Transpersonal Effects of Self-Initiated Expatriation on Retirees

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Declaration

I declare that the dissertation is my own work.

Abstract

According to a new research report published by Finaccord, the total number of expatriates worldwide amounted to around 66.2 million in 2017. This figure has grown at a compound annual rate of 5.8% since 2013. By 2021, Finaccord forecasted that the number will reach around 87.5 million. Among them, retirees account for 5.2 %, roughly 4.6 million in 2021. However, if academic research on forced immigration or expatriated workers is extensive, very little literature exists on people who chose to live abroad when retired as perhaps engaging with death and old age is a taboo subject in Western societies. Thus the present research may contribute to the understanding of this phenomenon as a new class of citizens is emerging, symbolized by the archetypes of the Old Sage and the Traveller, transnational, promoting multiculturalism and looking for novelty and freedom.

Using organic inquiry as a research method, the dynamics behind the decision of moving abroad are explored as well as the transformative process experienced not only by the expatriated retirees but also by the host and the home countries. The psychological and spiritual consequences are scrutinised through a transpersonal lens, i.e., focusing on the transformation of the self, the unfolding of a new identity, and the emergence of a different level of consciousness. Three main themes emerged from this research: (a) the multidimensionality of the causes of the departure ; (b) the transformational and challenging dimension of the journey making the return to the home country impossible and (c) the impact of multiculturalism and transnationality.

Keywords

Retirement, expatriation, emigration, spirituality, transpersonal psychology.

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1. Introduction

Retirement marks a transition in a life of an individual and this period may be challenging. It is not simply a one-time decision-making event, but it opens a period of a transformational process whose outcome cannot be predicted. The reactions may be different from one person to another, going from a felt sense of recovery of freedom to a loss of self-esteem or depression (Reitzes et al, 1996). But, the majority of them experience the need for retrieving a new meaning to life. As noticed by Guttmann (2001), finding meaning in life in old age is closely tied not only to spirituality but also to posture towards death. Elders become more and more aware that most of their lifetime has passed. Because of this consciousness and because of this quest for meaning, some retirees decide to realize their dreams and to expatriate. As for any life journey (Campbell,2003), this decision leads to a psycho-spiritual transformation, not only of the persons but also of their environment, and this research aims to explore the transpersonal nature and the process of this transformation.

1.1 Transpersonal Relevance of the Research

This dissertation is an attempt to understand the subjective experience of people who decided to live abroad in an unknown country when retired. I believe that these insights are valuable to elders who lost their self-esteem since they retired and do not know anymore what is their role in society. I met several of them who were looking for a meaningful life project and who struggled against a feeling of uselessness or loneliness as their life was built upon their professional life. This research is to demonstrate that retirement may be liberating and that different ways exist for finding its place in the world. This study aims to show that retirement may be an opportunity for spiritual growth and self-actualization and that a new journey begins after the working period. It also demonstrates that retirees who chose to live abroad give rise to a new archetype, promoting transnationalism and multiculturalism.

Organic inquiry (Anderson & Braud, 2011; Creswell, 2018) was used as a method for this research project. Organic Inquiry (OI) is an iterative and alchemical process that encompasses three stages: (a) an inward examination of my own experience and perspective on the topic, (b) an outward movement on analysing other participants' experiences and relevant literature and (c) an inward return to reflections on my own shifts and changes in understanding the topic in the light of the collected data. This approach is

particularly relevant in this type of research which is about observing what is emerging through discussions and readings but also dreams or intuition. The participants are considered as co-researchers and knowledge emerges from a collaborative experience. In my approach to retirees' psychospiritual transformation through expatriation, they help me to describe the expatriated retirees' process of change over time, touching upon a fuller range of transpersonal human experiences which are not fully covered by the literature.

1.2 Definition of Terms

But before going further, it is important to briefly define some key terms to be used in this study.

Transpersonal transformation is defined in this paper as a profound change in how people function, see themselves, and relate to other living beings in the world. This process involves not only the internal adaption of their belief system but also, as a consequence, the modalities of relationships with the external world. It also encompasses societal transformation as a result of individual change. Transpersonal transformation is about how an individual's transpersonal experience creates meaning in one's social life and influences social construction (Rominger & Friedman, 2013).

I herein use the operational definition of *intuition* given by Anderson (2007), i.e. "a subtle sense perception that conveys direct insight into future possibilities or circumstances that cannot be experienced through the ordinary five human senses or analytical reason" (p. 1).

Moving abroad implies a cross-cultural adaptation and the terminology of *cross-cultural adaptation, adjustment,* and *acculturation* will be used interchangeably. They refer to the process and outcomes resulting from individuals moving abroad to unfamiliar cultural environments (Farcas & Gonçalves, 2017). In this dissertation, these terms apply also to transformational realignment as well as to the individual's negotiation between the home and host cultures.

It is important also to distinguish between the terms '*expatriates', 'immigrants', 'emigrants'* or *'exiled'*. Expatriates usually relocate temporarily whereas immigrants settle with the prospect of staying permanently. The emigrants choose to leave their country of origin while keeping strong relationships with their home country, either voluntarily in search of a better lifestyle or involuntarily because of the political or economic context. The term 'expatriates' often applies to workers who may be classified as a powerful and wealthy minority, with much more freedom in dealing with the host society rather than the

immigrants (Adams and Van de Vijver, 2015) or the emigrants. Therefore, the definition of each category is dependent on the ability to integrate the host country and on the importance of the leeway to negotiate their identities in their new context. The expatriates have more freedom that the immigrants in this regard. In this dissertation, I consider retirees who voluntarily emigrate to another country, or retired Self-Initiated Expatriates (SIEs). So, the term 'expatriate' has been used rather than 'immigrant' or 'emigrant'. Even if, as for the emigrants, they may have kept strong relationships with their home country, they have complete freedom to discontinue their experience of expatriation at any time and they also have the economic means to live in a foreign country. I also used the term 'exiled', even if this word has a more negative and emotional connotation and includes a notion of isolation, banishment or a felt sense to be a stranger.

1.3 Research Question

The research question that this dissertation seeks to answer is: What are the spiritual and psychological impacts of retired people's choice to live abroad, in an unknown country, and how self-initiated expatriation can contribute to their psychospiritual growth?

Through this research based on organic inquiry, I sought to explore my own experience and one of four other participants. I was also interested in the following sub-questions: (a) Why did the participants decide to expatriate when retired? (b) What did they learn? (c) What are the transpersonal effects of their experience of living abroad?

2. Literature Review

Literature on voluntary expatriation is extensive but relates most of the time to expatriated workers. Very little research has been done on retirees, especially from a transpersonal perspective. However, psychological studies on the profile of retirees (Wang, 2007), acculturation (Adams and Vijver,2015; Adler,2002) and also on death (Clodd, 2020) provide an overarching framework for understanding the transpersonal experience of retired SIEs. In their studies, researchers have contemplated multidimensional aspects of retirees' expatriation such as the reasons behind their decision (Myklebost,1989; Warnes,1999) and the impact on their well-being. Most of the studies acknowledge the transformational impact of self-initiated expatriation on identity (Harlem,2010) even if some of them left their home country to retrieve old-fashioned values (Goss,2019).

