

How Prospective International Retired Migrants Use Tourism for Decision Making

Abstract

Despite the current importance of international retirement migration for both academics and practitioners, the extant literature on the topic is still scarce and mostly focused on short-period migration flows from wealthy and northern countries to cheaper and warm-weather destinations. This article aims at shedding light on the role of tourism in prospective migrants' decision-making process, considering the framework provided by the push-pull model, which is often used to explain both migration and tourism. A qualitative study was conducted, comprising ten in-depth interviews with 45+ year-old Brazilian citizens who intend to move to Europe after retirement. Results show that tourism is important for prospective migrants to evaluate possible migration destinations, as some of the most relevant migration pull factors (e.g., safety) are easily assessed during tourism experiences. Participants in this study also carefully plan tourism activities prior to their decision to migrate in order to get a more realistic notion of what the destination is like for residents. Overall, this study demonstrates that tourism is particularly important for several stages of migrants' decision-making process.

Keywords: international retirement migration, push-pull model, tourism experience, migration trigger, migration facilitator

1. Introduction

International retirement migration (IRM) has been a recurrent research topic for the past six decades, and it is expected to flourish since many of its aspects are still disregarded. Pickering et al. (2019) explained that research on this scientific field has an interdisciplinary nature, dating back to the 1950s. The dominant trend has been studies on relatively wealthy retirees who experience short-term mobility periods while living abroad for weeks or months each year to avoid severe winter weather.

Although some contributions in extant literature mention the expected role of tourism in fostering IRM, this approach has been generally overlooked. Considering the current relevance of retirement migration generated by both migration trends and the strategies adopted by some countries to attract retired migrants, this article aims to explore further the importance of tourism in IRM's decision-making process.

The article complements extant literature in several ways. It highlights synergies between tourism and migration by examining the contribution from both tourism and migration theory studies. Similarly, while studies on IRM tend to be dominated by short-term migration flows from affluent countries in the north to warm climate countries in the south (King et al., 2019; Pickering et al., 2019), this article offers evidence on a different migration movement, comprising prospective long-term migrants from developing South American countries to Europe. It also suggests that push-pull factors are context-dependent, namely on the characteristics (e.g., safety) of the home country of the prospective migrant. Moreover, this article focuses on the ongoing migration decision-making process and thus provides interesting views on its dynamism, in which tourism experiences can be seen both as triggers for intentions and facilitators of migration.

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The article is organized as follows. The literature review summarizes the most important contributions to international retirement migration and its relationship with tourism. Particular attention is given to the push-pull model, a commonly adopted analysis tool in migration and tourism studies that acts as a useful framework for synthesizing the field's dispersed scientific inputs. Then, the article presents the method adopted in a qualitative study with 45+-year-old Brazilian individuals who have experience as tourists and some intention to move to Europe (e.g., Portugal) after retirement. Empirical evidence is presented and discussed in the results section. The article ends with concluding remarks. Implications for marketing and business managers, limitations, and suggestions for future research are also provided.

2. Literature review

One frequently used approach to study tourism and migration alike is exploring the factors that push tourists and migrants from their home countries and pull them to the tourism/migration destinations. This section focuses on the theoretical background for the article, presenting a synthesis of the most relevant contributions to the push-pull model in tourism and migration theory and exploring tourism's role in migration.

2.1. The push-pull model in tourism and migration research

The push-pull model is popular in both tourism and migration literature. In fact, according to Uysal et al. (2008), the pull-push framework is the most recognized approach in tourism research. Moreover, Pickering et al. (2019) suggest that the push-pull framework has appropriately backed research on IRM, being particularly useful to articulate evidence depicted by the literature regarding migration motives and drivers. Van Hear et al. (2018) mention that, despite the simplicity of the push-pull approach, it is intuitive and offers support on the influence structural forces may exert over migration flows.

Baloglu and Uysal (1996) explain that push factors are socio-psychological forces that predispose the individual to travel, while pull factors are destination attributes that attract the tourist to a particular location. Indeed, an important body of tourism literature explores tourists' needs and destination attributes. Together, push and pull factors explain tourists' motivations and behaviors, having an essential role in consumer decision-making.

