

5 Lifestyle migrants in Spain

Contested realities of political participation

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Introduction

The transnational mobility undertaken by lifestyle migrants does not only have important impacts in the social, cultural, architectural, economic and linguistic landscapes at the destinations as described in earlier chapters of this book. Additionally, it may also seriously alter different dimensions of the local political life, especially in municipalities that have higher concentrations of lifestyle migrants and in places where conflicts about land use policies and more generally, the appropriation of urban space take place (Janoschka 2009a, 2010a, 2011a; Huete and Mantecón 2012). Hence, different forms of often conflictive community involvement and political association have been reported from destinations in the Americas (Blazquez *et al.* 2011; Janoschka 2009b, 2011b, 2013; McHugh *et al.* 2002). But it is within the European Union and especially in Spain where the political participation and representation of lifestyle migrants has generalised during the last decade. The ratification and implementation of the Treaty of Maastricht did not only expand the freedom of residence and the mobility of capital and labour, but also established new forms of citizenship contesting some of the common notions of citizenship, especially the relation between specific entitlements and the nation-state as a polity (Wiener 1998). In other words, some important citizenship rights such as the possibility to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections do not relate any longer exclusively to the membership of the citizen to a specific nation-state (Day and Shaw 2002), but include the possibility to participate politically in places different from one's nationality. This means that lifestyle migrants and other mobile citizens residing anywhere in the European Union can participate actively in local elections (both as voters and candidates) and thus express their demands within the formal arena of local politics – an aspect that is impossible in other destinations outside the European Union. As described by Janoschka (2008), lifestyle migrants often count on powerful tools, know-how and resources to transform their demands into political mobilisation and organisation, and they may take leadership within local politics, i.e. through formal representation in local parliaments and other forms of participation.

These circumstances open a fascinating field of research about the consequences that lifestyle migration has for the local political sphere, both from a conceptual perspective (e.g. addressing citizenship studies and the meaning of European citizenship) and an empirical viewpoint (e.g. observing the transformation of local governance regimes in migration societies). Given the fact that Spain is the most important European destination for lifestyle migrants, the political participation observed here can be considered prototypical for wider areas of the European Union. At the same time it characterises an important ‘social laboratory’ for a theoretically focused research approach regarding the outcome of the European political integration, the dispositions of free movement as a living example of the embodiment of a new transnational world (Favell and Recchi 2009) and the ways European citizens living in a country different from their nationality make use of their citizenship rights, participate actively and are represented formally in local politics. These aspects will be discussed subsequently, concerning the contested realities that develop when European lifestyle migrants residing in Spain put into practice their right to participate in the local government.

With regard to this, it is important to bear in mind that different forms of political mobilisation often canalise the complaints about deficiencies in the provision of public services in order to object to local development strategies. New political formations, protest organisations and even grassroots movements evolved among lifestyle migrants, and they possess resources (i.e. time and networks) to adopt winning strategies (Janoschka 2009). In many villages and towns, the vote of lifestyle migrants and of other migrants entitled to vote is decisive for the outcome of local elections (Durán 2011). As a consequence, lifestyle migrants have founded parties in dozens of municipalities during the last decade, and foreign councillors are now a common part of the political stage in many coastal towns and villages throughout Spain. In other words, EU foreigners have seriously challenged the dominant discourses, the composition and the path dependencies of local politics (Janoschka 2011b). However, such participation is at the same time a contested and conflictive reality of the practice of European citizenship that relates to important questions within mainstream migration studies, among others of how local political regimes integrate and permit (typically ethnic) minorities to participate in politics (Bird *et al.* 2011; Maxwell 2012; Bermudez 2010; Øostergaard-Nielsen 2011). But the case of political participation and representation of lifestyle migrants develops this debate further: in many municipalities lifestyle migrants constitute between two-thirds and four-fifths of the population, and in such cases the debates should not relate any longer to the integration of ‘minorities’ but consider the creation of new political and social relations to live together in such postmodern, multinational and multicultural societies. In this regard, it is surprising that the contested realities of political participation of lifestyle migrants have been addressed only in a few publications so far (Collard 2010; Ferbrache 2011; Janoschka 2010b; Durán 2005, 2011).

