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Seminar 5  
15 November, Thursday, 14.15-16.00

From life-stage to lifestyle migration: British international retirement migration to the Mediterranean

The study of international migration has remained resolutely focused on the ‘economic’ migration of young adults (and sometimes their families) and consequent issues of labour market insertion, spatial patterns of settlement, and integration/exclusion. This seminar looks at a type of migration which breaks this normative mould: the international movement of older people at or around retirement, for what are nowadays called ‘lifestyle’ or ‘quality of life’ reasons. We call this type of migration ‘international retirement migration’ (IRM) or, more poetically, ‘sunset migration’. It has become an increasingly widespread form of migration from the rich Northern European countries such as Sweden, the UK and Germany, to destinations such as Spain (including the Canary Islands), Italy and the South of France. The seminar will be in two main parts: the first will be an attempt to theoretically frame this type of migration, largely through the conceptual lens of lifestyle migration. Secondly, some results of a research project on British IRM to four Mediterranean destinations (Costa del Sol, Algarve, Tuscany and Malta) will be presented. The conclusion will attempt to interpret these findings in the light of ongoing re-theorisations of migration and its various typologies.

Attached reading:

Russell King (2012), Sunset migration, in Marco Martiniello and Jan Roth (eds) An Introduction to International Migration. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 279-302.