2.1 Motivations for Retiring Abroad

According to the literature, four main reasons may explain the retirees' decision of living abroad: (a) expatriation as a privilege, (b) a quest for a meaningful life, (c) time awareness and (d) loyalty to ancestors.

Expatriation as privilege

Literature shows that voluntary immigration concerns mainly retirees living in developed countries, in Europe or North America as deciding to live abroad when retired requires sufficient economic resources. In a study conducted on American and Canadians who chose to live abroad when retired, Goss (2019) observed that the majority of these people were white. Immigration to another country, namely Mexico where the standard of living is lower, was a way for expatriated retirees to reclaim their superior and racialized social standing. They reproduce the scheme of dominant versus dominated as privileged whites "whose economic status and nationality have given them the flexibility to move across countries". According to this author, their decision was essentially based on racist posture and as noticed by Green (2009), these Americans who chose to live abroad rarely gave up or lost their citizenship in the process, as a way of keeping their privileges.

Another material reason for choosing to live abroad is the search for well-being. As stated by Myklebost (1989, p.192), emigration generally involves people under 70 years old, searching for a better

climate or social conditions. But more psycho-spiritual reasons may explain the retirees' decision for living abroad.

A Quest for Meaningful Life

Another category of citizens exists, less driven by materialistic reasons, the one made up of expatriate retirees whose living style reminds the "Lost Generation" writers who travelled to Europe in the 1920s and symbolized "the New World against the Old" (Green, 2009, p.307). As posited by Green, "they expressed their dismay with the standardization and mediocrity of American modernity" (p.321). These writers opened the way to a new citizens' class who was growing over time and who was searching in other cultures what they cannot find in their home country. Their motivations are less based on materialism, nostalgia and racism than on a quest for meaning. Their voluntary expatriation resonates with the experience of retired SIEs and may be represented by an archetype whose shadowed side would be represented by maintaining privileges versus searching for meaning. Retired SIEs are driven by a sense of adventure, creativity and a need for freedom (Harlem,2010; Inkson et al., 1997). They are less sensitive to security issues (Fu et al,2015; Warnes et al.,1999) because, and as posited by Wang (2007), if they were insecure, retirees will not leave their home country. On the contrary, they show strong self-confidence and privilege risks and adventure rather than security.

Time Awareness

Another factor that explains the retirees' decision to expatriate made is their relationship with time. They become aware that inside the boundaries defined by time, they are free to choose to realize, or not, their wishes and travelling and discovering the world may be part of their dreams. Because death is increasingly accepted over time, being active and moving gives retirees a sense of freedom (Fromm,2013).

Loyalty to Ancestors

Contrary to a common belief, the links with family are less important when growing older (Tornstam,2011; Richardson, 2006). Retirees are not responsible anymore for their children and they tend to reconnect more to their ancestors rather than their descendants. They reclaim the heritage of their lineage as a way to improve their self-knowledge. As Mackey and Evans (2021) put it, expatriated retirees inherited from their ancestors' experience. They possess resources to meet the increased stressors and demands of overseas relocation due to their higher cross-cultural competency, adjustment, and security in

risk-taking. However, the authors note that the inheritance of these features is not straightforward and in families, usually only one sibling shows these personality traits.

2.2 Coping Strategies of Retirees Abroad

Coping strategies aim to overcome the challenges of expatriation. Retirees' identity changes but the patterns of adjustment may vary depending on the retiree's personality and the host country.

Overcoming Psychological Risks of Expatriation

It does not mean that the decision to live their home country is easy to take. As Adler (2002) posited, "such psycho-cultural pliability gives rise to tensions and stresses unique to the conditions which allow such dynamism in the first place". Adler mentioned five possible sources of stress: (a) because the boundaries are always moving, the multicultural retiree may be vulnerable without strong self-knowledge; (b) retirees may be overwhelmed by stimuli; (c) they may lose their sense of authenticity because they may have to change their roles depending on the situation and because psycho-cultural adaptation is essential when facing an unknown environment; (d) their life may become superficial, without any deep social commitments, (e) finally, the breakdown of boundaries may lead to an attitude of existential absurdity or even nihilism. However, Adler also noticed "that boundaries, however indefinite, give shape and meaning to the experience of experience; they allow us to differentiate, define, and determine who we are about someone or something else".

Adler's observations (2002) call for several comments. Expatriates can indeed lose all sense of reality if they do not have a solid knowledge of themselves, their values and the reasons for expatriating. Living in a foreign country requires flexibility, but this flexibility must be organized within a subjective framework constituted by the individuals' personality, their strategy of acculturation (David & Berry,2010) and their beliefs, all of these factors being variables of adjustment (Pinto,2011). Otherwise, the risks evoked by Adler are real and can lead to personality dissociation (Harlem,2010), or even its dissolution into nihilism.

However, the fact that expatriation is the result of a personal willingness and that retired SIEs can return to their home country at any time reduce the risks as observed by Warnes et al (1999) :

> Our interpretation is that the hurdles to be overcome, particularly in moving to countries of different languages, legal systems and social customs, are so great that most who proceed have strong motivations for doing so and sufficient material and mental resources to achieve success…

> Successful ageing abroad depends as much on learnt adjustments as on prior fitness and resources (p.737).

Adapting Identity to a Liminal Space

Harlem (2010) explored the keys to the success of expatriation from a psychological standpoint and concluded that:

> Immigration (as opposed to migration) can be understood as an achievement of sorts, one measured in psychic rather than geographic terms. Predicated on the ability to "stand in the spaces" between self-states, the immigrant is able to discover a new "home" not by forgetting the old one but by remembering it, by forging the possibility for psychic conflict between old and new, by laying the dialectical foundation of what we psychoanalytic types so fondly term "ambivalence". (p.473).

Living between liminal worlds, at least at the beginning of their expatriation, the retired SIEs have to adapt themselves to a new culture and sometimes a new language, provoking the remodelling of their identity so that they could be integrated into the host country.

Adams and Van de Vijver (2015) developed a tridimensional model of identity, personal, relational, and social. For these authors, the success of acculturation depends on three factors: the distance between the culture of the emigrant and the culture of the host country, the purpose of the emigration and the support network of the emigrant. Identity encompasses these three dimensions. They emphasize the fact that, while personal identity has to be strong to give the expatriate a sense of continuity, the two other dimensions, relational and social may change (Adams & Van de Vijver,2015, p.327). But, to be successful, their sense of coherence and continuity has to be maintained (Wang,2007).