In order to approach this gap, we structure our arguments presented here as follows: after a short presentation of the research methodologies applied in the empirical studies regarding the political geographies of lifestyle migration to Spain in the framework of the research projects EURO_CITI¹ and MIRES,² we will present and discuss some of the key results. In both projects, special attention was paid to different forms of local political participation and representation in Spanish coastal municipalities in which predominantly elderly European lifestyle migrants reside. The empirical debate carried out will give us a panorama about three key issues that are pursued here: (i) quantifying and analysing the electoral turnout of lifestyle migrants in local elections in Spain; (ii) analysing the political representation of lifestyle migrants after the different local elections in Spain; and (iii) characterising and interpreting the role that foreign candidates and foreign voters have in different local political constellations. In a final step, the results of this research will then be interpreted against a conceptual frame that considers the political participation of lifestyle migrants in Spain as a practice of European citizenship.

Political participation and representation of lifestyle migrants in Spain: methodological considerations

This chapter is based on the exhaustive analysis of different statistical and empirical data that refer to the contested realities of political participation of European lifestyle migrants in Spain. In a first step, we approach the phenomenon through an analysis of official statistical data that are provided by the Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE), especially the population census (*Padrón Municipal*) and the electoral census for foreigners (CERE). In this regard, it is important to clarify a couple of aspects to understand the constraints and possibilities for EU foreigners to vote and stand as candidates in local elections. To begin with, the electoral law is a major constraint for foreign citizens who live in Spain, because different from Spaniards, foreigners have to state explicitly their intention to vote. They can vote and stand as a candidate only if they register on the electoral census at least four months in advance.

Apart from this, it is important to state that the official data collection about electoral participation in Spain does not differentiate aspects such as age or nationality. This means that no social scientist can be certain about the electoral turnout of foreigners. In other words, any research about the electoral participation of foreigners can only approximate the participation figures from the electoral census. In this regard, it is important to remember that data about registration should not be confused with voting output. Based on these reflections, our research recognises the need to provide additional empirical data about the scope of electoral participation by lifestyle migrants.

Bearing this in mind, in the course of the research projects EURO_CITI and MIRES a representative household survey was carried out, covering

some of the mentioned gaps in research. Between April 2010 and February 2011, 720 face-to-face interviews with European lifestyle migrants were carried out in more than 50 municipalities using a questionnaire translated into English, German, French and Spanish. The distribution of the questionnaires followed a quota that aimed at reproducing the officially registered population with regard to regional proportions, nationalities, age structure and gender. In order to make the random household selection viable in organisational terms, only municipalities with a share of migrants from the EU-15 member states (plus Norway and Switzerland) of at least 15 per cent of the registered population were taken into consideration. Additionally, we explicitly avoided interviewing short- or long-term tourists – respondents only qualified for the survey if they had lived at least three months in Spain during the year previous to development of the survey. However, the research was carried out in the seven most important regional destinations of this intra-European mobility in Spain (the Autonomous Communities of Andalusia, Balearic Islands, Canary Islands, Catalonia, Murcia and Valencia) that concentrates approximately 90 per cent of the total target population (European lifestyle migrants aged at least 50 years) living in Spain.

Finally, and in addition to this survey, we also carried out a series of qualitative interviews to triangulate our data and provide more nuanced insights into the realities that elected foreign councillors experience. Such analysis is based upon 51 qualitative interviews with local councillors (of which 34 were foreigners and 17 Spaniards), focusing on political participation in their respective municipality. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and then analysed with MAXQdA software.

Electoral participation and representation in local governments: the political geographies of lifestyle migrants in Spain

As a key phenomenon within the context of European integration and a practical experience of a borderless Europe, more than 1.2 million mobile citizens from across Europe have transferred their permanent home to the coastal regions of the Mediterranean, and many more persons commute temporarily between Spain and different European countries. However, it can be considered that more than two-thirds of mobile European citizens from Central and Northern Europe are of retirement age (Rodríguez *et al.* 2010). The latest statistical data currently count more than 720,000 officially registered European foreigners who are aged above 50 years of which roughly 186,000 live in the region of Valencia and another 120,000 in Andalusia (INE 2013). Such data remind us that an important share of European lifestyle migrants consists of persons who are retired, early retired or close to reaching the retirement age who move to Spain looking for a different way of life. This aspect guided our research about political participation and representation, especially as different studies within the field of political science state an above-average political participation among older persons. With regard to the

electoral mobilisation of EU-15 residents aged over 50 years, the relation can be confirmed: 35.2 per cent were registered on the electoral census for the municipal elections of 2011, a rate that is significantly higher than that of all adults from the EU-15 countries (27%). However, the numbers vary substantially across the regional scenarios, with exceptionally low registration numbers in the Canary Islands (23.0%) and the Balearic Islands (30.1%) but substantially higher numbers in the two most important residential destinations for lifestyle migrants, Valencia (36.4%) and Andalusia (37.1%).

