer clear overviews of retirement migration in its early period. However, more recently, as methods and destinations have become more diverse, knowledge has become more dispersed. We build upon existing books and reviews by accumulating and reviewing the findings from quantitative and qualitative articles from different parts of the world to obtain a comprehensive picture of the current state of scientific research.

## **2. Process of selecting reviewed articles**

To select articles for the review of retirement migration literature, we executed a non-collocated keyword search on “international retirement migration” on Web of Science and a collocated keyword search on “international retirement migration” on Google Scholar. We limited the scope to papers published between 1998, when a review article by King, Warnes, and Williams (1998) was published, and 2021, the time of inquiry. By limiting the scope to more recent publications, we could focus on current-day retirement migration. On Web of Science, we scanned all 231 resulting articles. On Google Scholar, we scanned the first 250 articles from a total of 1,940 articles sorted on relevance. We created a pool of 148 peer-reviewed English-language articles about retirement migration. To select the papers to review, two authors independently read the titles and abstracts of the articles. We excluded 58 articles that focused on (1) internal retirement migration (Haas and Serow 1993; Litwak and Longino 1987; Walters 2002), (2) return migration – moving at an early age to a foreign country and returning to the country of birth upon retirement (Bettin, Cela, and Fokkema 2018), or (3) seasonal migration – moving for only part of the year rather than staying more or less permanently (Breuer 2005; Gustafson 2001, 2002, 2008). We cross-referenced the articles to ensure we did not miss any relevant studies. In total, 90 articles were included in the review (see appendix). Virtually all these articles use the term “international retirement migration” to refer to the phenomenon they study.

Two authors reviewed 90 articles by reading them thoroughly and categorizing them in terms of methods and thematic focus (see appendix). We coded the articles in terms of sampling strategy, data collection methods, data types, and whether they included country comparisons. The same authors identified recurring research topics, which were then combined into themes. For example, a distinction was made initially between social, economic, cultural, and political ties to the host country, which we combined into the theme “ties to the host country.” Consultations and discussions among the research team resulted in the final coding scheme.

### **3. Review of research designs**

We categorized all articles according to methodological approach and distinguished qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods articles (Table 1). The categorization showed a high percentage of qualitative articles (64%) compared to quantitative articles (19%) in this review. A small number (18%) use both quantitative and qualitative methods, also referred to as mixed-methods studies. Interestingly, a divide can be observed between early and later studies on retirement migration. While in the period 2000–2010, 26% used qualitative methods, this number increased to 78% in the period 2010–2021.

Quantitative studies, on average, had 423 participants, with 36% of the articles employing representative sampling methods. The representativeness of the samples was achieved by, for example, using national registers in countries that have information on retirement migrants' whereabouts (King, Warnes, and Williams 1998; Warnes 2001). Mixed-methods articles were similar; on average they had 391 participants, although they rarely employed representative sampling methods. The qualitative articles had 61 participants on average and used nonrepresentative sampling methods, such as snowball sampling, convenience sampling, and purposive sampling. For example, Banks (2004) enlisted people he met during daily travels, Hayes (2015) used an electronic newsletter for American migrants in Ecuador to recruit participants, and Casado-Díaz (2009) collaborated with the University of Third Age club in Spain to get in contact with retirement migrants. Although the nonrepresentative nature of the qualitative studies makes it difficult to generalize their findings, an advantage is that they are better suited for difficult-to-reach groups, such as migrants who are not registered in the destination country, which is often recognized as a limitation in retirement migration studies (King, Warnes, and Williams 1998).

Different data collection methods were used in quantitative and qualitative studies (Table 1). Questionnaires were used frequently in the quantitative design, followed by register/census data and secondary data analysis (e.g., web forums, television). In-depth interviews were the most frequently applied method in qualitative designs, followed by ethnographic fieldwork, semi-structured interviews, secondary data analysis (e.g., texts), and focus groups. There were some longitudinal studies (8%), although these rarely followed the same individuals over time. The lack of prospective longitudinal designs makes it difficult to systematically analyze adaptation processes in destination countries.

**Table 1: Methods used in articles on international retirement migration**

	Number of articles	Percentages in total (n = 90)*	Avg. N
<b>Research approach</b>			
Quantitative	17	19%	423 (2 NA)
Representative sampling	6	36%	Median: 365
Nonrepresentative sampling	11	64%	SD: 268
Qualitative	58	64%	62
Representative sampling	0	0%	Median: 38.5
Nonrepresentative sampling	58	100%	SD: 58
Mixed	15	18%	391
Representative sampling	2	8%	Median: 300
Nonrepresentative sampling	13	92%	SD: 329
<b>Data collection methods</b>			
Questionnaire	28	31%	
Register/census	11	12%	
In-depth interviews	44	49%	
Ethnographic fieldwork	35	39%	
Semi-structured interviews	32	36%	
Secondary data analysis (e.g., text)	10	11%	
Focus groups (or group discussions)	6	7%	
Longitudinal	7	8%	
<b>Countries of study</b>			
Comparison of countries	29	32%	
Multiple origins, single destination	15	17%	
Single origin, multiple destinations	7	8%	
Multiple origins, multiple destinations	7	8%	

\* The numbers in italics represent the subcategory of the total.

Note: The percentages of the sampling methods are calculated within each research approach – quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. The rest of the percentages are calculated from the total of 90 articles. Several articles use multiple data collection methods. The NAs in the quantitative articles are Warnes (2001) and Salvati et al. (2021), as they combine data from several secondary data sources.

Several articles applied a country comparative design. It was common for authors to compare people of different nationalities in a single destination (17%). Some articles compared different nationalities in different countries (8%). For example, Gehring (2019) and Ackers and Dwyer (2004) examined citizenship issues and free movement. Other articles compared migrants from the same country of origin to multiple destinations (8%), such as British retirees in Italy, Malta, Spain, and Portugal (Warnes et al. 1999). These comparisons reveal interesting aspects of retirement migration by showing the similarities or differences in choices and experiences between people originating from and residing in different countries. Studying individuals from the same origin country moving to other countries might show possible effects of the receiving country context on integration, while studying individuals from different origin countries in the same destination might answer questions about effects of the origin country on integration (Van Tubergen 2005).