Transnationalism and Integration

Retirees do not follow uniform adjustment patterns during the retirement process (Wang, 2007) and many variables may impact their behaviours: financial resources, belief system, health, previous life experience, etc. Even if none of these variables is dominant as shown by a survey made by Warnes et al.(1999) on British retired expatriates, the relationships with the host country may be determinant. Klekowski von Koppenfels' research on transnationalism (2014) concluded that some "American migrants, like other migrant groups, engage in transnationalism – political, cultural and socio-economic activities which link them with their home country – while also forging and strengthening ties in their host country" (p.2). She also emphasized that the emigrants are identified with their home country rather than with

their personal identity by the local population (p.171) which could have an impact on the expatriate's integration, either facilitating or slowing it down. Similarly, the retirees' choice of the host country may be based on stereotypes that could lead to disappointment when confronted with reality.

2.3 Personal Growth and Development

Because of the necessity to adapt themselves to the host country, the retirees' self evolves, what Torstam (2011) described as gerotranscendance. When moving toward gerotranscendance, the elders may experience a redefinition of their self and relationships with others, as well as a new understanding of fundamental existential questions. Approaching death and having new experiences such as the ones of expatriation lead to transcendent evolution. Individuals do not become old but are growing old (Zweig, 2021).

Retirement is one of the moments of life when people may become more conscious of mortality and then search for more authenticity (Clodd, 2020). Clodd observed that literature on retirement focus on five additional broad areas which are: (a) the importance of seeking meaning in facing mortality, (b) the concepts of time in the ageing process, (c) spiritual growth in the ageing process, (d) retirement as a liminal point, and (e) retirement as rebirth. Retirement is then a period of transition during which questions on what is life and how to have a meaningful life during the remaining time arise. Clodd posits that:

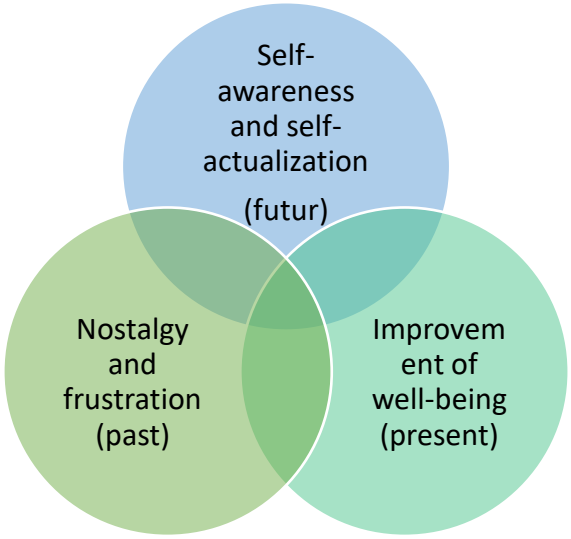
> Time is seen as precious and involves both a linear process that relates to an acknowledgement of mortality and an outward movement, an expanding form of cyclic time, embracing new possibilities. There is a reluctant acceptance of this phase as being time-limited but with a sense of wanting to use that time to soar, to find new ways of using our energy, skills and expertise. (p.99)

It is as if the sense of mortality and limited time was provoking an urge for living more authentically and intensively, experiencing new situations, and exploring new territories, even if (or because) the body sends signals of weakening. A tension exists between "how the existential self handles the new potentials of autonomy and self-actualisation, and how it grapples with the problems of finitude, mortality and apparent meaninglessness" (Wilber, 1984, p. 107). The tension may be relieved by a quest for meaning on existential issues linked to death and life cycles, and the awareness that life is made up of several symbolic deaths or transitional periods during which identities change. When retired, this quest

for meaning is nurtured by accumulated experiences and the loss of bodily strength and beauty. The former should be integrated and transcended, and the latter accepted. Retirement and expatriation together impose on retirees a detachment from their past life and an increasing destabilization of ordinary awareness which transform and renew retirees' self as they go through a transitional period resulting in an evolution of consciousness towards transcendence and self-actualization (Wade, 1996).

2.4 Impact of the Literature Review on the Research Project

The review of the literature shows that three main reasons may explain the retirees' decision of living abroad, (a) a search for an improvement in their personal and financial comfort, (b) a disappointment with the perceived evolution of their home country and the will to re-instore a former and idealized state and (c) the belief that retirement is a transitional period towards self-fulfilment and self-actualization.



The three categories of reasons may overlap, but whatever the reasons, the retired expatriates form altogether a new form of citizenship, trans-cultural and adventurous, looking for freedom and meaning. All of them are characterized by higher flexibility and an ability for changing or endorsing different identities to be integrated into the host country while improving their self-knowledge.

The findings from the literature and my own observations were confirmed by the reported experiences of the participants.

3. Research Methods

The research method used for this project was qualitative. Data on lived experiences, emotions or behaviours as well as the meanings attached to them were collected through different tools including interviews, personal experimentation, analysis of dreams or intuitive listening. Collecting, analysing and transcribing data was a long and alchemical process which took several months, from July to March.

3.1 Methodology

The methodology used for this research is based on Organic Inquiry (OI) as it allows access to subconscious knowledge (Anderson, 2007) and it is an effective way of explaining the universal through particular experiences. The approach developed by Anderson combines intuition and a scientific approach. It invites the researcher to let emerging what is sometimes hidden internally on a topic and to document it, making the invisible visible (Merleau-Ponty,1968).

A research project is not chosen by chance, but because it presents a specific interest for the researcher. I choose this subject as I was myself retired for two years and since this moment, I felt an urgent need to explore the world. I travelled often in my professional life. However, when I retired, I became aware that my professional choices were not made by chance but because I was compelled to do so, perhaps as a result of my family history, made up of wars and exile. I then chose this research project to explore the reason behind this need for expatriation and its transformative process.

This research project itself became transformative. Because I was listening to what was emerging during the research process, I became intuitively aware of what I felt or knew intuitively. Anderson (2007) defined intuition as follows:

> Intuition is a subtle sense perception that conveys direct insight into future possibilities or circumstances that cannot be experienced through the ordinary five human senses or analytical reason. When an intuition is sensed, one often feels as though one is tapping into a collective or unconscious source of wisdom that requires a diffuse awareness rather like a dream state while awake. However, as a subtle sense, intuitions often flitter out of sight as though vanishing into the background of awareness at the precise moment that the focused, rational mind “kicks in” searching for the intuition’s meaning. To “capture” meaning, intuitives often learn unique means to “navigate” between diffuse or dreamlike perceptual states and analytical reason and reflection. (p.1)

This intuition may appear under different forms or circumstances: dreams, meditation, or a bodily felt sense. And then writing down intuitive thoughts allows some distance between myself and the

research topic and the adoption of a more scientific posture. My written observations were also fed up with the literature review and participants' interviews.

3.2 Procedure for Collecting and Analysing Data

Tools for collecting data were multidimensional, going from thinking, listening to my body, observing synchronicity, or analysing my dreams to participants' interviews and literature review, creating an iterative movement between subjectivity and rationality. The procedure used for collecting and analysing the data was inspired by Anderson and Braud's (2011) writings on organic inquiry and I followed the five cycles that they described.