Nevertheless, it cannot be taken for granted that these numbers are the total figure of voting turnout – it only constitutes the maximum possible figure. But even given the case that all registered persons voted, the abstention of European lifestyle migrants would have doubled general abstention in the municipal election of 2011. This is not a surprising fact: individual registration is only mandatory for foreigners, while Spaniards are automatically registered. In other words, lifestyle migrants suffer an important symbolical barrier that disincentives the realisation of the right to vote.

However, the average values presented above do not fully respond to the local political opportunity structures, and at the same time they hide a multitude of different situations in many hundreds of municipalities across the seven Spanish regions that are the subject of this study. For this, it is important to remember that countrywide there are more than 150 municipalities, especially in coastal areas of Andalusia and Valencia, where lifestyle migrants account for more than 15 per cent of the registered population. In 75 towns and villages, more than 25 per cent of the population are lifestyle migrants, and in 12 municipalities European lifestyle migrants are the majority of the population (INE 2013). These places present the specific scenarios in which innovative political responses of the potential lifestyle migrants to actively challenge the structuring of local politics are implemented and developed.

Such a statistical overview also corresponds with the data retrieved from the electoral census. Hence, bringing together statistical data from the population and the electoral census for the 10 municipalities with the highest percentage of foreign population countrywide (between 63 and 78 per cent of which 87.5 per cent can be considered lifestyle migrants, e.g. citizens from the EU-15), it can be observed that the inscription rate to CERE is significantly higher than it is countrywide (46.3 against 35.2 per cent). However, this correlation is similar if the 25 towns and villages with the highest percentage of lifestyle migrants are considered, and it is similar for all municipalities in which more than 20 per cent of the population are lifestyle migrants. In conclusion, the concentration of lifestyle migrants can be regarded as a key factor for the electoral mobilisation of this group.

Nevertheless, a closer look at electoral enrolment in each of the aforementioned 25 municipalities again offers a wide range of situations, with values that range from less than a third (i.e. Rojales, Calpe) to a maximum of 81.7 per cent in the village of Llíber. This poses the interesting question of how such variations can be explained. A further analysis of the statistical data does not

relate aspects such as the size of the municipality, the geographic location of the municipality (coastal or inland) and the predominant nationality of the inhabitants (i.e. British, German, Dutch or French) as relevant factors. Accordingly, we will subsequently focus on the data provided by the representative household survey carried out in order to paint a more coherent explanation.

By contrasting the electoral census with the survey data and given the statistical representativeness of the survey, we can state the surprising fact that a vast majority (nearly 90 per cent) of the registered voters made use of their right to vote. In other words, 32.7 per cent of the respondents of the survey stated that they had voted in the last municipal elections. Our findings demonstrate that, in general terms, women are more likely to vote than men, and Britons and Germans are more likely to vote than other nationalities, but in both cases the differences are not statistically significant. But beyond this, some of the complementary data gathered in the survey give us some indications for further analytical and interpretative steps. For instance, a significant positive correlation between voting behaviour and the time that a person spends in Spain during the year exists: 39.8 per cent of the permanent residents voted in the last elections, while only 9 per cent of the residents that live between three and six months in Spain participated in the elections. Additionally, the proportion of voters also rises significantly if the time of residence in Spain (in years) is longer: 43.6 per cent of the residents that have lived in Spain for more than five years voted, and among those who have lived in Spain for more than 15 years this reaches nearly 50 per cent. This means that long-term lifestyle migrants almost approach the average of the Spanish population (66.5 per cent).

On the other hand, a similar significant positive relation can be observed between the voting turnout and active membership in clubs and social associations (40.2 per cent). This gives us a hint that the previously observed differences between municipalities may relate to three issues, namely previous urbanisation of the municipality, the residential stability of the lifestyle migrants and the amount of social capital of the residents themselves. Additionally, there is also a strong relation between the housing situation and the likeliness of voting: 44.4 per cent of the interviewees who live in houses of more than 150 square metres say that they had voted in the last elections, whereas this reaches only 23.3 per cent of those living in housing of less than 80 square metres. This may relate to and subsume the aspects mentioned earlier, namely that long-term residents are more likely to live in bigger houses than those who live temporarily in Spain. Additionally, we found out, in similar terms, that people who show a major interest in political questions relating to (i) the European Union and (ii) the host country Spain are significantly more likely to vote in local elections – this is an interesting issue for conceptualising the situation in Spain and the practices of European citizenship in relation to personal and political interests.

