

## Retirees from Europe migrating to Thailand: A study of two co-occurring occupational transitions

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Published study (2025) and ongoing longitudinal research

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# Background



- Retirement is a major occupational transition
- Migration is a major occupational transition
- International retirement migration is increasing
- Limited understanding of how these transitions occur together
- Retirement migration associated with low incomes, disability, and/or absence of spouse



# Aim of the study

This study explored how European retirees experience retirement and migration as co-occurring occupational transitions while living in Thailand, with a focus on everyday occupations, identity, and well-being.



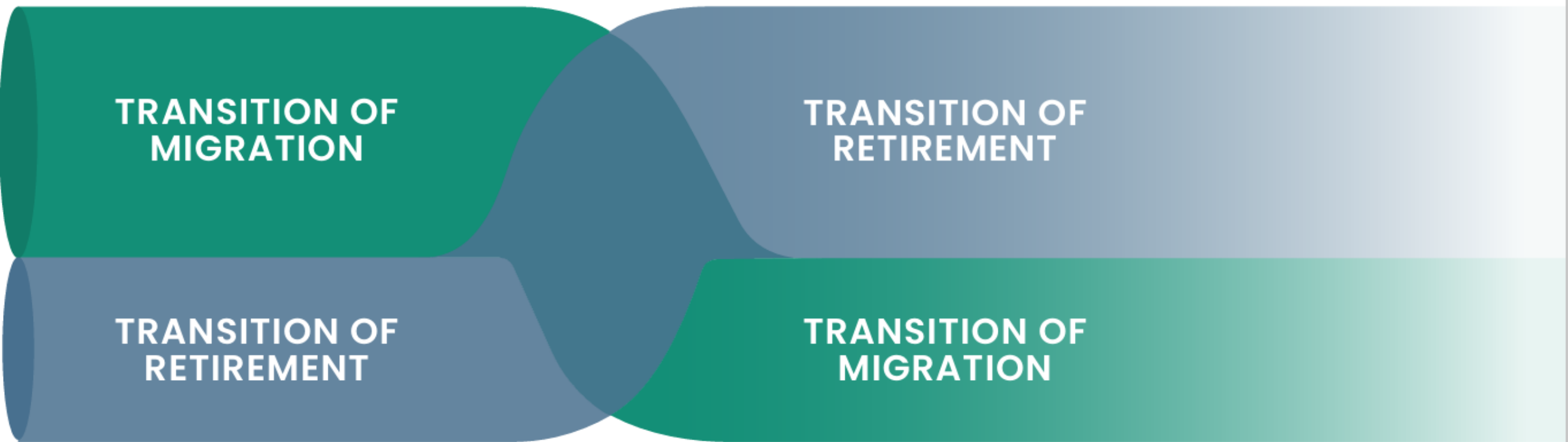
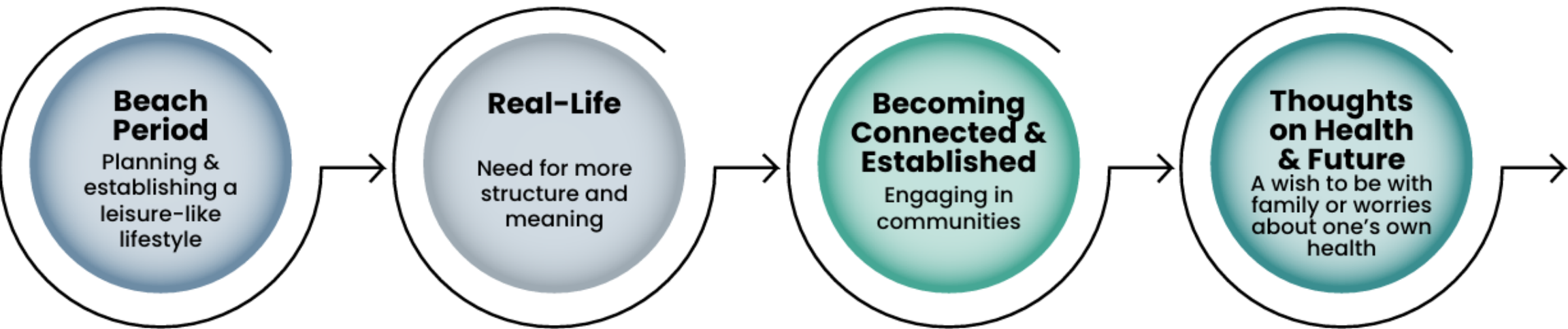
# Methods

- Qualitative design
- Constructivist grounded theory approach
- 21 European retiree migrants
- In-depth interviews conducted in Thailand



# Key finding

Retirement and migration form a dynamic, intertwined process rather than separate or linear transitions. Each transition takes prominence at different points in time.



***“I thought by myself, I always worked very hard, so now others can go and do it, work, and I can enjoy my golden years while I am still in good health” (Maurice, male, 68 years)***

***“I did not expect everything to be the same as in the Netherlands; that, of course, is not the case, but I was not aware either that it would all change” (Victor, male, 72 years)***

***“I am sitting on the beach every day, enjoying myself with my books, sometimes I start to get the feeling that I should be doing something!” (William, male, 69 years)***

***“Well, 4 months ago, I started at a market helping Thai people, just 2-3 hours, but that makes me well. People appreciate you; they would like to know if I can speak Thai” (Sam, male, 71 years)***



# Why the early phase matters

Expectations meet everyday reality

Initial routines are formed

Early social and occupational patterns emerge

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**Foundations for belonging and future orientation**

# Ongoing longitudinal study



- Builds on the published study
- 20 retiree migrants
- Retired and migrated at the same time
- Retired and migrated less than 2 years ago
- Followed over one year
- Three in-depth interviews per participant



# Conclusion

- Retirement and migration are intertwined occupational transitions
- Each transition alternately takes prominence over time
- Experiences and occupations in one transition shape the other
- Through this dynamic process, retirees establish routines, identity, and belonging

**Thank you**

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