## 4. Review of empirical findings

The thematic focus in the reviewed articles can be split into two main research questions: First, who moves and why? And second, how do migrants fare after arrival? These two questions are in line with the overall migratory process, which is split into two phases: the initial phase, which corresponds to the process of the actual move, and the integration phase, which involves how migrants are incorporated into the destination country (Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014). The overarching questions – who moves where and why, and how do migrants fare? – have been approached from different perspectives. Table 2 demonstrates how many times a theme was investigated in relation to retirement migration. The most frequently investigated themes were related to (1) integration (63%), such as the integration process of retirement migrants and the problems they encountered during this process; (2) the migration decision (49%), focusing on the motives for moving; and (3) health and well-being (38%), investigating migrants' satisfaction with the move and the health care system of the destination country. Quantitative articles have mainly focused on the individual characteristics of migrants (65%), although without comparisons to stayers. Qualitative articles have mainly focused on adjustment to life in the destination country (64%). Keep in mind that the total numbers on which these percentages were based are sometimes small.

**Table 2: Number of articles on international retirement migration by theme, in percentages**

Theme	Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed	Total
<i>Who moves and why?</i>				
Profiles of migrants	65%	7%	60%	27%
Migration decision	53%	47%	53%	49%
<i>How do they fare?</i>				
Integration	41%	64%	87%	63%
Ties with the country of origin	29%	26%	47%	30%
Health and well-being	38%	41%	27%	38%
Total	17	58	15	90

*Note:* Most of the articles investigated several themes, resulting in the percentages being more than 100 in total. The percentages of themes are calculated within the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods.

### 4.1 Who moves where and why?

#### 4.1.1 Profile of retirement migrants

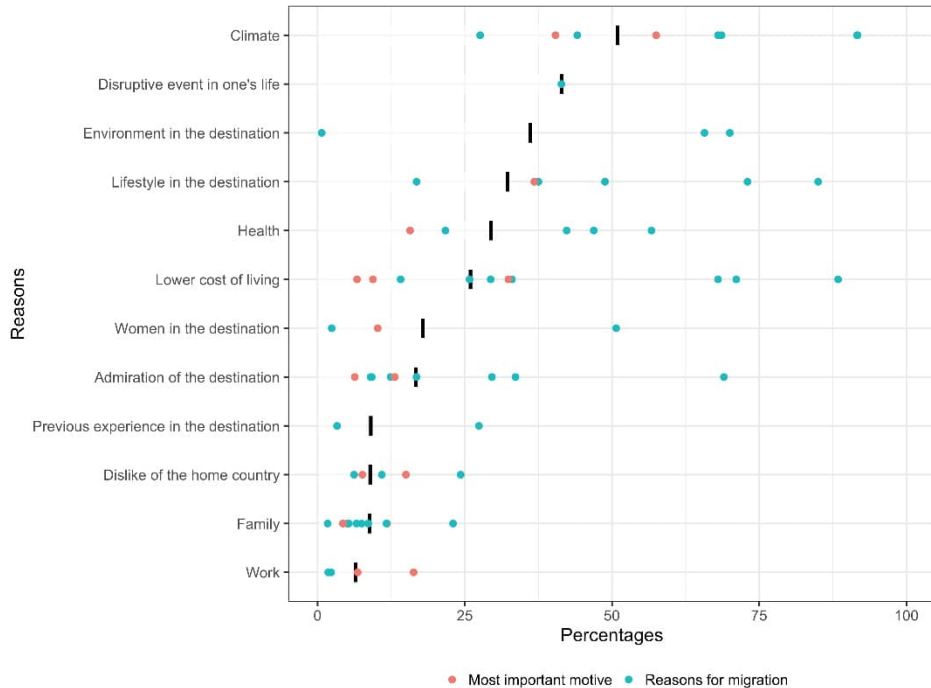
The profile that emerged from the literature indicates that most of the retirement migrants were between the ages of 65 and 70 (Casado-Díaz 2006; Casado-Díaz, Kaiser, and

Warnes 2004; Huber and O'Reilly 2004; King, Warnes, and Williams 1998; Wong, Musa, and Taha 2017), were Caucasian (Oliver 2017; Rojas, LeBlanc, and Sunil 2014), and were in the higher spectrum of socioeconomic status (SES), with high education, high income, and highly skilled jobs (Amin and Ingman 2010; Lizarraga 2010; Rojas, LeBlanc, and Sunil 2014; Williams and Patterson 1998). While some studies showed that there were slightly more men than women (King, Warnes, and Williams 1998; Rojas, LeBlanc, and Sunil 2014), they also showed that retirement migrants were mostly married or cohabiting with a partner (Huber and O'Reilly 2004; Rodes and Rodriguez 2021). However, this picture is far from complete, as retirement migration has become accessible to a more varied group of people over the years, especially those who are financially not as well off (Iorio 2020; O'Reilly 2007; Repetti, Phillipson, and Calasanti 2018). In addition, with the rise of people moving for health care services, the age composition of retirement migration is also subject to change, with older people being on the move as well (Bender, Hollstein, and Schweppe 2017, 2020; Wong and Musa 2014). These studies showed that the affluent retirement migrant stereotype deflects attention from the diverse and varied composition of the retirement migrant population, with individuals having different characteristics, needs, and motivations.

#### **4.1.2 Migration decision**

The migration decision was one of the central themes in the retirement migration literature. Almost half of the articles included in this review examined why people moved abroad upon retirement (Table 2). The question about why people move in these studies was strictly approached from a motivational perspective; people reported, sometimes long after a move, why they thought they had migrated at the time. It is important to consider that these retroactively asked questions might have biased their responses. Figure 1 presents motives from ten quantitative articles that played a role in retirement migration. In general, climate appeared to be the most prominent factor in the decision to move for retirement migrants. For northern Europeans, moving to southern Europe enabled them to avoid wet and cold winters in the country of origin (Casado-Díaz 2006; Warnes and Patterson 1998). The climate motive was followed by pull factors, such as the lifestyle and environment of the destination country.

**Figure 1: Weighted average of motives for international retirement migration to new countries**



Notes: Each red dot represents a quantitative article that reports the *most important* motive to migrate. Each blue dot represents a quantitative article that reports the *reasons* to migrate. The black line represents the weighted average of migration motives. The total sample size is 3,286 individuals from ten quantitative articles. For each motive, the weighing is done by calculating the average from the articles that examined that motive. The bigger the sample size of the article, the more weight its percentage has on this plot.