Cycle 1 was a cycle during which the topic of the research project emerged. I have to find a research project for this dissertation and my previous experience as a researcher taught me that, to be grounded and to enrich the present field of qualitative research, the subject should be inspired by my own experience. I knew also that a researcher identifies a topic based on his/ her unique interests and passions. I went then through the more significant events of my life and I decided to explore the process of expatriation experienced by retired people. As previously mentioned, I was retired for a few months and I felt this urge to travel and expatriation. This first cycle of project identification lasted several weeks. But, at the end of this period, I knew intuitively that the topic will have some added value for the research, not only on the transpersonal aspects of retirement and expatriation but also on ageing. I submitted the proposal to the ethical committee for approval. The process of acceptance was long and difficult and showed me the difficulty of putting words on feelings.

In Cycle 2 Anderson and Braud (2011) claim that the researcher explores his or her own values, assumptions, and understandings about the topic, while also reviewing a range of relevant literature. The result of Cycle 2 was a series of lenses, around ten, that was both "a way of viewing a topic and what is seen" (p. 31). As soon as the subject has been approved, I started to deepen my research motives and my relationship with the subject. I wrote my thoughts in a journal every day. I also meditated regularly and I made some shamanic journeys. I paid more attention to external signals such as unexpected meetings or conversations on this topic. I listened especially to my embodied intuition: my professional life was ending; I had no more geographical attachments and my desire to discover the world was becoming more and more pressing. Why? So I decided to explore this topic and also leave my home country for the USA. A

six-month visa was easy to obtain which encouraged me in my approach. I stayed there for three months. During this period, I selected and reviewed the literature which brought me other perspectives on the subject.

Thereafter, I started to write the first draft of my own experience from my understanding of what emerges from this data collection: among this multicultural and multi-faceted population of retired SIEs, I identified broadly three types of retirees, namely the nostalgic, the selfish and the researcher. I then decided to narrow my research project and focus on people who were searching for a new life meaning as defined by Viktor Frankl (1985) and on their psychospiritual transformation if any. Even if the decision of living abroad improves the retirees' well-being, this decision includes some psychological risks and I decided also to explore this aspect. Finally, I tried to identify more precisely the psychological profile of these retired SIEs and to understand how they see their place in their world, their relations with their country of origin or their host country and how their decision impact the world. A semi-structured questionnaire has been elaborated accordingly.

Cycle 3 consists of choosing sources and their selection criteria, collecting data and preparing descriptive, summary reports of findings before a more in-depth interpretation. As being myself a participant in this project, I started to write down my own story from my experience. I selected articles or books and I analysed them in depth. I then recruited and interviewed other participants. I used tables or X-mind software for identifying the most relevant sources for my research and also not to lose focus as I received a large amount of information linked to psychological but also social or political areas.

According to Anderson and Braud (2011), cycle 4 focuses on how the researcher has changed, or what he or she has learned from the research project compared to the original lenses presented in Cycle 2 and indeed, my analysis of the topic has evolved. I was thinking that this desire to travel was linked to personality traits such as curiosity or a need for freedom. However, the implications of this research were more profound than I initially thought. The decision to live abroad taken by the retires not only triggers an individual transformational process but also impacts political and societal organizations. It challenges preconceived ideas on ageing, well-being and death.

In Cycle 5, I integrated the new understandings that arose during Cycle 4 with the empirical and theoretical literature examined in Cycle 2. I then wrote up the discussion section which gathered the

outcomes of the above-described alchemical process of OI-based research. The structuring of my thoughts was facilitated by seminars and presentations organised by Alef Trust during the research process.

3.3 Participants

Participants' recruitment started after ethical approval has been obtained (Appendix 1) which was not an easy process. The difficulty of recruiting participants fed my reflections on this project. I realised that I was looking for independent and individualistic persons who do not belong to any settled communities. So, it was not easy to trace them.

I then send an announcement (Appendix 2) for recruiting participants to friends and I published it on several social networks. Finally, four participants have been recruited, two were addressed by friends and two were found through social networks. The recruitment was based on the following criteria for inclusion and exclusion:

Criteria for inclusion:

- Participants must be retired;
- Participants must have decided to live abroad when retired;
- They will not have chosen to live abroad for economic necessity or political problems;
- They should be engaged in some form of self-inquiry / inner work / personal development;
- Participants must be able and willing to articulate their experience;
- If English is not their first language, participants must be fluent;
- Participants must be able to commit to the process.

Exclusion criteria:

- Participants operating in fragile contexts, which might expose them to safety/security risks;
- Participants who are experiencing/or have recently experienced intense psychological and/or emotional imbalances;
- Participants who find it hard to discuss personal matters, particularly those associated with their bodies and spirituality.

The four participants included three women and one man, aged between 56 and 70. Three of them had American nationality and one has Canadian nationality. All of them were retired for more than one year. Two of them chose to live in the south of France, one in Portugal and one in Luxembourg. One participant was married and the others were divorced. All participants had a full professional career during which three of them travelled extensively.

Participants were requested to sign an informed consent form (Appendix 3) stipulating that they understand the nature and the consequences of the research before the interviews. I also sent them a Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 4). Each interview was conducted online, using Zoom technology. The interviews were recorded and lasted about one hour. Semi-structured interviews were conducted based on six questions. However, the questions were only the basis for an open discussion. The main questions were as follows:

- Can you begin by telling me about your experience moving abroad?
- How would you describe how different you experience yourself since your settlement in an unknown country?
- Can you tell me a bit more about what the move meant for you?
- What are the main challenges that you face or have faced?
- In your opinion, did this experience affect your sense of self, the sense of who you are?
- How do you think other people see you? Here and in your home country?

After the interview, a debriefing sheet was sent to the participants (Appendix 5).

The interviews have been listened several times and transcribed using NVivo software. Fourteen codes were identified and gathered under themes which were compared to the findings from literature and my own thoughts to feed up the discussion.

Raw data are attached in Appendix 6 and a sample of data analysis is in Appendix 7.

3.4 Ethical Issues

Even if the risk was low, I thought that participants may feel strong emotions as they were revisiting their past and the reasons that led them to move away. Often expatriations are accompanied by a break-up of family or friends, which can lead to feelings of disconnection and isolation. Even if participants signed a consent form and received detailed information about the research project, I

informed them verbally before the interview, that they can withdraw their participation at any time without explanation or penalties if they feel uncomfortable or upset. They were also informed that, alternatively, they can ask that I change questions or the direction of the conversation. I also recalled to the participants, before starting the interviews, that it was possible to stop the interview at any time and that they may seek help from local resources if they feel stressed after our meetings. I reminded them that all the data will be anonymously transcribed and destroyed and that I will not give any psychological advice in my capacity as an Alef Trust student, nor offer to counsel should it be requested but that they may seek help from local resources if they feel stressed.