So, tourism motivation literature has often been developed using the push and pull concepts initially proposed by Dann (1977). Amongst the most relevant contributions that aimed at identifying push and pull travel motivations is the study conducted by Crompton (1979), who identified nine push dimensions (e.g., escape, relaxation, enhancement of kinship relationships, prestige) and two pull dimensions (novelty, education). Alternatively, Yuan and McDonald (1990) proposed a set of five push factors (escape, relaxation, prestige, novelty, enhancement of kingship relationships) and seven pull factors (e.g., budget, ease of travel, wilderness, culture, and history). As Klenosky (2002) refers, research has focused either on push, pull, or push and pull factors, many of them adopting a quantitative approach, including exploratory factor analysis, to propose scales of attributes and motivations. It is widely accepted that push and pull factors are interdependent, and ultimately their relationship is essential to understand tourists' behavior and success of destination (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Klenosky, 2002; Oh et al., 1995). For instance, Baloglu and Uysal (1996) proposed the push-pull framework to segment the market and to develop marketing strategies, arguing that the success of tourism destinations depends on the perfect match between push and pull factors. These factors have been shown to explain tourists' satisfaction (Eusébio & Vieira, 2013; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), which might also explain destination loyalty and suggest as relevant criteria an efficient resource allocation by tourism managers (Uysal et al., 2008).

When looking into the push-pull approach in migration studies, similarities are quite clear for the pull factors. According to Lee (1966), pull factors represent the attractiveness of the destination, and push factors are the conditions at the home country that impel prospective migrants to leave. Lee (1966) considers migration to be also affected by intervention obstacles, namely distance, as well as geographical and political barriers,

which act as deterrents. Moreover, personal factors, subject to changes along the individuals' life cycle, can act as both facilitators and inhibitors to migration. One changing moment mentioned by Lee (1966) is retirement. The author argues that, although individuals compare positive and negative factors of home and destination countries, the decision is not completely rational and thus distinct from the neoclassical approach. In addition, the model assumes that prospective migrants have incomplete and subjective information about the destination. Indeed, perceptions of the destination's advantages and disadvantages are often a result of others' narratives and can only be fully developed by living there (Lee, 1966). These assumptions are in line with extant literature (Williams et al., 2000; Williams et al., 1997), which questioned tourism's ability to offer knowledge and experience to prospective migrants, as tourists' experiences are often limited to tourist attractions.

Recently, and following the push-pull model, Wong et al. (2017) developed a push and pull motivation scale with international retired migrants to Malaysia, and identified five push factors (prior overseas experience, overseas retirement dream, unfavorable political and security situation, escapism, and health improvement) and seven pull factors (amenities and facilities, leisure lifestyle, being active, cost and economics, conducive environment, people and communication, and socialization), thus demonstrating once again the adaptability of this framework to IRM. Despite showing that the push-pull theory of travel motivation also applies to retired migrants, it is important to note that the factors that emerged are not the same as for general tourism (e.g., Crompton, 1979; Yuan & McDonald, 1990), particularly by giving more emphasis on social aspects such as people, communication, and socialization. These motivations were further explored by IRM literature, as described in the next section.

2.2. IRM motivation and destination choice criteria

Pickering et al. (2019) summarized the contributions in the literature regarding the motivations of retired people to migrate to another country into four dimensions, comprising the characteristics of the destination (e.g., climate), factors related to the social networks and language, the cost/affordability of the destination, and the structural/political facilitators such as ease of travel and access to visa and residency authorization. Indeed, while exploring the migrants' decision process, we found the most cited factors as destination choice criteria to be:

- Natural factors, such as weather (Casado-Díaz, 2006; Casado-Díaz et al., 2004; Dwyer, 2000; King et al., 2019; Rodríguez et al., 2004; Sunil et al., 2007; Williams & Hall, 2002; Williams et al., 1997; Wong & Musa, 2014) and natural landscapes (Rodríguez et al., 2004; Sunil et al., 2007);
- Cultural factors, such as lifestyle (Bell, 2017; Casado-Díaz et al., 2004; King et al., 2019; Ono, 2015; Williams & Hall, 2002; Williams et al., 1997), migrant community and friendliness of locals (Sunil et al., 2007; Wong & Musa, 2014);
- Economic factors, including the cost of living and prices of houses (Bell, 2017; Casado-Díaz, 2006; Casado-Díaz et al., 2004; Dwyer, 2000; King et al., 2019; Ono, 2015; Rodríguez et al., 2004; Sunil et al., 2007; Williams et al., 1997; Wong & Musa, 2014) and more favorable income tax treatment (Williams et al., 1997);
- Safety factors, namely low criminality rate (Sunil et al., 2007);
- Migration networks, which are highly valued information providers and contribute to reducing migration barriers (Casado-Díaz, 2006; Rojas et al., 2014; Sunil et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2000);
- Prior tourism experiences (Casado-Díaz, 2006; Ono, 2015; Rodríguez et al., 2004; Williams et al., 2000).