Example of interpretation: Six articles examined the motive of lifestyle in the destination. Five of these articles, shown with blue dots, asked people to indicate whether lifestyle was a reason to migrate after retirement. One article, shown with a red dot, asked people to indicate whether lifestyle was the most important reason to migrate. The percentages indicate how many people replied positively to these questions.

Another frequently expressed reason is related to health (Breuer 2005) and the availability of health care services. For Europeans in Turkey, Turkish health care and medical facilities strongly affected choosing Turkey as their destination (Unguren, Tekin, and Bayırlı 2021). Similarly, in East Asia, the emergence of care facilities targeting foreign older adults demonstrated how providing health care services can become a significant pull factor (Bender, Hollstein, and Schweppe 2017; Wong and Musa 2014).

Lower living costs were another common motive given by retirement migrants. Hayes (2014) examined the destination Cuenca, Ecuador, which has a relatively cold climate but still attracts many retirement migrants. He argued that inexpensive real estate

and lower costs of living, combined with the limited financial security in retirement in the United States, have made relocation an increasingly popular strategy to avoid adjusting to a lower standard of living upon retirement (Hayes 2014). Migration to lower-income countries for more purchasing power has sometimes been criticized from a post-colonialism perspective, with the argument that some migrants occupy a position of relative affluence and benefit from privileges related to race, class, and nationality deriving from global inequalities (Botterill 2017; Osbaldiston, Picken, and Denny 2020).

Push factors also played a role in the decision to migrate, but these were less frequently examined. Examples are the experience of a disruptive life event, such as illness or divorce, and dissatisfaction with the country of origin. Truly (2002) demonstrated that in addition to migrants who were mainly informed by push factors and migrants who were mainly informed by pull factors, there was a third group of new migrants who were neither dissatisfied with the country of origin nor particularly interested in the culture of the destination country; instead, they imported their current lifestyle to the more attractive destination. This was exemplified by the availability of English-language newspapers in Spain (Haas 2013) or Japanese television stations in Malaysia (Kohno et al. 2016). Nonetheless, what becomes clear from these findings is that pull factors seem more prominent than push factors in determining whether people migrate in retirement.

Certain characteristics might influence not only who can migrate but also what is considered a desirable lifestyle that is worth migrating for (Benson and Osbaldiston 2016; Ono 2015). One such factor is SES. For some, the move was caused by financial incentives, as pension rights built during the working life might not be sufficient for the desired lifestyle in the country of origin (Bender, Hollstein, and Schweppe 2020; Hayes 2015, 2021; Repetti, Phillipson, and Calasanti 2018). For others, the move was not only to improve living standards but also to participate in intergenerational practices, such as providing financial support to children or aged parents back home (Iorio 2020). Repetti, Phillipson, and Calasanti (2018) found that northern European retirement migrants in Spain from a low socioeconomic background experienced greater difficulties in accessing goods and services and participating in social life due to being financially fragile compared to those from a high socioeconomic background. This indicates that migration is not always a good strategy to improve financial position and status.

Gender differences have also received attention in the literature. Gambold (2013) specifically focused on retirement migration among women, who generally have lower pension entitlements and a higher expected longevity than men, which puts them at greater financial risk. Comparing reasons for migration between divorced men and women in Morocco, researchers found that women moved because they fell in love with the country, while men fell in love with a Moroccan woman (Bolzman et al. 2021: 17). The search for a potential (sexual) partner among men appeared more often in studies of

retirement migration, particularly in Asia, but its prevalence is not known (Bell 2015; Bender, Hollstein, and Schweppe 2020; Howard 2008; Stones et al. 2019).

#### **4.1.3 Destination selection**

In terms of where people move to (Table 3), the prominence of Britain and the United States as countries of origin, and Spain and Mexico as destination countries, confirms the classic image of retirement migration, although it is not entirely clear whether the numbers reflect the highest popularity or highest accessibility for research. The table demonstrates that retirement migration is a more global phenomenon, as people from 23 different countries of origin have been observed in 21 different destinations. However, it is important to consider that our review was monolingual, including only English-language texts, which could have created a bias in the origins and destinations studied. For example, scholars examining German retirement migration often publish in German-language outlets, so the magnitude of German retirement migration might be underestimated.

A question that arises is what determines the specific location people decide to settle. A more pleasant climate, for example, can be found in many places. Also, many different types of settlement options exist within countries, particularly in terms of rural or urban destinations. One factor that appeared to be important in destination selection is prior travel experience (Ashton et al. 2019; Bell 2017; Benson 2010; Rojas, LeBlanc, and Sunil 2014; Davies and Hoath 2016). Prior visits create familiarity with the destination's culture and people before migration. Another factor related to destination selection that could be particularly important for older migrants is accessibility. Repetti and Lawrence (2021) demonstrated that retirement migrants preferred locations that were easily reachable, either by car or by plane. Considering that aging individuals have a greater demand for facilities such as hospitals and require more help from their surroundings, the importance of accessibility should not be underestimated. However, the limited coverage of this issue raises the question of whether retirement migrants themselves are aware of it.

**Table 3: Frequency of countries of study in international retirement migration articles**

Country of origin	Frequency	Country of destination	Frequency
United Kingdom	46	Spain	38
United States	26	Mexico	11
Germany	17	Thailand	10
The Netherlands	15	Malaysia	9
Sweden	9	Italy	6
Japan	8	Portugal	6
Switzerland	7	Malta	5
Belgium	7	Turkey	5
France	5	Indonesia	5
Australia	5	France	3
Canada	5	Ecuador	3
Austria	2	Australia	2
Italy	2	Greece	1
Finland	2	The Philippines	1
Norway	2	China	1
Denmark	2	Costa Rica	1
Hong Kong	1	Bulgaria	1
Greece	1	Ireland	1
Brazil	1	Morocco	1
Ireland	1	Panama	1
Portugal	1	Sweden	1
South Africa	1		
Iran	1		

Note: Warnes (2001) was excluded from the country of destination review, as it includes register data with a comprehensive list of countries. The country of origin in Prapanneivuth (2016) was unknown. Additionally, there were eight articles that listed Europe as the country of origin; these were also excluded from this table.

