BETWEEN (RE)BORDERING AND NETWORKED BORDER: CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY PRACTICES OF EASTERN EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS IN SPAIN[1]

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the cross-border mobility practices of Eastern European immigrants across and within European Union (EU) borders, taking into account the changes in the patterns of the EU border regime which have affected mobility in the last 20 years. Drawing on empirical research with references to in-depth qualitative interviews of Eastern immigrants in Spain, this paper highlights the ways in which the emerging models of cross-border mobility management are producing new geographies of the EU's border. On the one hand, *(re)bordering* makes human mobility difficult, while on the other, *networked border* facilitates mobility.

Keywords: mobility, border, European Union, Eastern Europeans, Spain.

RESUMEN

El artículo examina las prácticas de movilidad transfronteriza de los inmigrantes de la Europa del Este en las fronteras de la Unión Europea (UE), teniendo en cuenta los cambios en el régimen fronterizo de la UE que afectó la movilidad humana en los últimos 20 años. Basándose en la investigación empírica, con la realización de entrevistas en profundidad a

inmigrantes de la Europa del Este en España, el artículo evidencia las vías en las que los modelos de movilidad transfronteriza producen nuevas geografías en las fronteras de la UE. Por un lado, se trata de la *(re)fronterización* que dificulta el movimiento humano, y por el otro, de la *frontera red*, que facilita la movilidad.

Palabras clave: movilidad, frontera, Unión Europea, Europeos del Este, España.

I. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Cross-border mobility as expressed in temporary and permanent movement is an important element of post-communist restructuring in Eastern Europe. The two last enlargements of the EU (2004, 2007), which incorporated twelve countries of Eastern Europe into Community structures, changed the map of mobility from the former region towards the EU, while offering a view of a Europe without borders (Meinhof, 2002). These events favoured an increase in human mobility, which with the convergence of communications and transportation, led to a new kind of movement which Sheller and Urry (2006) call the «new paradigm of mobility». In consequence, the past decade has witnessed substantial academic interest in cross-border mobility in the EU context, initiated by closely related debates on globalisation and security.

Authors have expressed concern about the ways of and limits to controlling mobility in the European social space by the EU and its Member States, as well as the dynamics of territorial inclusion and exclusion raised by policy practice (Scott, 2006; Bigo, 2005; Guild, 2005; Den Boer, 2002; Verstraete, 2001).This literature points to a fundamental 'contradiction between greater openness of internal borders and the reinforcement of controls at the external borders' (Foucher 1998: 42).

Closely related to these issues, the aim of this paper is to contribute to the empirical study of the connections between border and mobility from the experience of being on the move, and it does so by examining cross-border mobility in terms of 'stage' of eastern Europeans engaged in labour mobility in Spain. The paper tries to capture the perceptions of mobile persons, in order to understand the manner in which they live and interpret cross-border practices. Thus, the ability to manage borders can create or modify a particular image of migration.

The article aspires toward the inclusion of an analysis of human production and reproduction of borders as a way of understanding the persistence of borders and their meaning and implications for the European integration process. It aims to highlight the importance of border in the field of mobility studies and to demonstrate how borders can offer new potential for connectivity and mobility.

Although border has been recognized as an essential component of mobility, research in this area is largely lacking insight into migrants' own perceptions of migration and cross-border mobility: perceptions which this paper wishes to explore.

First, the article looks at the relationship between cross-border mobility and the enlargement of the EU towards the East and highlights how migration becomes mobility following the policy of open borders in the enlarged EU.

The study thus examines three periods of Eastern European migration in Europe and Spain: the first period (1992-2002), when the border was closed to all of the immigrant groups studied; the second period (2002-2007), when borders were made open to Romanians and Bulgarians by the Schengen Agreement (for a period of no more than 3 months), but not for Moldovans and Ukrainians; and the third period, which has continued since 2007 upon the opening of the EU towards Romania and Bulgaria, which allowed their citizens free circulation without time limits, even while there are restrictions for the labour markets in Spain and other European countries (Germany, UK). In the case of Moldovans and Ukrainians, an EU norm was imposed, which requires entry visas for their citizens who wish to enter EU territory.

Therefore, the paper underscores the role borders play in human mobility by taking into account the EU policy of free circulation of people: border as network (opening up of borders under the Schengen Agreement and enlargement), and border as barrier (the bordering and re-bordering process).