It can be observed that several of these factors coincide with the destination attributes frequently cited by tourism literature (e.g., Andreu et al., 2006; Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Crompton, 1979; Eid et al., 2019; Hsu et al., 2009; Klenosky, 2002; Mussalam & Tajeddini, 2016; Yousaf et al., 2018) as criteria that tourists use to make their travel decisions, namely regarding weather, natural attractions, and culture, just to name a few.

Still, additional factors arise, such as migration networks, which are an important facilitator for people that are considering living permanently in another country. Another factor that arises from IRM is having prior tourism experiences in the destination.

Tourism experiences are identified in some studies as an antecedent of migration. In line with Carling and Schewel's (2018) recent suggestion, the role of tourism in migration processes, more particularly in the preparation phase, is clear. Moreover, Williams and Hall (2002) note that for prospective migrants, that is, individuals who have already decided to migrate, tourism provides important opportunities to compare alternative destinations and gather information. On the contrary, place attachment can affect their intentions to migrate.

2.3. Tourism as a trigger/facilitator of IRM

Evidence from the literature (e.g., Rodríguez et al., 2004; Williams et al., 2000) shows that most of the international migrants had previous tourism experiences at the destination, which ultimately helped them choose where to spend (part of) their retirement time. Still, Williams et al. (1997) argue that tourism has a limited ability to provide knowledge and authentic experience of other countries, as often tourists are confined to traveling packages in highly touristic areas. Second homes are also often located in the most touristic areas (Perles-Ribes et al., 2018). The acquisition of local knowledge and *mode de vivre* can be consolidated in repeated visits or buying a second house for holidays in a foreign country. As such, tourism is the starting point of a process that leads to seasonal and even permanent retirement migration (Williams et al., 2000; Williams et al., 1997).

In fact, Williams et al. (1997) state that the rising trends in IRM are associated with international traveling, encompassing both work-related migration by providing experience on living abroad and tourism by providing experience on traveling internationally. The importance of these factors seems to vary between permanent and short-term international migrants. Indeed, evidence indicates that long-distance retirement is more common amongst married couples who were migrants during their active life (Williams et al., 1997), and seasonal migration is more common amongst wealthier migrants, considering that it implies owning a second house (Williams et al., 1997). Additionally, extant literature shows that prior tourism experiences shape the way prospective retirement migrants search for a destination (Williams et al., 2000), enabling them to establish social connections (Sunil et al., 2007) and fostering familiarity with the location (Williams & Hall, 2002).

Hence, this article argues that tourism experiences are a catalyst for more engaged learning about the destination, as prospective migrants need to go beyond traditional touristic experiences (e.g., recreational, cultural, or winter tourism) in order to get a realistic understanding of essential factors to consider in their decision process, including the local lifestyle (Bell, 2017; Casado-Díaz et al., 2004; King et al., 2019; Ono, 2015; Williams & Hall, 2002; Williams et al., 1997) and friendliness (Sunil et al., 2007; Wong & Musa, 2014), and to establish connections with residents, as, for example, other migrants (Casado-Díaz, 2006; Rojas et al., 2014; Sunil et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2000).

3. Method

Based on the literature's contributions, this article adopts a qualitative and exploratory approach in order to tackle the following research questions:

- (1) How are the tourism choices of prospective international retired migrants affected by their intention to migrate?
- (2) How does tourists' contact with pull factors affect their intention to migrate after retirement?
- (3) How does tourism affect the relationship between pull and push factors associated with intentions of retirement in another country?