## 4.2 How do retirement migrants fare?

The common themes that concern life after moving to the destination country can be separated into three subdomains: (a) integration in the host society, (b) ties to the origin society, and (c) health and well-being of migrants. Note that although we attempt to be as complete as possible, one has to realize that there is great diversity in people's experiences, for example due to differences in prior connections to the destination

country, geographical location, socioeconomic background, language proficiency, and life histories.

#### **4.2.1 Integration**

After migrating, the next step in the migration process is to settle in the destination country. One of the most important factors stimulating the integration of migrants is destination-language proficiency, which allows for social participation and enhances feelings of belonging (Torkington 2015). Research showed that although retirement migrants' desire to learn the language was relatively high, the percentage of those who were actively taking lessons was low (Bahar et al. 2009). Unsurprisingly, most studies on the language proficiency of retirement migrants showed a lack of local language fluency (Ahmed and Hall 2016; King et al. 2019; Lizarraga, Mantecón, and Huete 2015; Rodríguez 2001). This was often associated with being too old to learn (Iorio 2020), differences between the dialect spoken and what was being taught (King et al. 2019), remaining oriented toward the country of origin, and the presence of retirement communities in which the original language or English was spoken (Gustafson and Laksfoss Cardozo 2017). This has been characterized as language laziness among retirement migrants, resulting in limited communication with the locals (Huber and O'Reilly 2004).

The retirement migrants' relationship with locals was often investigated in the retirement migration literature. Research by O'Reilly (2007) showed that one-third of her respondents had no Spanish friends or work colleagues. Similarly, Ahmed and Hall (2016) reported that few interviewees had Spanish friends, even those who had lived in Spain for 20 years or longer. There were cross-cultural differences in Rodríguez and colleagues' (1998) research, with British and Germans preferring to meet people from their own country, while those from the Nordic countries, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg were more interested in getting to know Spanish people. It is unclear whether these estimates are representative, especially because of the snowball sampling schemes, which may bias the samples toward less well-integrated respondents. Retired migrants gave several reasons to explain the unsuccessful integration process. One of the stated reasons was the lack of knowledge of and fluency in the local language (Casado-Díaz 2009; King et al. 2019; Lizarraga, Mantecón, and Huete 2015; Rodríguez, Fernández-Mayoralas, and Rojo 1998), but it needs to be recognized that a lack of integration also hampers language learning. For women, gender discrimination due to more traditional gender roles in the destination country than in the country of origin was believed to limit integration as well (King et al. 2019). It is important to keep in mind

that for some retirement migrants, integration might be an option rather than a necessity (Huber and O'Reilly 2004).

An interesting exception concerns retirement migrants who form families by marrying locals. Research reported marriages with locals in Thailand, Mexico, and Morocco but not as much in Europe (Bolzman et al. 2021; Howard 2008; Lizarraga, Mantecón, and Huete 2015). While intercultural marriages might indicate a certain degree of integration, two studies argued that most retirement migrants who married a local did not get involved in the spouse's family life (Bell 2015; Howard 2008). This, again, might indicate a limited integration process for the migrants.

An alternative way to socialize in the destination country is by connecting with other expatriates. Contrary to findings showing the difficulty of making local connections, Casado-Díaz (2009) demonstrated that migrants have more friends than they had in their countries of origin. Research showed that retirement migrants often socialize with other expatriates, thus creating "expatriate bubbles" with "like-minded people" (Bell 2015; Lardiés-Bosque, Guillén, and Montes-de-Oca 2016; Oliver 2017; Oliver, Blythe, and Roe 2018; Rodríguez, Fernández-Mayoralas, and Rojo 1998). The places of residence of retirement migrants are important in understanding these types of communities. In Spain, for example, many migrants live in *urbanizaciones*, which are resorts planned for tourists and retirement migrants (Ahmed and Hall 2016; Breuer 2005). Retirement communities can also be established through associations or clubs in the destination country. These associations were a big part of social life for the retirement migrants in many popular retirement destinations (Casado-Díaz 2009; Haas 2013; Innes 2009). People who connected through these organizations sometimes became family outside of family, not only having fun together but also helping each other in precarious situations (Casado-Díaz 2009). While these clubs usually targeted expatriates, there were exceptions in which locals and expatriates connected, for example in Malta (Innes 2009). It's important to note again that snowball sampling might overrepresent retirement migrants in such communities. A truly random sample could yield a larger share of highly integrated migrants but could also yield larger shares of persons who are isolated in a more general sense, not interacting with locals but also not with other migrants.

There are several other ways in which integration into a destination country takes place. One of these aspects is migrants' political or societal participation. For example, Rodríguez, Fernández-Mayoralas, and Rojo (1998) found that migrants were not very keen on participating in local politics and elections, which was corroborated in a more recent study (Durán 2018). Similarly, O'Reilly (2007) stated that only 9% of 340 British migrants had ever voted in an election in Spain, with half of those who did not vote either not possessing the correct papers or lacking information needed to be involved. As nationals from one country and residents in another country, retirement migrants occupy an interesting position regarding politics, which could explain their disinterest in politics



in the destination country. However, it is unknown whether retirement migrants were interested in politics in their countries of origin either.

Retirement migrants not only have a potential effect on politics but also affect the destination country's economy. Over the last 20 years, residential tourism, including retirement migration, has led to environmental and infrastructural changes in Spain (O'Reilly 2017). The areas that became popular for retirement migrants also attracted businesses catering to retirement migrants (Calzada and Gavanoas 2020; Rodríguez, Fernández-Mayoralas, and Rojo 1998). Therefore retirement migration not only stimulated the social lives of the migrants but also stimulated the local economy through money being spent, visiting friends and relative tourism (VFR) (King, Warnes, and Williams 1998), property investments, and providing employment (Benson 2015), for example by stimulation of services for retired people (Rodríguez, Fernández-Mayoralas, and Rojo 1998). A caveat is that part of these opportunities benefit working-age migrants sharing the same country of origin rather than locals because these working-age migrants speak the native language of the retirement migrants (Calzada and Gavanoas 2020). Additionally, the presence of retirement migrants might increase housing prices, or prices in general, in the destination country due to increased demand (Hayes 2021; Lizarraga 2010).