Finally, there is a positive relation between the proximity to specific political ideologies, and electoral mobilisation, especially among those who consider

themselves to be ‘conservatives’. This issue bridges the voting output of lifestyle migrants in Spain: here, the results of the survey correspond with information gathered in qualitative interviews, namely that lifestyle migrants over-proportionally vote for the conservative party (more than 50 per cent of all valid answers). Such results do not only respond to socio-economic characteristics and a rather conservative ideological profile of the population on a scale of self-identification that was carried out in the survey. It also reflects the active strategies applied by the Spanish conservative party to attract the votes of foreign residents in general. Among others, the conservative party was the first one to acknowledge the potential that the foreign vote could have for the winning ticket in local elections, and they reacted accordingly. For instance, in the province of Alicante, several dozen foreign candidates were already included on the conservative party lists for local elections in 2003, and the number has risen substantially since then. In contrast to this, the centre-left socialist party has listed fewer foreign candidates than the conservative party in all elections since the time European foreigners have been entitled to vote.

Political representation of lifestyle migrants: a typology

This relates to the other side of the political participation coin in local elections, namely the representation that lifestyle migrants have achieved in local parliaments since they were first entitled to stand as candidates in 1999. Since then, they have been allowed to vote in four electoral events, and the number of foreign councillors integrating electoral lists has been steadily rising. In similar terms, the number of elected councillors also rose substantially, exceeding by far the number of 100 after the municipal elections of May 2011. Although this might sound less than one would expect at first sight, these councillors often play an important role, given the widespread transformations that have been taking place since their active enrolment. Based on the qualitative interviews carried out with local councillors, we have developed a typology that reflects the role and the changes that have occurred in local politics after the election of foreign councillors to the local parliament. Five different scenarios can be distinguished in an ideal-type analysis, taking into consideration that the real situation is less pure and less clear-cut than the typology might suggest.

- 1 Lifestyle migrants as subjects for ‘vote catching’:** in many municipalities, the inclusion of European lifestyle migrants on the electoral lists, especially of one of the traditional parties, responds primarily to attract the vote of the foreign electorate. This is similar to the observed strategies in other parts of the world, especially if a specific ethnic group is targeted through this inclusion (Garbaye 2004). Such participation rather stabilises than transforms the governing local regime in a scenario in which it adapts itself to the transformations that have been induced by granting numerous

European lifestyle migrants the right to vote. In this scenario, the elected foreign councillor is usually granted the role to improve communication between the government and the foreign community. This occurs, for instance, by heading a newly created office of ‘intercultural communication’ or for the ‘attention of the European residents’, creating a specific hotline for the daily problems that lifestyle migrants, usually without sufficient command of the Spanish language, have with the local administration. But beyond this strategic assignment of a specific role that takes up some of the demands from the numerous group of lifestyle migrants, foreign councillors do not participate in the strategic political networks that take decisions in the most important fields within the local government (i.e. allocation of budgets, decisions about urban planning, development of social services and local infrastructure).

- 2 Lifestyle migrants as ‘catalysts of modernisation’:** in some of the smaller villages that have especially high percentages of lifestyle migrants and a number of enrolled foreigners that is bigger than that of the local population, electoral participation is the clue for changing or approving the local government – the participation and representation of foreigners can significantly change the majorities. In such a situation, foreign councillors are aware of their key role, and they demand control of key departments and/or the leadership in local politics. This is especially the case in relation to questions of local infrastructure and urban planning, which are usually the most controversial topics that activate the lifestyle migrant community. The following quote provides us with a better idea of this relation:

This is not a coalition. I usually vote with the PP [the conservative party], but I can fail and vote for the opposition or be against a plan. Then I speak with the mayor and ask him, ‘how did you get into power?’, because before I was elected, there were four councillors of the PSOE [the socialist party], two of the PP and one of the Bloc [the regional nationalist party]. Since I have been participating with a friend, this has changed, because we visited all foreigners personally, something that had never been done before. So, where do all these votes that went to the PP come from? These are the foreigners that voted me, because they trust me. If they want to do things now that the foreigners do not want, what do you think they will vote the next time? – They would set up their own party, eight or nine hundred foreigners that can vote here and only five hundred Spaniards, it would be easy to have the majority and then the Spaniards would not command anyone or anything here.