During the interviews and even if the meetings were online, I paid special attention to body language as much as possible to detect any sign of distress.

I also debriefed the session after the interviews and invited the participants to address anything that might have caught their attention or unsettled them during the interview. However, no incidents were reported.

The risk of stress existed also for me as a researcher-participant because the research topic required me to re-visit events that may have been stressful and interviews of the participants remind me also some forgotten emotions. To overcome this issue, I made long walks in nature so that I may retrieve internal homeostasis. I also practised the 5Rythms dance. These embodied practices help me to clarify my thoughts and to step back from emotional discharges.

4. Results: From Answering a Call to Gerotranscendance

From the discussions with the participants as well as my own experience, three main themes have emerged. Each theme was a step in a journey towards a new life balance and spiritual maturity. The first theme is the call to leave to which the retired SIEs answered for three reasons: the fulfilment of a dream, the loyalty to their ancestors and their personalities. The second theme is the challenging experience of living in an unknown country and the difficulties of their acculturation. In response to the stress of expatriation, these retirees created a liminal space marked by distancing themselves from the local population and a refusal to return to their home country unless forced by exceptional circumstances. The third theme is about the transformation which took place inside this space. Not only the participants re-created a transnational and multicultural community, but they improved their self-knowledge and their level of spiritual maturity.

4.1 The Decision to Move Abroad: Answering the Call

All the participants that I interviewed did not know a few months before their expatriation where they will live in. As expressed by IN, "I actually knew nothing about Portugal before I moved there" (IN,115). They only knew that they had to live abroad and they left. For all of them, one of the reasons was the fulfilment of a dream. For some of them, the reason to live abroad was based on loyalty to their ancestors. But whatever the reasons, the participants showed common personality traits.

The Fulfilment of a Dream

At the outset, the participants had a dream or a wish, sometimes coming from their childhood. IN " was always fascinated with Europe" (IN,9); JL has "been in love with Europe" since he "was 4 years old" (JL,2) and AM reported: «I always kind of thought of moving to Mexico when, you know, when I retired" (AM,8).

The willingness to move also relied on deeply rooted desires such as living in a more cultural or historical environment or near the sea and they believed that their wishes can only be fulfilled in another country. IN "just kept thinking there has to be something better than this and something more than this" (IN,79); KA looked for "getting into the cultural environment that Luxembourg offers"(KA, 74) and JL said that his «dream was to live in Europe and to live by the sea"(JL,286)

However, these wishes explain only partially such a radical decision as most of these dreams could have been fulfilled in their own country.

Loyalty to Lineage and Ancestors

Another reason explaining the decision to move abroad was the loyalty to a line of ancestors and the need to find their roots. All participants were born in North America and "new countries". They kept the transgenerational memories of what their ancestors had undertaken two or three generations before. They also inherited from their parents or their grandparents the belief that expatriation, even if risky and challenging, had positive effects. Their departure was then based on the belief that through expatriation they will have a better life. This was confirmed by IN when she told me that her "parents were German immigrants to Canada" (IN,4) or KA when she talked about her father who "was adventurous too"(KA,103).

By moving abroad, they situated themselves in a historical rather than a geographical perspective, sometimes with a touch of romanticism as when JL stated: "I knew that my destiny was Europe" (JL,107). This founding belief gave them optimism and an internal force that facilitated their integration into the host country. This aspect may be retrieved from the four participants when they said: "Unbelievably lucky to land here" (KA,52) or "I was so lucky with everything "(IN,254) and also "I have the courage to do this" (AM,233).

I retrieved this feature in my own history. My family had a long history of war and exile. They came from Spain and settled in Algeria in the 19th century following a recruitment campaign launched by the French government. As long as I can remember, each generation of my family has known war and exile. At the end of the Algeria world, my parents were forced to come back to France for economic reasons although they never went before to this country. As with the participants, I never felt like a part of any society or culture. I also travelled a lot, first for tourism, then for professional reasons and finally when retired. Each experience of expatriation helped me to build up my identity and to refine my belief system.

The interviews with the participants as well as the exploration of my own history led me to wonder whether this taste for elsewhere was linked to a personality type. Indeed, although we share the same history with siblings, this need for adventure usually affects only one of them, as it was the case with my own family: One participant, for example, when talking about his father, said: "he had three children

and only one of his children travels all the time but the other two never do" (IN, 415-416). Personality traits may then explain this difference in behaviours.

Personality Traits

Common traits may be retrieved from the five participants: they shared the same desire to travel. From a spectrum going from security to risk-taking, they also were more prone to take risks. The other main common traits that I noticed were the sensation of being protected by an invisible force the gratefulness for that and an attraction for adventure.

The feeling of being protected appears in the interviews with three of the participants when they talked about their luck: "I feel lucky. It's wonderful, you know, to just have all these new experiences" (IN,433); "by luck, I found this great apartment" (AM,16);" I was lucky to Luxembourg, lucky" (KA,58). At no time they mentioned their courage or their taste for risk, showing humility.

The attraction for adventure emerged in sentences such as: "It's very exciting living in a country where everything is new" (IN,113) or "I'm someone that follows my heart" (AM,245) or also "we see in English to have itchy feet, you want to go, you want to go all the time" (KA,98).

The other personality traits were openness, curiosity and a lot of energy. These personality traits were summarized by AM when she said "I am very interested in foreign culture" (AM,178) or "I am very, very active" (AM,107). Carpe Diem could be their motto.

4.2 Expatriation as Transformational Process

After deciding to move and responding to the inner voice that urged them to leave, retired SIEs had to face realities that are sometimes challenging. In front of these difficulties, the participants adopted a surprisingly similar attitude towards the culture of the home and the host countries: they distance themselves from both cultures and create a limited circle of friends made up of expatriates. They constructed a liminal space, at the same time being outside of local culture and mixed with it.

Re-creating in a Liminal World

Although the criteria for choosing the country to which they will expatriate were clear and often based on culture or quality of life, paradoxically they did not fit in. Some participants found the local population "curious". The language barrier could have explained this paradox. But this was not the case as even participants who spoke the language of the host country kept their distance from the local

population. The willingness of learning more about the culture and the language of the host country was present but the participants thought that local people had specific features that prevented them from having close connections. AM said that “they spoke this funny language and they were not very nice” (AM,36-37); JL affirmed: “I don’t belong to the French community” (JL,358) and IN said: “I find challenging about, it's more specific to the Portuguese people” (IN,277).

Then they surrounded themselves with a small number of like-minded friends, multicultural and expatriates: “I have a few, you know, friends I like” (JL,315) or” I haven’t really made a lot of friends” (JL,318) or “I had a most wonderful group of friends; None of them was from Portugal” (IN,121). Their friends were usually either people with whom they travelled a lot or who spoke several languages. As indicated by IN, “my friends and where I came from. I mean, we were all expats” (IN,308) or “my close group of friends are about six or eight of us. We were all from somewhere else” (IN,123). For JL, “most of his friends are international” (JL,324). Because of this chosen isolation, I felt loneliness and some sadness in the single participants. However, other reasons than expatriation may explain this feeling of isolation such as their single status.