#### **4.2.2 Ties with the country of origin**

Retirement migrants often kept ties with their countries of origin (King, Cela, and Fokkema 2021). Some individuals held onto the house in their home country to go back to frequently or stayed with family and friends there (Bahar et al. 2009; Green 2015; King, Warnes, and Williams 1998). Some chose destinations at a shorter distance from their origin countries to have more frequent contact with their friends and family (Lardiés-Bosque, Guillén, and Montes-de-Oca 2016), and some continued to provide transnational grandparent support (Repetti and Calasanti 2020). Huber and O'Reilly (2004) showed that Swiss migrants retained links with their former home in several ways. For example, more than half of 1,100 surveyed retirement migrants traveled to Switzerland at least once a year and stayed on average for five weeks. Within the broader retirement migrant population, there were differences between who visited the origin country more or less frequently. For example, US citizens residing in Mexico showed greater degrees of transnational practices (e.g., more return trips) compared to the British living in Spain (Lizarraga, Mantecón, and Huete 2015), possibly due to most of the participants from the United States being from border states, making it easier to keep transnational ties (Lardiés-Bosque, Guillén, and Montes-de-Oca 2016).

Modern communication technologies seem to have helped to keep connections between the retirement migrants and their family and friends (Casado-Díaz, Casado-Díaz, and Casado-Díaz 2014; Innes 2009; Rojas, LeBlanc, and Sunil 2014). Rojas, LeBlanc, and Sunil (2014) showed that retirees regularly kept contact with family and friends in the United States, with more than half of respondents (53%) reporting weekly contact and an additional 19% reporting daily contact. Another way of keeping in touch was when families of migrants came to visit them in their new residence, also known as visiting friends and relatives tourism (Casado-Díaz, Casado-Díaz, and Casado-Díaz 2014; Williams et al. 2000). Williams et al. (2000) suggested that family members sometimes overstay their welcomes, although it is not clear how often this occurs. These results indicate that, in line with the transnationalism perspective, migration does not imply a complete break from their previous lives but rather that retirement migrants keep contact and practice mobile kinship to different degrees. While these findings on contact frequency are interesting, little is known about the quality of and support exchange in migrants' family ties compared to those of non-migrants.

A final connection with the country of origin is the option to return. Return migration among retirement migrants is an understudied phenomenon mainly due to the lack of registration of those who move to the destination country and those who return to the country of origin. According to Sone and Thang (2020), return intentions were influenced by the presence of family; financial situations involving higher exchange rates and inflation; health conditions; and a sense of belonging, all of which can signify a commitment to the home country. Although a return might have been a sign of failure as a migrant for some or the result of life events, such as the death of a spouse or a health issue (Hall and Hardill 2016), a return was already in the retirement plan for others (Ahmed and Hall 2016). Casado-Díaz (2006) showed that around 50% of 266 retirees did not intend to return to their home countries in the future, 36% were uncertain if they would, and 14% had return plans. No significant nationality differences were found concerning returning to the country of origin, although Nordic immigrants had a more positive opinion about staying in Spain in the future than their British and German counterparts. A survey conducted in 2016 (Giner-Monfort, Hall, and Betty 2016) showed that 29% of 216 retirement migrants in Spain intended to return to the United Kingdom in the next few years, which is a higher percentage than reported in previous papers, perhaps showing a changing trend.

The literature has also pointed to the possibility of being “stuck” in the destination. The decision to return might be harder for people whose attachment to and social networks in the country of origin are weak or nonexistent; should they return, they might have no local ties and not know which local authority to apply to for assistance (Hardill et al. 2005). In addition, some could not afford to return to their origin countries (Hayes 2014). It must be noted, however, that it is difficult to give precise estimates of return

migration due to the lack of representative data. While return intentions provide an insight into what might happen, it is difficult to estimate whether these intentions translate into actual return migration.

#### **4.2.3 Health and well-being**

Among the reviewed articles focusing on the general health, well-being, and life satisfaction of retirement migrants, most indicated that they were satisfied with their lives in the destination country (Howard 2008; Sunil, Rojas, and Bradley 2007). Given that no study used a comparison group, it is unknown whether migrants are more satisfied than non-migrants; nor is it known whether well-being improved because of the move. In this sense, the findings on well-being are somewhat ambiguous and require further research.

Although there are many components to well-being, one of the most important is health. Health includes both physical and mental health, but in the retirement migration literature, most of the emphasis was on the physical health of retirement migrants. Several articles argued that retirement migration had a positive effect on the majority of individuals' health. For example, Amin and Ingman (2010) showed that almost all 80 retirement migrants from the United States in their study reported excellent or good personal health conditions in Mexico. A positive health status could be related to several factors, such as active lifestyles and climate, with warmer climates being associated with enhancing the conditions for a more active lifestyle (Botterill 2017). However, it should be noted that most of the research is self-reported; those with compromised health might be reluctant to report the specifics of their conditions. Moreover, no comparative cross-sectional or longitudinal designs have been used, so it is difficult to speak of an effect of retirement migration.

While retirement migration can lead to vibrant social lives, Huber and O'Reilly (2004) showed that some suffer from boredom, loneliness, and isolation. According to their research, these negative feelings could result from losing a partner, having health issues, the superficiality of relationships, or simply the lack of things to do. This could become particularly problematic when boredom and emotional problems develop into more severe issues, such as alcoholism, which is considered the "black spot in paradise" (Huber and O'Reilly 2004). Ways to overcome loneliness and isolation included volunteering, which led to a more active lifestyle (Haas 2013), and participating in peer-led care practices, which not only provided different hobbies and social groups but also created an environment where people kept an eye out for each other's well-being (Oliver 2017: 176). Nevertheless, research is unclear about whether loneliness, depression, and boredom are due to retirement migration or other factors, such as the change of lifestyle

when switching from working to retirement or losing loved ones, which happens to non-migrant retirees as well. Research is also not clear about the prevalence of these issues.