(Interview with a foreign councillor)

Additionally, the achieved representation may also modernise certain aspects within the organisation of local government, especially in smaller villages. Many of the elected councillors were previously successful professionals and/or politicians, and they bring their experience into their new roles.

- 3 Lifestyle migrants as ‘catalysts of cultural conflicts’:** different from the previous case, the representation of lifestyle migrants in municipalities of major size includes a major complexity. For instance, there are different localities (for example, Dénia or Jávea in the province of Alicante) with 30,000 or more inhabitants of which at least a third of the possible voters are European residents. Given their active involvement, the structuring of local politics has widely transformed in recent years, and the representation of foreigners as local councillors and/or their involvement in the government has often been a key facet of these transformations. In these municipalities, local politics are much more professionalised than in villages with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants, and, additionally, the public administration is much more complex and diversified. In these cities, much of the controversial issues are directly related to the use of languages in the public sphere, a facet of specific importance in lifestyle migrant destinations in Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands, where Catalan is given pre-eminence over Spanish. The linguistic question that lies behind the use of the Catalan language gives place to diametrically different interpretations: for the local population, the use of Catalan is part of the basic achievements of democracy in Spain. Contrary to this, many lifestyle migrants consider the use in the public sphere of any language other than Spanish (with which they usually struggle) as a means to exclude them explicitly from participating in political, social and cultural questions. On different occasions and in different municipalities, this has provided scenarios of conflict and contestation that are extremely difficult to overcome, especially as common party politics and oppositional positions may intermingle with linguistic questions. This question reminds us of remarks expressed by Favell (2008) about the wide range of symbolic exclusions which complicate participation by foreigners in different European migration societies.
- 4 Lifestyle migrants as ‘new and independent political force’:** the manifold experiences gathered since the granting of voting rights and the subsequent increase in political representation by lifestyle migrants has also produced an array of different frustrating situations, sometimes even despair among lifestyle migrants. This is especially the case in municipalities which belong to the first and third cases in this typology. In such places, the inability to change some of the key aspects that motivate lifestyle migrants to participate actively in local politics (deficiencies in local services, the problems related to the overwhelming construction boom and the consequences of the real estate bubble burst after 2007) has often been paired with cases of corruption and/or abuse of urban planning schemes. One of the key decisions that was subsequently taken by politically engaged lifestyle migrants to overcome this situation has been the founding of parties that are controlled by foreigners and primarily respond to the discontent with the way local politics have been previously operating in the corresponding municipality. Such situations may bring lifestyle migrants into power, but they

may also simultaneously exacerbate the existing conflicts between local inhabitants and the newcomers from abroad, as well as conflicts between local entrepreneurs and the public administration.

- 5 Lifestyle migrants as ‘integrated and integral political power’:** finally, there also exists the case that a new local political philosophy has been created by counting on the political involvement and representation of lifestyle migrants. A paradigmatic case for how lifestyle migrants achieved an integral political power position in local politics is the municipality of Teulada-Moraira in the province of Alicante, one of the places with the highest percentage of foreign population countrywide. Since 1999, the first election in which foreigners were allowed to vote, a local party has developed an integral strategy to incorporate lifestyle migrants from across the European Union. Since then, Spaniards and foreigners have achieved parity in the electoral lists, and the government tasks have been distributed with regard to the professional qualifications of the elected councillors. Among others, the political representatives belonging to the lifestyle migrant community have gained important roles in local government – for instance control of the department of finance, the department of environment and holding the position of vice-mayor. In the municipality, all official information is provided in five languages, and the administration has developed effective channels for participation and civic involvement, providing an interesting model of political representation by lifestyle migrants (Janoschka 2010b). Such a model additionally adapts to changing conditions, for example European expansion – in the 2011 local elections, the governing party also included candidates from Romania and Poland on their electoral lists.