I attempt to continue Rumford's (2006) thesis by examining the mechanisms through which the EU constructs and reconstructs its borders with its close neighbours and how these processes are dynamic, contingent and sometimes contradictory. Thus, the paper tries to capture how the EU operates with two sets of border regimes, which have far-reaching consequences for the re-territorialisation of borders on the continent. While inside the EU state borders have been bridged in the sense that they no longer represent physical obstacles to movement, the EU's external borders have become major barriers in terms of the movement of people (Scott and Houtum, 2009).

Secondly, I analyze the importance that overcoming borders has for mobile citizens, while highlighting the nature of mobility between Eastern Europe and the EU. Focusing on the cross-border migration and mobility of various groups of immigrants, the paper aims to shed light on the ways in which migrants and citizens construct their experience of mobility beyond the border. Using as a reference the experience of people who have circulated between their home countries and Spain over the last 20 years, ever since the onset of emigration from Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine, the article analyzes whether borders figure as a resource or as an obstacle for current human mobility and advocates the right to mobility that people from non-EU countries have. Thus, the article concentrates on the opening of the internal borders within the EU and less so on its external borders.

My argument is that migrants have assumed their mobility through the challenge posed by the EU's policy changes in (re)bordering. The main idea is that migrants have to live with and learn to handle EU borders. Thus, the concept of mobility in the wider Europe highlights that in an ever increasingly mobile world, mobility may be a fundamental right that complements others. I argue for a rethinking of borders as mechanisms, not of division, but of connectivity. As Cooper and Rumford (2013:108) rightly point out, we need to view borders not simply as markers of division but also as mechanism of connection and encounter.

I refer to the mobility from Eastern Europe to Spain, given that Spain has become the most attractive EU country for migratory flows over the last decade. As Arango (2013:2)

argues, Spain is the second-largest recipient of immigrants in absolute terms among the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, following the United States.

Given the restrictions throughout Europe, by the second half of the 1990s it was hard for eastern Europeans to emigrate with a regular work visa. As such, the main option was to move irregularly, in a clandestine way. They had to choose a destination with a sizable underground economy and sectors with an increasing demand for labour. Therefore, Spain became a place of preference for the eastern European networks that have arisen in recent years, coinciding with the opening of the Schengen border (2002) and EU enlargement to Romania and Bulgaria (2007). Despite the consequences of the economic crisis which have been widely attributed to the adverse developments in the construction sector, the mobility of Romanians and Bulgarians to Spain has continued to increase.

I have considered it appropriate to include Moldovans and Ukrainians in the sample, because their presence allows us to better interpret the ambivalence of borders: bordering *versus* networked border. The number of Moldovans and Ukrainians has increased in Spain because of the setting up of networks. Moreover, thousands of Moldovans and Ukrainians who live and circulate between their countries of origin and Spain make use of EU citizenship for reasons of identity, something which allows them to circulate within the EU territory.

The article is organised as follows. First, I summarize the main theoretical concepts regarding cross-border mobility. After the explanation of the methodology used, I present a review of the border regime and the mobility of Eastern Europeans in Spain and the EU, focusing on the legislation regarding the free circulation of people from Eastern Europe. Subsequently, I analyze the perceptions of mobile citizens, considering three periods that mark the circulation of Eastern Europeans and that accompany several changes in border regime: the complete closure of borders, the partial opening of them, and finally, the enlargement of Europe that was accompanied by the flexibility of borders and the overcoming of them by Eastern Europeans who had become accustomed to mobility. The aim is to understand how EU enlargement has influenced the mobility of citizens. The findings uphold the idea that the flexibility of the European border and the inclusion of free movement for European citizens have resulted in mobile labour schemes.

II. CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY APPROACH

Studies of mobilities and of borders have both been argued to be central to the social sciences (Rumford, 2007). Both empirically and conceptually, research on borders and bordering raises questions that are intricately entwined with movement and mobilities. Similarly, as Richardson (2013) points out, it is difficult to conceive of mobilities without confronting the ways in which mobilities are constrained and regulated by borders and bordering practices.

II.1. Between (re)bordering and the networked border

Recently, border studies have moved from the realm of the gradual construction of Europe as a polity to an increasing focus on social processes related to the (re-/de-)making

of boundaries within and across national borders (Jansen, 2013:37). Authors found two perspectives that have come to dominate the discussion on EU borders: first, securitized borders associated with the process of bordering and *'(re) bordering'* (Andreas, 2003; Van Houtum, 2010) and secondly, borderless Europe –*networked border*– in which the barrier impact of borders became insignificant (Newman, 2006).