As people age, the need for professional health care increases. Legido-Quigley et al. (2012) argued that British pensioners in Spain were satisfied with their experiences of Spanish health care because of the perceived higher quality in terms of thoroughness and humanity of care and the cleanliness of facilities compared to health care in the United Kingdom. They appeared to have a high level of trust in the Spanish health care system (Legido-Quigley et al. 2012). Similarly, Amin and Ingman (2010) showed that 35% of US retirement migrants in their sample regarded Mexican health care as excellent because drugs and health services were cheaper than in the United States, while 14% regarded Mexican health care as poor, especially when they did not have health insurance coverage in Mexico and had to go back to the United States to receive care. While these studies mostly showed a positive outlook on health care services, it is unclear to what extent the composition of interviewees affects this perception. For example, an overrepresentation of young and healthy retirement migrants could lead to a more positive perception.

Due to a lack of communication between formal state care and retirement migrants, some formal state care is difficult to access. Interviews with 200 retirement migrants in Spain (Calzada 2018) showed that most migrants used formal state care as a last resort and attempted to get help from personal networks and private care providers first. The lack of communication resulted from migrants not speaking the language, which became problematic when they needed health care services that were provided in only the local language (Hall 2021; Hall and Hardill 2016; Hardill et al. 2005; Kohno et al. 2016). Some retirement migrants encountered other barriers, such as a lack of integration with their legal status, failure to meet criteria for public help, or lacking the financial means for access to health care (Hall 2021). Therefore people sometimes fell back on other forms of support. Several volunteer organizations, often founded by other expatriates, assist individuals in situations where they require extra help (Gehring 2016; Haas 2013). These organizations are commonly found in Spain (Ahmed and Hall 2016; Casado-Díaz 2009; Haas 2013) but also are getting more popular in other retirement destinations, such as Mexico (Lardiés-Bosque, Guillén, and Montes-de-Oca 2016). Examining retirement migrants' experiences with foreign health care is becoming more critical, as the countries of destination where people settle are becoming more diverse and people are choosing locations at greater geographical distances (Green 2016).

When the required care is challenging to obtain in the destination country, people might fall back on sources in the country of origin. Hall and Hardill (2016) suggested that older British people in Spain retained a strong dependence on the United Kingdom, particularly regarding health care. This is similar to US retirement migrants in Mexico, who often traveled to the United States to make use of their medical insurance coverage (Lardiés-Bosque, Guillén, and Montes-de-Oca 2016), and Dutch retirement migrants in

Spain, who often adapted their mobility patterns to ensure that they retained access to their origin country's health care systems (Gehring 2016, 2017), resulting in transnational health care practices (Gehring 2016; Hall, Ono, and Kohno 2021; Kahveci, Karacan, and Kosnick 2020; Toyota and Xiang 2012).

A new type of retirement migration concerns retirees who move particularly for the availability of affordable and extensive health care. Certain places, such as Thailand, are especially attractive for the affordable intensive care they provide to foreigners. For example, the care facilities investigated by Bender and colleagues (2020) catered specifically to German-speaking individuals and were built to "German or Swiss norms." They aimed to care for the residents in every aspect, making a "worry-free" environment. However, whether these institutions achieved such an environment depended on a person's background, needs, and resources (Bender, Hollstein, and Schweppe 2020).

## **5. Conclusion and future directions**

Existing literature provides rich accounts of the migration experience of older adults using predominantly qualitative methods. By conducting extensive fieldwork, the qualitative studies in this research line have captured a wide range of perspectives. They have brought to the fore unique and unexpected cases of retirement migration that could easily be overlooked in quantitative analyses. In doing so, researchers have demonstrated the heterogeneity of migrants in terms of both their backgrounds and their experiences. Additionally, researchers have been able to include the experiences of retirement migrants who do not appear in formal registration data because they did not inform municipalities of their moves. By using in-depth and semi-structured interviews, researchers have discovered what concepts are relevant in a bottom-up manner, which has the advantage that the data observed are not affected by preexisting concepts (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The information gathered through these studies provided a solid basis for the field. Having said that, it remains essential to assess whether these accounts are representative of the broader population of retirement migrants and to systematically test hypotheses that arise from this basis.

In this conclusion, we propose future directions for retirement migration research (Table 4). We believe there is a need to test existing ideas and hypotheses more rigorously. This applies to ideas about why people move as well as to ideas about how migrants fare. To this end, we suggest several methodological improvements that would facilitate such inquiries. These suggestions are discussed below and summarized in the left column of Table 4. We outline several new substantive questions that come out of this paper and are important to address. These questions are summarized in the right-hand column of Table 4.

**Table 4: Methodological and thematic improvements**

Theme	Methodological improvements	Novel research questions
Why do people migrate?	<p>More representative samples</p> <p>Amplify the focus on self-reported motives to move, with analyses of actual risk factors</p> <p>More systematic comparisons with stayers</p> <p>More descriptive information on trends in old-age migration</p> <p>More descriptive information on the association between age and outmigration flows for different origin–destination combinations</p> <p>Multiple origins, multiple destinations</p>	<p>What is the influence of personality traits on migration?</p> <p>How does having a partner affect retirement migrants' decision to migrate after retirement?</p> <p>What is the role of family ties and social networks on migration?</p> <p>What are the effects of societal and political problems in the origin country on retirement migration?</p> <p>How can differences in the type of destination chosen be explained?</p> <p>To what extent can international retirement migration (IRM) be seen as a sign of strengthened agency among the old?</p>
How do people fare after migration?	<p>More representative samples</p> <p>Comparisons before and after migration and/or matched comparisons with stayers</p> <p>Longitudinal data after migration</p> <p>Inclusion of (selective) return migration in the design</p> <p>Multiple origins, multiple destinations, multilevel designs</p> <p>Use of dyadic data (data on both partners)</p>	<p>How do well-being and life satisfaction develop over time as migrants age in the destination?</p> <p>How does IRM affect intergenerational support exchange?</p> <p>How do transnational practices of migrants affect integration in the destination?</p> <p>What are the effects of IRM on loneliness, depressive symptoms, and health behaviors?</p> <p>What are the effects of IRM on consumption and subjective economic well-being?</p> <p>What are the effects of the destination context (country effect) on adaptation and well-being?</p> <p>What are the social and economic effects of IRM on local destination communities?</p> <p>Who returns to the country of origin, who stays, and who cannot return and feels trapped?</p>

In this section, we suggest research design improvements that allow for a more stringent test of prevailing hypotheses about the two central themes: migration decision and life after migration. Some of these design elements are explained below:

- 1) More representative samples in a certain destination country or from a certain origin country could help us provide more accurate descriptions of retirement migrants.
- 2) A longitudinal (prospective or retrospective) design that has at least two time points, before and after the move, or at least in different stages of life after the move, could help us observe and evaluate the integration process and adaptation over time.
- 3) A multilevel approach, including different destination countries and origin countries, could help us examine the role of (characteristics of) the origin and destination contexts.
- 4) A control group of non-migrants could help us better understand who is “at risk” of moving and enable the assessment of the importance of the migration context in terms of how people fare. Causal migration effects will be difficult to estimate, but even at the descriptive level, there now is a lack of knowledge

about differences in relationships, health, and well-being between migrants and non-migrants with similar background traits.