Conclusions: contested realities of political participation

Based on our empirical research, the developed typology can provide us with some additional explanations about the initially discussed differences in electoral enrolment at the municipal level and the political outcomes of political participation by lifestyle migrants. Beyond the observed differences in electoral enrolment due to certain social characteristics, especially if permanency in Spain is considered, our research provides evidence that the local political system is a key factor for electoral mobilisation – an observation which is in line with our previous research about other forms of rather radical mobilisation in concrete planning conflicts (Janoschka 2009b, 2010a). With regard to this, we have observed that the greatest electoral mobilisation takes place in three areas: first, when lifestyle migrants feel that they play a key factor for electoral output and are considered part of the local government, especially in smaller villages (type 3). Second, when they are considered an integral and integrated part of the political landscape of their municipality, enrolment is above average (type 5). However, the third case (type 4), when lifestyle migrants regard themselves as independent political forces, has so far resulted

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in controversy. In some municipalities, the constitution of independent foreign parties has achieved greater electoral mobilisation. Contrary to this, in other places the mobilisation has not altered. This result is in line with the findings of our survey, in which we asked lifestyle migrants about their participation and the contested relations that have been established in the course of this participation. While nearly 70 per cent consider political participation as positive for the municipality and 60 per cent agree that lifestyle migrants should be represented on the local council, opinion drastically changes when it comes to political parties for foreigners: almost two-thirds of the respondents reject parties founded by foreigners, and less than 30 per cent support the hypothetical election of a mayor from the lifestyle migrant collective. This situation is reflected in the fact that political parties constituting foreigners have been so far successful only in a reduced number of municipalities.

All this brings us toward some final conceptual reflections which link some of the initially presented debates about European citizenship with the observed empirical data about political participation and representation of lifestyle migrants in Spain. In this regard, it is important to reflect again that different authors consider lifestyle migrants and other European 'free movers' as an embodiment of a new transnational world (Favell 2009) in which citizens increasingly escape from some of the constraints of the old national systems. Indeed, our empirical debate shows that lifestyle migrants use these freedoms of the European Union, but they make a rather selective use of the granted citizenship rights. This reminds us of the argument of Lepofsky and Fraser (2003: 127), who argue that the rising flexibility in practical uses of citizenship goes hand in hand with a transformation of its theoretical conception. In this regard, postmodern or post-national citizenship includes more than just only a collection of rights, but is also a powerful discursive mechanism which articulates identities and which has shifted from a given status to being a performative act. Such an idea leads to the question discussed here of how citizenship rights may be important for claiming the right to participate actively in local politics. According to Rose (2001), citizenship is currently shifting from being a possession towards being a capacity of 'citizenship practice' (Wiener 1998). Some authors propose that the mobility of European citizens and the formal possibilities for political participation within Europe result automatically in a European civil society. But different analyses of municipal data show, for instance, that formal political participation of EU citizens abroad is extremely low (Jacobs *et al.* 2004; Strudel 2004), and our own data give a very nuanced picture of the practice of European citizenship, at least with regard to formal political participation and representation.

Favell and Recchi (2008), who conducted qualitative research on the political interests and involvement of highly mobile foreign professionals in London, Brussels and Amsterdam, concludes that these 'Eurostars' do show no more major interest in municipal voting rights granted to EU citizens than traditional labour migrants, even if they are locally socially active, possess social capital and have only minor language problems. Apparently, it is not

the right to vote which encourages political participation by foreigners. It seems instead that the symbolical signs and codes which control access to local politics even keep foreigners with perfect language skills away from active interaction with the local political elites. In the words of Pierre Bourdieu, this exclusion means that the capital of cultural practices bound to the field of local politics are so restrictively controlled and monopolised by the traditional elites, that foreigners are discouraged from participating actively in political life abroad (Bourdieu 1989). Our research about the contested realities of political participation of lifestyle migrants in Spain supports these arguments in some areas – especially if the first and third cases of the developed typology are considered. However, they also show that the practical creation of a European civil society goes beyond these traditional schemes of interpretation: the villages and towns on the Mediterranean coast are intensive laboratories of globalisation, as well as of new expressions of European citizenship which has only little connections with the bureaucratic aspects of the European Union imagined in Brussels, but much more with growing together in daily practice ‘from below’.

Notes

- 1 EURO_CITI is the acronym of the Marie Curie Intra-European-Fellowship granted in the 7th European Community Framework Programme (PIEF-GA-2008–220287) to the Centre of Human and Social Sciences of the Spanish National Research Council in Madrid. The fellowship was implemented between July 2008 and December 2010 by Michael Janoschka.
- 2 MIREs is an interdisciplinary research project financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (Plan Nacional I+D+i, CSO2008–06458-C02–01), developed under the direction of Dr Vicente Rodríguez and carried out by the Centre of Human and Social Sciences of the Spanish National Research Council and seven Spanish universities between January 2009 and June 2012.

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