Considering that extant literature is dominated by studies on migrants from wealthier countries in the north who spend part of the year in southern countries with lower costs of living and warmer weather, the contribution of this study derives from the adoption of a different perspective, namely by analyzing data on a sample of 45+-year-old active citizens from Brazil that intend to migrate to Europe (namely Portugal) after retirement. Thus, the fact that the study population comprises prospective migrants allows us to capture the dynamic nature of the decision process. A purposive sampling technique was adopted, and the participants exhibited a diverse profile in terms of gender, education, job, and expected number of years before retirement, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Sample characteristics

Interview	Interviewee pseudonym	Age	Gender	Expected years to retirement	IRM type
1	Tom	65	Male	Up to 10 years	Short-term migration
2	Rose	58	Female	Retired	Permanent migration
3	Eva	58	Female	Retired	Short-term migration
4	Jenny	60	Female	Retired	Short-term migration
5	Emma	50	Female	15 years	Permanent migration
6	Elias	49	Male	15 years	Permanent migration
7	Neil	61	Male	Retired	Short-term migration
8	Ewan	62	Male	Retired	Permanent migration
9	Carol	60	Female	Retired	Permanent migration
10	Helen	59	Female	3 years	Short-term migration

A total of 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted in 2019. Data saturation was reached at the 8th interview. The interview outline consisted of three sections aimed at exploring (i) the intention to migrate to a foreign country, (ii) the international tourism experience, (iii) and the relationship between international retirement migration and tourism. Ethical procedures commonly accepted in social sciences research were adopted. The study was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. Full information was provided before, during, and after data collection, and interviewees confirmed their informed consent regarding audio recording and the use of transcripts to disseminate results. The interviews were audio-recorded to enable data transcription, and all audio files were only accessed by one researcher and later destroyed after analysis. Transcriptions were subjected to content data analysis in order to identify the themes and categories depicted from participants' narratives. Codes were initially defined based on the literature review and further developed during data analysis.

4. Results

Extant literature suggests that tourism experiences facilitate the choice of destination for IRM (Rodríguez et al., 2004; Williams et al., 2000) and stresses the role of tourism as a trigger and facilitator of IRM as described in previous sections. According to participants, tourism visits are often used to test the destination and further plan future migration.

Still, tourism experiences may also act as a trigger, both in the urge to migrate and choosing the place where to migrate, since they add value to the decision process. One participant in this study explained that this could be unexpected, as he recently felt particularly attracted to London, leading him to attempt immediate migration:

"When I visited London, I really liked it because the city matches my ideas perfectly, not only culturally but also regarding lifestyle... when I got to London, I felt that urge, like 'this is the place where I want to live'; it was so compelling that I tried to migrate to the UK." (Elias, M, 49)

Arguably, tourism experiences to possible migration destinations get more important as interviewees get closer to their retirement, as it accelerates the urge to decide, also indicating that the participants had a planned

strategy while traveling as tourists. One interviewee who expects to be retired in three years mentions that her next trip to Europe is planned in detail to help her prosecute her IRM intentions:

"I haven't done that so far, but my next trip to Europe will be more strategic... I want to go to Germany and to the United Kingdom, to London, to Portugal... let my imagination turn into reality a bit more, allow my goals to materialize." (Helen, F, 59)

The importance of a tourism experience prior to migration is also confirmed by one participant in this study who is already accomplishing her migration from Brazil to Portugal. She explains that a tourism experience reduces the perceived risks of migration, allows for an evaluation of the destination, and ultimately avoids disappointment:

"The decision to migrate to Portugal was sustained by former visits as a tourist and the fact that I was pleased with the country, with the cities (...) it is of utmost importance to know the country as a tourist, analyze pros and cons, in order to decide to live outside of your own country; for me, to embark in such an adventure without knowing and going abroad, I think it's dangerous ... and it may minimize disappointment." (Rose, M, 58)

Hence, our findings corroborate indications in the literature suggesting that prospective migrants use tourism to prepare for their migration (e.g., Carling & Schewel, 2018; Williams & Hall, 2002). Still, participants in this study stress the differences of being a tourist from actually having experience in living in a different location, confirming extant literature (e.g., Lee, 1966; Williams et al., 2000; Williams et al., 1997) that calls attention to the limited ability of tourism experiences to provide information about living in a specific location. For example, one interviewee explains that:

"I've already had an idea on how it is to live in Portugal, not in-depth, though, because only day-to-day living provides that; I visited it as a tourist, and you have a different picture, another perspective; but I saw it, really liked what I saw and what I felt." (Carol, F, 60)

Another participant further suggests that to have a clear idea of what it is like to live in the destination, one should reside there for a longer period:

"[as a tourist] you have only a superficial idea; the right word is really superficial because to have a clear idea you need at least two to three months, in my opinion, so as to experience the non-tourist daily routines of the people who live in that place." (Elias, M, 49)

Overall, this study confirms that tourism is particularly useful for prospective migrants, especially when the time to retirement approaches, as was the case of Helen (F, 59), who is three years away from retirement and is now deepening her search for information and intensifying her decision process: "I won't be an eternal tourist" (Helen, F, 59). To consider migration more seriously after retirement was also evident in the testimonial of Rose (F, 58), who mentions that "since I knew Portugal, I fell in love with it and always wanted to live there; after retirement, that desire grew even more", and she decided to migrate, but only after being a retiree for some time.

4.1. Destination pull factors and intention to migrate

As seen previously in this article, extant literature provides an extensive list of pull factors associated with IRM. Our results present additional empirical support on the importance of some pull factors for IRM, namely at cultural, economic, and social levels. As explained by one interviewee, her migration destination has to be a "financially and psychologically suitable" place (Helen, F, 59).

Yet, the factor most stressed by participants in this study is safety, which was acknowledged as essential for Brazilians, considering that they live in a country with high violent crime rates. Safety is particularly important for elders who are more vulnerable to criminality, as underlined by Neil (M, 61):

"Besides safety, which is a top priority for us, I believe it's important to have access to some public services, which are essential, for example, a public health system (...) I think [Brazilian migrants] are a well-integrated community." (Neil, M, 61)

Empirical support is then aligned with literature, particularly regarding safety (e.g., Sunil et al., 2007; Wong et al., 2017) and local friendliness (e.g., Sunil et al., 2007; Wong & Musa, 2014; Wong et al., 2017). Moreover, these results are also in line with literature that points out the relationship between tourism and destination safety (Jurado & Matovelle, 2019; Karl & Schmude, 2017) and crime trends (Mataković, 2020).

Climate and weather characteristics, two very frequently mentioned factors in the literature, were not considered relevant by participants. As a point of fact, Brazilian participants' migration intentions are targeted toward regions (Europe, USA) that normally have worse weather than Brazil, so it is understandable that this is not a migration criterion. On the contrary, these prospective migrants are concerned with the least positive factors in their home country (e.g., violence, political and economic crisis), bringing about a clear comparison between push and pull factors that are also reflected in the way they use tourism to explore the benefits of IRM further. Hence, these findings suggest that pull factors are context-dependent.

The starting point of the potential migrant, particularly the characteristics of his/her home country, may make some pull factors irrelevant (e.g., the weather in the case of the present study). Indeed, the profile normally presented by literature on IRM – north to south, affluent or semi-affluent, colder to warmer climates, short-term-stays type of retirees (King et al., 2019; Pickering et al., 2019) – does not conform to the interviewees. Specifically, the participants in this study clearly prefer a country with safety conditions and are willing to abdicate their favorable weather in their home country. Indeed, safety was pointed out as one major motivation for their future decisions. In studies by extant literature (e.g., Bell, 2017; Casado-Díaz, 2006; Casado-Díaz et al., 2004; Pickering et al., 2019; Rodríguez et al., 2004; Sunil et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2000; Williams et al., 1997) this type of evidence was not found, which could be due to the samples that were considered, mainly comprising people from richer countries that moved to cheaper and nice weather locations. Hence, the context of their home country is distinct from the one that applies to the participants in this study.