- 5) A dyadic investigation of retirement migration could help us see how moving together with a partner might affect the migration experience. Considering that most retirement migrants are married, it is important to investigate how couple dynamics affect the migration decision process and life in the destination country and vice versa.

The wide variety of perspectives from which retirement migrants' lives in the destination country have been examined demonstrate how all-encompassing and life-changing retirement migration is. Some aspects of retirement migration, however, have not been explored in depth. One of these relates to the personality characteristics of migrants. Studies on other forms of migration have demonstrated that personality predicts migration (Jokela 2009; Van Dalen and Henkens 2007, 2013). Thus it would be interesting to examine whether personality plays a role in the migration decision of retirement migrants and to see whether it affects life satisfaction in the destination country. Additionally, integration has mainly been approached from a social perspective; it would be interesting to examine other types of behavior that could suggest integration, such as participation in cultural and political activities. Also, more attention could be paid to prior life events, especially adverse events, as differences in the past might explain some of the differences between retirement migrants in the present. Finally, while the research on macro-level factors has so far focused on the 2008 financial crisis (i.e., Salvati and Benassi 2021; Calzada 2018), interesting questions arise with changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially questions about changes in border control. As transnational practices are a big part of the lives of retirement migrants, not being able to cross borders very easily, or sometimes not at all due to lockdowns, might impact return migration or the future of retirement migration.

Since the second half of the last century, the meaning of "old age" has changed. While retirement used to be a prelude to a person's final stage in life, the emphasis seems to have shifted; retirement now signifies entering a "next" phase in life. The migration of older adults, as observed in retirement migration literature, fits within this new perception of old age, as individuals perceive retiring abroad as an opportunity to start again, to obtain a new lease on life. In this contribution, we have shown that while for some this simply means living a similar type of life in a country with a better climate, for others it means a more all-encompassing break from their past lives. The studies in focus have given us noteworthy insights into the complexities of the retirement migration experience. This form of migration not only significantly impacts the individual but also affects the populations of sending and receiving countries. Some particularly popular areas see the average age of the population increase substantially. To a certain extent, the

burden of elderly care is transferred from the sending country to the destination country, which demands a lot from municipalities and local governments. Simultaneously, sending countries must renegotiate their responsibilities because even though the retirement migrants are no longer situated in their territories, they have built up rights to entitlements earlier in the life course. Thus international retirement migration is much more than a privileged form of migration for an exclusive group of people and gives important insights into the challenges and opportunities relating to individualization, aging, and globalization that future societies will face.

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## Appendix

The 90 articles included in our review were read thoroughly and categorized according to their methodological approaches and thematic focus. For the methodological categorization, we made an overview of sample size, sampling strategy, methodological approach (quantitative/qualitative/mixed), data collection method (see Table 1), and geographical focus. The theme categorization was completed in two steps. First, 14 categories were made in an inductive manner according to the focus of the articles. Second, after further examination, the 14 categories were grouped into five main categories that appeared most prominent and overlapped with each other: profiles of migrants, migration decision and destination selection, integration, ties with the country of origin, and health and well-being. Table A-1 presents the list of the selected articles and their theme of focus. In Table A-2, we demonstrate the organization of the literature according to both the thematic and methodological approaches.

**Table A-1: Thematic categorization of findings in IRM studies**

No.	Year	Article	Method	Profiles of migrants	Migration decision and destination selection	Integration	Ties with the country of origin	Health and well-being
1	1998	King, Warnes, and Williams	Quantitative	1	1	1	1	
2	1998	Rodriguez, Fernandez-Mayoralas, and Rojo	Mixed	1	1			
3	1998	Warnes and Patterson	Quantitative	1				
4	1998	Williams and Patterson	Mixed	1	1	1	1	
5	1999	Warnes, King, Williams, and Patterson,	Quantitative	1	1	1	1	1
6	2000	Williams, King, Warnes, Patterson	Mixed			1	1	
7	2001	Warnes	Quantitative	1	1			
8	2002	Truly	Mixed	1	1	1		
9	2004	Ackers & Dwyer	Qualitative	1		1		
10	2004	Oliver	Qualitative			1	1	
11	2004	Huber and O'Reilly	Mixed	1		1	1	1
12	2004	Banks	Qualitative			1		
13	2005	Hardill, Spradbery, Arnold-Boakes, and Marrugat	Qualitative			1	1	1
14	2005	Breuer	Mixed	1	1	1	1	
15	2006	Casado-Diaz	Mixed	1	1	1	1	
16	2007	O'Reilly	Mixed			1		
17	2007	Sunil, Rojas, and Bradley	Mixed		1	1		1
18	2008	Howard	Quantitative		1	1		1