Distancing From Home Country

The participants’ relationship with their home country was even more ambivalent. None of them wanted to go back while being strongly attached to their nationality: “I’ll always be American because it comes down because, you know, it’s where I was born, where I was raised, where I was educated” (JL,138-139). However, some of them judged severely their co-citizens whom they found not brave enough for realising their dreams or too narrow-minded. For example, IN said that “they're very clueless about the rest of the world” (IN,374) and for AM, “the people in the States are very…limited in their thinking” (AM,172). They made clear their intention not to return to their country of origin: “I don't know why anybody wants to live in the U.S. anymore, quite honestly” (IN,112).

Their position was also ambivalent about their compatriots living abroad. JL clearly stated that he did not want to spend time with them and said: “I don’t want to be part of the American British” (JL,333) without specifying the reason. AM “ tries to stay away from these people” (AM, 290, talking about the American people). Their attachment went to their lineage rather than the people around them as shown by JL's words when he talks about the organisation of his funeral: “It’s all organised. I can have a Jewish

funeral. I'm not religious but I think my parents wanted me, want me to have a Jewish burial"(JL,385 & 390). Keeping this link to his lineage allows him to preserve his identity.

This estrangement from the local population, their co-citizens and their homeland led them sometimes to feel anxiety and distress. AM reported that she "knew nobody. It was awful. It was awful" (AM,53). They also felt insecure as expressed by AM when she said " I don't know what it's going to happen in the future" (AM,203). Because her family never went to visit her, IN felt surprised and sad and declared "I was really quite shocked that not more came to visit"(IN,362). The interviews sometimes revealed bitterness: "I have been disappointed by people, friends and lovers" (JL,260).

Being 'Special'

But, even if challenging, their negative feelings never called into question their decision to stay in the host country as confirmed by sentences such as: "I do not want to go back" (AM,92); "don't want to go back there, so I have a better life here (IN,171); "this is where I want to be" (KA,305).

None of the participants wanted to change their nationality either. They remained deeply attached to their historical roots and they made several references to their relatives who remained in the USA. Being a foreigner, trying to establish some distance with their compatriots either in the home country or in the host country was part of the identity they are proud of. It gave them a sense of being different or 'special' as expressed by JL or KA: "I do feel special since I move to Europe" (JL,255) or "I wanted to be a big fish in a little pan rather than a small fish in a big pan" (JL,305) or also" I'd rather be a small fish in an ocean" (KA,87).

4.3 Renewed Self Through Gerotranscendance

This feeling to be special as well as the feeling of having found a new family improved their well-being. Participants demonstrated also through the interviews more refined self-knowledge and spiritual maturity, which Tornstam (2011) described as gerotranscendance.

Finding Another Family

In this liminal world which they have created, all participants became friends with people who resembled them. As mentioned before, this circle of people was narrow, but it brought together people with the same mindset or sharing the same need for space and adventure. These circles formed a new class of citizens who did not feel attached to a national system but who were beyond the borders. These

circles had porous borders, as expatriate retirees could decide to change countries at any time and re-enter a new circle. Freedom remained an essential value for them and the notion of "family" became blurred. As IN put it, “I consider them my family in Europe” (IN, 309) when she talked about her new friends. KA stated that she “ became a much more outgoing person to initiate friendships or initiate doing things together”(KA,141) and IN says that “my close group of friends are about six or eight of us. We were all from somewhere else”(IN,123) and JL mentions: “I’m having trouble having a lot of good friends in the city”(JL,311).

Self-knowledge, Authenticity and Well-Being

Participants’ comments showed a high level of authenticity, discernment and self-knowledge. KA's interview was the most significant in this respect, as she had not travelled much before her expatriation. She had locked herself into a traditional family and professional system, which was becoming confining as time passed by. She decided to leave everything behind when she retired. Expatriation seemed to her to be an obvious decision to make. Before her expatriation, she did not know who she was. And then she became conscious of herself, her desires and her identity.

> I saw it was really possible as a single person for me to move to Europe. I was always worried before. I have never been able to make a decision. And here I just decided… was no longer Paul's ex-wife or Ian and David's mother or this or that…. I actually knew nothing about Portugal before I moved there (KA,68).

Expatriation led to an identity transformation which was sometimes unconscious depending on the participants’ personality. While KA denied being egoic when looking for the realization of her wishes (KA,222), she said that “every time you move, you can reinvent yourself” (KA,43). She thought that she was more resilient, with more “empathic ability now, which is even more attuned to it” (KA,262) and that she was “getting younger”(KA,455).

The same authenticity and well-being were observed in the other participants. For example, JL posited: “I’m sort of a superstar (JL, 240); I feel like I’m somebody (JL298-299); I felt really, really good with myself, proud and … euh… just generally happy”(JL,309). KA completed her statement by saying: “It’s stressful, but it also has a dynamism and an energy and a curiosity and a learning” (KA,110). For IN, it was as “coming back to my roots”(IN, 191). AM feels more cosmopolitan, expansive, positive, optimistic, and a ‘sun-shinning’ person (AM,61).

Spiritual Maturity and Gerotranscendance

This authenticity about themselves demonstrated that participants had reached a certain level of spiritual maturity which was reflected in the interviews. For example, participants became aware of the importance of language as expressed by KA: “Your personality is demonstrated through your language” (KA,364). But they also developed a more intuitive way of communicating, probably because most of them did not speak the language of the host country as noticed by KA when she said “You make these almost subliminal connections” (KA,386).

Their capacity for acceptance increased, leading to more openness, tolerance and acceptance: KA found herself “much more tolerant” (KA,122). Participants also became aware of preconceived ideas and their damage as summarized by KA, “ you just you're just constantly learning and growing in ways that you can't even understand” (KA,112).

The meaning of life seemed to some of them to be more obvious as for KA: “It’s a quest for a shared experience, a wide, shared experience” (KA,183); “now I see with people my role as interacting with them” (KA,216); “I am in the right place for the type of person that I am” (KA,220).

5. Discussion: Toward a More Inclusive World

More and more retirees decide to move abroad. According to the research (Ashton et al.2019), " by 2050, the baby-boom generation, born between 1946 and 1962,… are predicted to travel more than past generations and are more likely to consider retiring overseas" (pp.449). The emergence of this new type of citizen challenges the beliefs that Western societies have about old age and retirement. Rather than seeing retirement as a period of retraction, retired SIEs see it as the beginning of a new life cycle in a continuous process of self-actualization. They answer a call which incites them to leave, a call to which the retired SIEs answer for various reasons such as the desire to fulfil a dream or the loyalty to their ancestors. From the interviews and data collection, It appears that they share the same personality traits forming an archetype blending the features of the Old Sage and the Explorer.