4.2. Tourism relationship with pull and push factors

Corroborating extant literature, some of the pull factors most emphasized by interviewees are easily witnessed in tourists, especially safety, and often result from comparisons between their experience in tourism/migration destinations and their home contexts. For instance, Tom (M, 65) says that fact is inescapable: "I always compare, all the time... like the possibility of walking in the street peacefully, with a phone in your hand". Several interviewees explained that the comparison between push and pull factors (e.g., cost of living, safety, lifestyle) is constant when abroad. Take, for instance, the following statement:

"Ah, I'm always comparing, of course! The country we live in is tough, but I always compare, I compare infrastructures, the way people behave, what it has to offer, the beauty, the difficulties, I compare everything." (Helen, F, 59)

As observed by participants in this study, an effective comparison requires tourists to go beyond the touristic attractions, corroborating extant literature (e.g., Williams et al., 1997). One interviewee suggests prospective migrants should explore beyond touristic contexts and try to look deeper in order to scrutinize the destination, namely regarding its social environment:

"In our trips we nearly always try to grasp the human perspective, the daily routine, safety, how you are treated in a store or in a restaurant, for instance, and whenever possible, we go to the same places locals normally go". (Tom, M, 65)

Thus, these results show that the limited ability of tourists to assess the destination as real prospective migrants can be surpassed by off-the-beaten-track experiences deliberately selected, as our participants reveal. Participants

in this study often mentioned staying with friends and relatives that lived in the destination, choosing rural and low-density tourist areas to spend their vacation, and alternative accommodation (e.g., renting an apartment instead of staying in hotels) to get to know the destination. Therefore, although extant literature (e.g., Williams et al., 1997) argues that tourists are unable to get an authentic view of the destination, our results demonstrate that this ability varies according to the degree of intention to migrate, which, in turn, affects the choices regarding the travel (e.g., accommodation). These findings are coherent with a study by Williams and Hall (2002), who found that prospective migrants use tourism to compare alternative destinations and gather information, thus fostering familiarity with the location. Our study further demonstrates that prospective migrants adapt their tourism experiences and mostly gear their attention toward relevant aspects of the decision process in a conscious effort to transform traveling into an asset for future retirement plans.

5. Conclusion

International retirement migration (IRM) has been a particularly dynamic topic in recent years, associated with a global increase in migration flows and with the effort made by some countries to attract wealthy retired foreigners.

Although extant literature seldom mentions the association between IRM and tourism experiences, this article evidences a clear association between them. The importance of tourism in the migration decision process seems crucial among participants, exhibiting various degrees of intention to migrate after retirement and having as a common strategy to accomplish repeated visits or one longer stay prior to completing the decision to migrate. It is important to note, however, that these tourism experiences are not traditional ones. As stressed by the literature, traditional tourism experiences may not provide an accurate view of the living conditions and characteristics of the destination. Williams et al. (1997) noted that for some prospective migrants, the solution was to avoid traveling packages and opt for buying a second house for repeated holidays in the destination. This article provides anecdotal evidence of the intentional choices made by prospective migrants to assess the destination's living conditions during vacation periods accurately. These choices included the type of tourism experience, the accommodation, and the engagement with locals, including relatives, friends, and the migrant community. This was particularly evident when prospect migrants advanced in their decision process, especially when the time of retirement approached.

Independently of the decision process stage, the push-pull model provides an interesting framework to understand IRM and its association with tourism further. It should be noted that some participants are considering migrating permanently, and all of them planning on moving to a different continent, which arguably is a process much more complex than, for instance, moving from north to southern Europe, as often studied by the IRM literature (e.g., Casado-Díaz, 2006; Casado-Díaz et al., 2004; Dwyer, 2000; King et al., 2019; Rodríguez et al., 2004; Williams et al., 2000; Williams et al., 1997). Moreover, literature on IRM has also been dominantly focused on short-term migration flows from affluent countries in the north to warmer climate countries in the south (King et al., 2019; Pickering et al., 2019), which did not enable to stress this aspect until now. The fact that these participants are planning to leave their country and permanently migrate to countries on another continent makes them carefully ponder a plethora of pull factors and show higher levels of engagement while traveling as tourists. Overall, literature seems to have overseen these new and more informed prospective migrants, who value different pull factors, depending on their home countries' characteristics (strengths and weaknesses). It is also interesting to observe that some participants mention having a clear idea of their migration destination without having ever visited it as a tourist – and they only plan to go there as tourists closer to their retirement age.