Re(bordering) refers to challenging, expanding or altering the idea of Europe in order at once to accommodate Eastern Europeans, and potentially other neighbours, as new citizens of the EU, and to define its new spatial, cultural and conceptual boundaries (Paasi, 2009; Wallace, 2002). As action, (re)bordering includes the bureaucratic legal and police practices aimed at establishing a tight perimeter around the EU, while opening up the internal EU borders. Thus, (re)bordering, as I conceive it, is at once about inclusion and exclusion and its limits. Hand in hand with the opening of internal borders and the closing of external ones goes the more surreptitious process of introducing various forms of border controls within EU territory – Balibar's «ubiquity of border» (2002). The combination of these developments establishes the terms of mobility, belonging and legal status for both resident populations and immigrants within a unified Europe.

Another way to theorize borders in spatial terms is the idea of mobility and networked borders that asserts a particular network/border relationship. Networks do not by definition simply cross-borders with ease, in the same way that borders, by definition, cannot simply be theorized as being employed to stop them. Rather, borders and networks share a mutually constitutive dynamic (Axford, 2006:6), in the sense that localities are connected to «larger» geographical spaces and scales in such a way that we have, as Dicken *et al*., (2001: 97) sum up, «a mutually constitutive process: while networks are embedded within territory, territories are at the same time, embedded into network».

Moving beyond the distinct network/border dialectic has important implications for the (re)bordering process. Acknowledging the intrinsic and reciprocal relationship between mobility, territory and borders can help to understand borders as being networked themselves and allow borders to take on strange new properties. One of the ways in which borders and networks «hold hands» is the idea that borders are increasingly designed to embrace mobility not only in ways that render borders mobile in themselves, but also to the extent that some borders actually require mobility to be recognized as borders.

The unresolved tension between ideas of networked Europe and (re)bordering has opened up the possibility of a more nuanced account of Europe's borders, in particular, an awareness that the EU's borders are becoming differentiated and can vary in scope and tightness (Hassner, 2002). For instance, the EU's security borders are far more rigid than the equivalent economic, telecommunication and education borders, which are designed to facilitate rather than reduce mobility.

The (re)bordering thesis advanced by Andreas (2003) emphasises the need to reinforce and securitize borders and relies on a somewhat undifferentiated notion of borders, which are intelligible only in terms of policing and security and a defence against external threats (the mobility of undocumented immigrants, terrorists, and traffickers in people and drugs). As Salter (2006) argues, state borders have always been «spaces of exception» with regard to the law. People who have done nothing wrong automatically become suspects when they cross state borders. At the borders, people find themselves in the position of perpetual suspicion as they have to

prove their innocence every time they cross. Thus, the proof of innocence is extracted from people's bodies, which have become the new passports, IDs, and passwords (Epstein, 2007).

The (re)bordering thesis cannot easily accommodate the differentially permeable borders of networked Europe. Similarly, the idea of a Europe defined by flows and networks downplays the importance of territorial bordering and the ways in which political priorities can result in some borders being more important than others: what was previously the EU border with eastern Europe (along the line of the Iron Curtain) has become relatively unimportant when compared to the enlarged border with Ukraine and Moldova.

II.2. Cross-border mobility as connectivity

Nevertheless, the twenty-first century is regarded as an era of mobility, fluidity, openness and connectivity. As Cooper and Rumford (2013) stress, in this mobility era, borders are not generally considered to be by nature wholly divisionary. They simultaneously delineate and connect an inside from its outside (van Houtum *et al*., 2005). They form liminal spaces where connection and separateness overlap within the same milieu. As Paasi (2009) rightly points out, borders create «channels» or «conduits» of passage and in doing so provide a means through which facilitated connection, for some and not for others, takes places. Related to this, Balibar (2002) and Bosniak (2006) state that the analysis of cross-border mobility reveals a great deal about the politics of mobility and its material dynamics, particularly through legislative regulations, the geopolitics of homeland 'security' and the embodied politics of identity and difference. In this context, security strategies have to be imagined on a global scale, as the trajectories of everyday mobility cannot easily be contained inside state borders (Cresswell, 2010; Hannam *et al*., 2006). King, Skeldon and Vulnetari (2008:2) argue that 'the distinction between internal and international moves becomes increasingly blurred, not only because of geopolitical events and the changing nature and configuration of borders, but also because migrants' journeys are becoming increasingly multiple, complex and fragmented'. This is relevant in the case of cross-border mobility at the Romanian-Moldovan-Ukrainian border.