Once the threshold has been crossed, the journey begins and challenges have to be faced. The experience of living in an unknown country and acculturation is not an easy path. As shown by this research, stress and isolation may occur depending on individual's level of psychological self-structuration, what Wang (2007) calls "adjustment patterns". When abroad, these retirees re-created a community of like-minded people with its own codes and values, showing distancing from the local cultures. Living in a foreign country prompts them to improve their self-knowledge and their level of spiritual maturity characterized by a deep understanding of one's spiritual beliefs, a sense of inner peace and purpose, and the development of qualities such as compassion and empathy. The attainment of this higher level of consciousness added to the ageing process makes their return to their previous state and their home country impossible.

The retirees' decision to live abroad does not only transform the individual (Mao and Shen, 2015; Kemp, 2010). Because their number is increasing, the retired SIEs modify also societies' beliefs, promoting multiculturalism above the frontiers and pollinating local culture. They also teach younger generations the importance of freedom and call into question the preconceived ideas on retirement, death and life.

5.1 The Departure

As observed through participants' experience, the decision to live abroad results from the answer to a call. If the reasons are diverse, common personality traits may be observed among retired SIEs.

Answering a call

My research shows that in the beginning, there is a call. It may be the realization of a childhood dream, the rejection of a limiting situation or simply the desire to continue to travel. Not all participants have the same dreams or life experiences. Some have travelled a lot, some not, but all of them have sufficient resources which allow them to live abroad. By a synchronicity effect, all the participants in this study came from the *New World* but the limited number of participants does not allow us to draw definitive conclusions about the nationalities of retired SIEs as a significant cause for expatriation or about other conclusions. Aware of the limited time they had and having sufficient resources to realize their wishes, they decided to move abroad, answering an internal call. Retired SIEs answer to an impulse towards an 'elsewhere' carried by an idealism which pushes them to cross the borders of everyday life to achieve more freedom. It is the same thirst for freedom that drove for example the writers of the *Lost Generation* to go to Europe in the 1920-the 30s. As for these writers or artists, the decision to leave may be built on a certain disappointment, that of the country of origin which does not respond to the subjective search of the expatriate, hence the leap into the unknown and the separation from the familiar to go into exile. Exile and existence have the same root: "to be out of", to separate, a separation that sends each one back to his destiny or the unknown of his origin. Their decision of leaving disturbs their community of origin because it prompts their relatives to question themselves on their own choices of living, the values of the society in which they live and their capacity for freedom and responsibility.

The driving force behind the departure remains the imagination, that of the travel, the unknown, and the new experiences to be lived. This imagination is nourished by family histories but also by cultures or myths of their home country. Drawing from myth is a way for them to give meaning to their life by building the *imaginary* of their experience in connection with sacred stories. If the decision to leave is often based on the family myth, the choice of the host country is constructed from the *imaginary* conveyed by the media. The departure allows the individual to position himself from the point of view of identity, by asking himself the question: who am I? What are my values? What is my vision of the world?

The Archetype of the Old Sage Explorer

Although the reasons vary from one participant to another, they share common personality traits. Curious by nature, they dream of other cultures and people. They do not have the feeling to take any

particular risks despite the warnings of their entourage that considers expatriation as risky when getting older. They are not afraid to be alone and are very selective in their friendships. Flexible and adaptable, they keep some distance between themselves and the host country and create a liminal world where the notion of borders is blurred.

The personality of the retired SIEs combines the traits of two Jungian archetypes: the Old Sage and the Explorer. Jungian archetypes allow us to better understand the personality of these retirees who decide to move abroad because they refer to a holistic and symbolic perspective that captures a set of patterns and personality traits that facilitates the description of people sharing the same traits and values (Jung, 2014). Given their research for authenticity, their quest for meaning, and their acceptance of death, retired SIEs share the same traits as the archetype of the Sage as they use their knowledge and experience to teach younger generations how to grow older. Expatriated retirees share also the trait of the Explorer or the Pilgrim as "this character is usually on some kind of quest or in search of something: a way home, self-knowledge, a key to happiness or wisdom, or a 'better way,' whatever that might be" (Taheri & Jalaly, 2013, p. 184).

5.2 A Journey With No-Return

Once the decision is made, everything happens quickly and a period of deconstruction and reconstruction begins. The rite of passage consists of crossing the border and undergoing all the administrative formalities that mark the limits of the compartmentalized worlds in which we live. Some participants take this step more easily than others because they were used to travelling in their previous life. However, the rite of passage is symbolically the same for everyone.

Then they have to face the unknown: another language, another culture where they are more or less welcomed as foreigners. Through linguistic differences, symbolic universes are encountered, made of myths and beliefs. While none of them wanted to return to their country of origin, all the participants kept a distance from the population of the host country, adopting the position of an observer. As underlined by the participants, this distancing is partly explained by the stereotypes that the host population may have of the foreigner, the one who comes from elsewhere and who is the bearer of all fantasies and sometimes of all evils. The local population can be assimilated to the guardians of the threshold who are there to test the retirees' willingness to live abroad. The guardians can take different

forms such as an unpleasant civil servant or hurtful words. All the participants in this research met and resisted this ordeal.

This posture of observers allows the retired SIEs to remain in their isolation, and to guarantee symbolic and subjective freedom. This distancing may be marked by the fact of keeping one's linguistic accent as a reminder that the quality of a foreigner is non-negotiable because it is part of their identity. So they stay at a distance while re-creating a community of people like themselves, expatriated from different countries. They also avoid their fellow citizens and what they represent, namely their country of origin to which none of them wishes to return. They feel misunderstood by their families, and even criticized. Doing so, retired SIEs search to distance themselves from a country and its values in which they do not recognize themselves, remaining free of any commitment.

They, therefore, re-create a liminal world which looks like a patchwork of communities beyond nationalities and borders. These friendly communities, whose formation is facilitated by social networks, become a second family with which relationships are strong and built on solidarity, mutual aid and the recognition of the other as a projection of oneself. Within this cocoon, retired SIEs' identity change. Because of their life experience and the challenges they faced through expatriation, their discernment towards themselves, people and the remaining time to live sharpened, making their return to their home country symbolically and physically impossible. During their journey, retired SIEs are confronted with situations that lead them to rethink their identity. By moving away from their home country and their community of origin, they are pushed to review their patterns of thought. This experience leads them to open their mind to other possibilities and to go from the imaginary to reality. The individual has then a unique experience of understanding the dynamics of his identity construction and of questioning them if necessary.

By deciding to leave, the participants have crossed a threshold that will be difficult, if not impossible, to cross again and they know it as they become more spiritually mature. The definition of spiritual maturity refers here to the ancient Greek notion of *askesis,* in which the goals were to learn to live, dialogue and die through experiences that led to a transformation of the vision of the world and a metamorphosis of personality, all aspects observed through the discussions.