**Table A-1: (Continued)**

No.	Year	Article	Method	Profiles of migrants	Migration decision and destination selection	Integration	Ties with the country of origin	Health and well-being
19	2008	La Parra and Angel Mateo	Quantitative					1
20	2008	Innes	Qualitative		1	1		1
21	2009	Casado-Diaz	Qualitative			1		
22	2009	Gibler, Casado-Diaz, Casado-Diaz, Rodríguez, and Taltavull	Quantitative	1	1	1		1
23	2009	Bahar, Laçiner, Bal, and Özcan	Mixed	1	1	1		
24	2010	Benson	Qualitative		1	1		1
25	2010	Amin and Ingman	Mixed	1				1
26	2010	Lizarraga Morales, Mantecón, and Huete	Quantitative	1		1		
27	2012	Benson	Qualitative		1			
28	2012	Toyota and Xiang	Qualitative		1	1		
29	2012	Legido-Quigley, Nolte, Green, la Parra, and McKee	Qualitative					1
30	2013	Haas	Qualitative			1	1	1
31	2013	Gambold	Qualitative		1			
32	2014	Rojas, LeBlanc, and Sunil	Mixed	1		1	1	
33	2014	Casado-Diaz, Casado-Diaz, and Casado-Diaz	Quantitative				1	
34	2014	Hall and Hardill	Qualitative			1	1	1
35	2014	Wong and Musa	Qualitative		1			
36	2014	Legido-Quigly, McKee, and Green	Qualitative					1
37	2014	Hayes	Qualitative		1	1	1	
38	2014	Abdul-Aziz, Loh, and Jaafar	Mixed		1	1		
39	2015	Hayes	Qualitative		1		1	
40	2015	Wong and Musa	Qualitative		1			
41	2015	Benson	Qualitative			1		
42	2015	Green	Qualitative				1	
43	2015	Lizarraga, Mantecon, and Huete	Quantitative	1		1	1	
44	2015	Bell	Qualitative		1	1		
45	2016	Ono	Qualitative		1	1		
46	2016	Lardies-Bosque, Guillen, and Montes-de-Oca	Qualitative			1	1	
47	2016	Kohno, Musa, Farid, Aziz, Nakayama, and Dahlui	Qualitative					1
48	2016	Giner-Monfort, Hall, and Betty	Quantitative	1			1	
49	2016	Ahmed and Hall	Qualitative		1	1	1	1
50	2016	Gehring	Qualitative					1

**Table A-1: (Continued)**

No.	Year	Article	Method	Profiles of migrants	Migration decision and destination selection	Integration	Ties with the country of origin	Health and well-being
51	2016	Davies and Hoath	Quantitative	1	1			
52	2016	Prapannetivuth	Quantitative		1			
53	2016	Green	Qualitative					1
54	2017	Gehring	Qualitative			1	1	1
55	2017	O'Reilly	Qualitative			1	1	1
56	2017	Bender, Hollstein, and Schweppe	Qualitative		1			1
57	2017	Gavanas	Qualitative			1		1
58	2017	Bell	Qualitative		1	1		
59	2017	Botteril	Qualitative			1		1
60	2017	Gustafson and Cardozo	Qualitative			1		
61	2017	Wong, Musa, and Taha	Quantitative	1	1			1
62	2017	Oliver	Qualitative			1		1
63	2017	Sampaio	Qualitative		1	1		
64	2017	Oliver	Qualitative	1				
65	2017	Hoffman, Crooks, and Snyder	Qualitative					1
66	2018	Repetti, Phillipson, and Calasanti	Qualitative	1	1	1		
67	2018	Stones, Botterill, Lee, and O'Reilly	Qualitative			1		
68	2018	Duran	Quantitative			1		
69	2018	Calzada	Qualitative			1		1
70	2019	King, Cela, Morettini, and Fokkema	Qualitative		1			1
71	2019	Ashton, Scott, and Choibamroong	Qualitative		1			
72	2019	Gehring	Qualitative	1		1	1	
73	2019	Sampaio and King	Qualitative		1	1		
74	2020	Bender, Hollstein, and Schweppe	Qualitative		1			1
75	2020	Calzada and Gavanas	Qualitative			1		
76	2020	Kahveci, Karcan, and Kosnick	Mixed			1	1	1
77	2020	Repetti and Calasanti	Qualitative		1		1	
78	2020	Scuzzarello	Qualitative			1		
79	2020	Osbaldiston, Pickering, and Denny	Qualitative		1		1	1
80	2020	Iorio	Qualitative		1	1		
81	2020	Sone and Thang	Qualitative			1	1	
82	2021	Hall, Ono, and Kohno	Qualitative					
83	2021	Unguren, Tekin, and Bayirli	Quantitative	1	1			1
84	2021	Bolzman, Fokkema, Guisse, and van Dalen	Qualitative		1	1		

**Table A-1: (Continued)**

No.	Year	Article	Method	Profiles of migrants	Migration decision and destination selection	Integration	Ties with the country of origin	Health and well-being
85	2021	Repetti and Lawrence	Qualitative		1	1		
86	2021	King, Cela, Fokkema, and Morrettini	Qualitative		1	1		
87	2021	Hall	Qualitative				1	1
88	2021	Salvati and Benassi	Quantitative					
89	2021	Hayes	Qualitative		1			
90	2021	Rodes and Rodriguez	Mixed				1	

*Note:* This table looks at 90 articles included in the review. The number 1 is given to a category if the article has a research focus on that category. The main focus of Salvati and Benassi's (2021) research is macro-level impacts of migration, which does not fit into the abovementioned categories.

**Table A-2: Articles on IRM grouped by theme and method**

Theme	Methods		
	Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed
Profiles of migrants	9, 64, 66, 72	1, 3, 5, 22, 26, 43, 48, 51, 55, 82, 84	2, 4, 8, 11, 14, 15, 23, 25, 32
Migration decision and destination selection	20, 24, 27, 28, 31, 35, 37, 39, 40, 44, 45, 49, 50, 58, 63, 66, 70, 71, 73, 74, 77, 80, 84, 85, 86, 89	1, 5, 7, 18, 22, 51, 52, 61, 84	2, 4, 8, 14, 15, 23, 38
Ties with the host country	9, 10, 12, 13, 20, 21, 24, 28, 30, 34, 37, 41, 44, 45, 46, 49, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, 66, 67, 70, 72, 73, 75, 78, 80, 81, 84, 85, 86, 87	1, 5, 18, 22, 26, 43, 68	4, 6, 8, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 23, 32, 38, 76, 90
Ties with the country of origin	10, 13, 30, 34, 37, 39, 42, 46, 49, 54, 55, 72, 77, 79, 81	1, 5, 33, 4, 48	4, 6, 11, 14, 15, 32, 76
Health and well-being	13, 20, 24, 29, 30, 34, 36, 47, 49, 50, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 62, 65, 69, 70, 74, 79, 82, 87	5, 18, 19, 22, 61, 83	11, 17, 25, 76

Note. Article numbers are based on the numbers in Table A-1.