Therefore, evidence in this study effectively points to tourism as both a trigger and a facilitator of IRM. Contact with pull factors as tourists is shown to reduce the perceived risks of migration, increasing the emotional ties with the destination or, on the contrary, making tourists discard their prior intention to migrate to that

destination. Moreover, there is a clear impact on knowledge about the destination. Although tourism might provide only a superficial experience, it also offers important information on, for example, security, amenities, and friendliness of the locals. In point of fact, these were the most stressed pull factors mentioned by the participants in this study.

One of the main findings is that the push-pull factors that the prospective migrants value depend on their context, namely on the conditions of their home countries. Indeed, it was found that not all pull factors are always relevant. While aspects related to safety stood out as one major motivation of the prospective migrants, other commonly pointed out by extant literature (Casado-Díaz, 2006; Casado-Díaz et al., 2004; Dwyer, 2000; King et al., 2019; Rodríguez et al., 2004; Sunil et al., 2007; Williams & Hall, 2002; Williams et al., 1997; Wong & Musa, 2014) – weather – was not considered pertinent by the participants in this study – who, in fact, live in a country with warmer weather than the destinations they are considering migrating to. Hence, this article highlights the context-dependent nature of motivations, which is still little documented in the literature. Arguably, the fact that extant literature is dominantly focused on short-term migration flows from affluent countries in the north to warmer climate countries in the south (King et al., 2019; Pickering et al., 2019) did not enable to evidence this until now.

Managers and marketers involved in IRM destinations should consider that the strongest pull factors vary according to migrants' profiles. Apparently, different marketing and communication strategies are required for citizens from developed or developing countries, aiming at short-term or permanent migration, as prospective migrants need tourism experiences as similar as possible to locals, different from traditional tourism expectations. Hence, destination managers aiming to attract IRM should carefully consider the development of tailored experiences that satisfy mid-term prospective migration, namely in terms of low-density tourism destinations, accommodation alternatives more similar to the ones used by inhabitants than traditional tourist accommodation (e.g., hotels), and providing enhanced opportunities to engage with locals. Indeed, prospective migrants need authentic experiences, as they use tourism to gather information relevant to their migration decisions. So, for retirement destinations, this means more contact with residents, ease of circulation across the country, including rural areas, and overcoming the fact of some services being exclusively for local inhabitants.

The fact that some destinations (e.g., in Europe and other locations) attract many retired migrants has implications for policymakers. Besides defining adequate permit legislation, bilingual inscriptions, and guidelines and simplifying property purchase, short-term migration requirements should also be reviewed. According to these findings, in order to leverage the impact of tourism in IRM, some recommendations would include the possibility of applying for a long-stay visa to allow for trial experiences and house rental contracts for non-residents, since prospective migrants often rely on friend and family support for a place to stay in the destination.

However, this exceeds traditional tourism destination planning since these permanent migrant locations will become more and more important in the near future. Their impact in low-density areas can be massive by increasing both the number of inhabitants and the substantial amount of money spent in local economies. It should be noted that many of these prospective migrants are still active and young, as demonstrated by our sample. Hence, the economic impact of IRM goes beyond expenditure and consumption and may include education and entrepreneurship initiatives.

Despite the interesting insights, it should be underlined that this study does not offer generalized results because of the sampling characteristics. Therefore, it should be carried out with other samples and different contexts (e.g., nationality) to validate results. In particular, it is recommended that future studies include participants from different contexts (e.g., geographical, economic, cultural) to explore further how push-pull motivations depend on the context. Suggestions to further examine the relationship between tourism and IRM include comparing prospective migrants from different nationalities and doing longitudinal research

to analyze the dynamism of the migration decision process connected to tourism. In the case of quantitative approaches, other antecedent variables could be tested, namely family ties in destination countries and other demographic and life-cycle factors that may act as mediators in the relationship between retirement, tourism, and migration.

As the push-pull model has been used by travel motivation literature and IRM literature, it is suggested that future research further compares the contributions of the two areas. For instance, a systematic literature review could help better understand the specificities of travel motivations for different segments of tourists, including prospective migrants, and provide a holistic view of the topic. Empirical studies would also be useful to provide evidence on the importance of different push and pull factors in the various stages of prospective migrants' decision process. Opportunities to study the impact of tourism on IRM include involving different typologies of tourism experiences (e.g., recreational, cultural, winter, and gap-year tourism). Considering the relevance of IRM for research and political and managerial terms, this topic is expected to continue attracting researchers in the coming years.

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