5.3 Above the Borders and the Divisions

Expatriation is an adventure that transforms not only the travellers but also their environment. As observed by Anna Lund (2017) “embodied values can become conscious” (p. 306) and liminal periods such as retirement “might open the door to new potentials for transformation” (p. 306). This observation may also be applied to societies. Because their number is increasing, the retired SIEs change the cultures and societies, bringing multiculturalism and mutual understanding, i.e. some of the features of transpersonal psychology.

Multiculturalism

The cultural identity of the retired SIEs is made up of the different cultures that they experience. They are able to incorporate other value systems or beliefs. This supposes that the core identity of the person is strong and has been worked out through improving self-knowledge. To Adler (2002), “the multicultural person maintains indefinite boundaries of the self”. The emigrant’s personality has to be flexible. As multiple and unpredictable situations may occur at any time, the emigrate must adapt him/herself permanently.

But if the experience of expatriation transforms the retirees, the society in which they live also changes under the influence of retirees’ presence as well as their home country. Expatriation pushes the ‘other’, considered as the population of the host country or the family and friends of the home country, to re-evaluate their values and beliefs either on ‘foreigners’ for the former or on ageing and retirement for the latter. Because of the exchange of information and experiences with local people, the presence of retired SIEs allows a reciprocal understanding and the unfolding of a transnational and cultural identity or multi-culturalism. As noticed by Mao and Shen (2015), the development of multi-culturalism is facilitated by the membership to social networks that help the emigrates’ integration and ease their understanding of the local culture. For Adler (2002), multiculturalism” suggests a human being whose identifications and loyalties transcend the boundaries of nationalism and whose commitments are pinned to a larger vision of the global community*”.* It refers to the citizens of the world, this twenty-first-century utopia. As Peter Kemp put it (2010), *“*the multicultural person is intellectually and emotionally committed to the basic unity of all human beings while at the same time recognizing, legitimizing, accepting, and appreciating the differences that exist between people of different cultures.” Adler posited that “ the multicultural person

embodies attributes and characteristics that prepare him or her to serve as a facilitator and catalyst for contacts between cultures".

What do they teach us?

In addition to being a bridge between cultures, expatriated retirees challenge the beliefs of Western societies on societal structures, age and death while participating in a transformation of the society that they created when younger. They also question the notion of direct family and of community in which affiliation becomes fluid.

These expatriates also question the notion of social pact that becomes international and multicultural, challenging the notions of borders, shaking up the ideas of patriotism and nationalism, the foundations of wars. They work towards a more inclusive world based on mutual understanding through the promotion of essential values such as openness, curiosity or otherness. The retired SIEs are transmitters of an experience of the 'Elsewhere' and of the 'Other'. But being a transmitter implies a voluntary action not only from the subject but also from those for whom the message is intended. If the receiver lacks openness or curiosity, sharing the experience is impossible. The opportunity to overcome the archaic fears of the unknown will be then missed.

These retirees especially encourage us to ask ourselves questions about the definition of life or what is life. Their experiences show us that it is a dynamic and continuous flow. To be alive is to be constantly self-constructing. Life does not stop under the effect of an external event such as retirement: it continues to unfold following the instructions inscribed in the DNA of each one. To be alive means to evolve and transmit genetic information inherited from our ancestors while transforming it and adapting it to the context. Retired SIEs demonstrate the vital force that characterizes the living and is animated by an interior impulse or a drive that pushes them to free themselves from the limits, internal and external, and to exceed fears to go towards the unknown and oneself. This vital force responds to two needs: the need of responding to the immanent principle of evolution and the need for purpose: Movement and purpose combine here towards a dynamic of self-discovery of others and oneself.

Retirement is considered in Western societies as the social marker of old age. However, the participants show that this is not the case. Retirement was for them the beginning of a more fulfilling life corresponding to their dreams or their personality. The living is also capable of regenerating itself. It is

separated from others and at the same time needs them to exist, thus forming ecosystems with shifting forms as shown by the communities created by these retired SIEs. Although it is not their intention, they shake up patterns and open the way to a new form and more inclusive society.

5.4 Limits of this Research

This research opens new perspectives for future studies. Very little literature was found on the transpersonal effect of retired SIEs and most of the research relates to expatriation for professional reasons. However, the number of retirees who decide to live abroad is growing and begins to have a strong impact both on the host and the home country, opening vast areas for future psychological research. Several questions remain unanswered: does the phenomenon of expatriation during retirement concern women more than men? Does it affect all countries or all cultures in the same way? Do we have different behaviours or adjustment patterns according to retirees' nationality? Etc. The research areas remain important in the face of this emerging phenomenon.

From a reflexive perspective, I may have been affected by my own experience of both forced exile and self-initiated expatriation. For example, I have experienced this ambivalence towards people in the host country as the willingness to learn foreign cultures while knowing that I will never be part of it. As being myself a participant in this research, it was difficult to remain neutral and avoid bias.

6. Conclusion

Retirement opens a period of transition during which people are confronted with themselves and their beliefs. Upon retirement, retirees begin a period of renegotiation of the social pact, based on experience, acceptance of death, and awareness of the limited time left to live. More authentic and free from professional and family constraints, expatriated retirees seek not only well-being but also a meaningful life and some of them choose to live abroad. The review of the literature shows that the reasons explaining retirees' expatriation are multiple and may include loyalty to ancestral history or a search for a country whose values correspond to their own. However, retired SIEs share the same personality traits and embody the archetypes of the Old Sage and the Explorer.

This decision of leaving is not without risk. The host country's values may differ from those imagined by the expatriate or unexpected challenges may arise. The journey is also challenging because retirees are confronted with a new culture whose language and symbols they sometimes may not understand. However, the improved well-being of these retirees shows that they have found their way and their place in society through the creation of liminal communities.

Expatriation changed not only the identity of retirees but also the culture of the countries where they lived. They promote multiculturalism above the borders. But also retired SIEs demonstrate the power of life force and illustrate the fact that self-actualization is a long-life process.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 Ethical Approval Request 40
Appendix 2 Announcement for Recruiting Participants..... **Erreur ! Signet non défini.**
Appendix 3 Consent form..... **Erreur ! Signet non défini.**
Appendix 4 Participant Information Sheet..... **Erreur ! Signet non défini.**
Appendix 5 Debriefing Sheet..... **Erreur ! Signet non défini.**
Appendix 6 Interviews Transcriptions..... **Erreur ! Signet non défini.**
Appendix 6.1 Transcript of IN Interview ..... **Erreur ! Signet non défini.**
Appendix 6.2 Transcript of KA Interview ..... **Erreur ! Signet non défini.**
Appendix 6.3 Transcript of AM Interview ..... **Erreur ! Signet non défini.**
Appendix 6.4 Transcript of JL Interview ..... **Erreur ! Signet non défini.**
Appendix 7 Sample of Data Analysis ..... **Erreur ! Signet non défini.**

The appendixes are not included in this paper