However, as a result of the new choreography of the border opening and ground-breaking trans-world, transnationalism has emerged as a cross-border field where migrants on the move for opportunities of work, try to be continuously between here and there (Glick Schiller *et al*., 1992; Vertovec, 1999; Portes *et al*., 1999) and play an active role in shaping «transnational space» (Hannerz, 1996).

Therefore, mobility and fluidity (Faist, 1999; Hannam *et al*., 2006) permit the connectivity across EU borders (Rumford, 2007), interdependency or dependency on economic pressures, geographical proximity and the impossible task of the EU insulating itself from its neighbours. It is driven by a rationale to remove barriers to cross-border movement, originating in the ideas of European integration, and elimination of new divides in Eastern Europe. Here, borders acquire substantially different meanings. They become areas of exchange, interaction and integration. Prominent in theorisations of transnational processes that appear to transcend geographical boundaries in different ways, this conception of borders places primary emphasis upon dialogue, social learning, partnerships, networks and exchanges. In this context, the EU wants to give the impression that borders are geographically wider, politically inclusive and economically active.

II.3. Cross-border mobility as feelings: a people approach

Van Houtum (1999:330) points out that not only the objective reality of the borders is important, but also the subjective reality, the feelings, actions and thoughts of the actors confronted with the borders. Thus, due to their porosity, approaching a border of any sort raises many disturbing questions. Who is on the other side of the dividing line? What will trespass cost me, money or perhaps my life? All of these fears and apprehensions highlight how borders signify a limit. This is a people approach (Van Houtum, 2000) and concentrates on the interaction or the lack of interaction between people on both sides of border. Research in this approach is focused on socio-psychological or behavioural factors. It deals with cross-border behaviour, with symbols and perceptions of people that practice cross-border mobility.

Thus, the cross-border mobility of eastern Europeans can also be seen as a mental construct, a mental learning process that starts in the home country. The more one probes the essence of borders, the more it becomes apparent that there is nothing at all certain about them; they are those places that are known only by what we feel in their proximity. Yet, it is the emotional impact of them –the very thing that borders signify– that continued to be overlooked.

The border is thereby divided not just in a spatial sense but also in a mental sense, and the force of the *us-them* effect feeds the mental distance in cross-border mobility. This approach is often used in border research in the EU, where many of the physical barriers have been removed and where the borders are moving forward in the direction of an integrated border.

Studies that could be categorized by the people approach typically stay away from the fixation of borders as political lines in space (Paasi, 1999). Borders are interpreted as necessary constituents of social and individual life and are, therefore, studied in terms of their relevance rather than barrier effect (Rumley and Minghi, 1991). The focus of the people approach is on the emotional reactions, actions, and origins of individuals confronted with the cross-border migration and mobility.

If we want to better understand the configuration and characteristics of cross-border mobility we must include in the analysis the perceptions of people who practice it. Thus, as note Hyndman (2012), we have to interrupt dominant thinking and practice by displacing attention on borders to the crossers of borders themselves. This is what we are going to do here.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research supporting this article was aimed at gaining a qualitative insight into the phenomenon of cross-border mobility in a wider Europe from the perspective of the movers themselves. I conducted 100 qualitative interviews with Romanian, Bulgarian, Moldovan and Ukrainian migrants working in Spain and who arrived in-country in three waves: before the opening of the Schengen border, after the opening, and following the entry of Romania and Bulgaria into the EU. These three variables formed the primary recruitment criteria, although it was also envisaged that there would be differentiation amongst respondents based on variables such as country of origin, age, family situation and reason

for moving. This article is based on the combined responses from individuals from the three main groups and provides an overview of the key issues identified in the study.

The interviews were carried out in the Community of Madrid and the Community of Valencia: 78 in-depth interviews of working-age men and women in the following order: 32 Romanians, 20 Bulgarians, 14 Moldovans, and 12 Ukrainians. In this work, all informants appear under pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity. Some of the informants came to participate in the project through immigrant associations, while others came through personal contacts and the subsequent snowball effect.

In order to add a cross-border element to the empirical work and to gain a greater understanding of the complexities related to border experience, further qualitative interviews were carried out in Romania, Moldova and Ukraine with returning mobile citizens who had moved to Spain but returned to their country; 10 in-depth interviews were conducted along the border situated between Romania and Moldova at Giugiulesti and Albita, and 10 more in Cernauti –on the border between Romania and Ukraine. In addition, we interviewed two bus drivers who travel regularly on routes between Ukraine and Spain and Romania and Spain.

Regarding analysis, grounded theory methodology (Rich, 2012; Haji Omar *et al.,* 2010; Wasserman *et al.,* 2009; Glaser and Strauss, 1967) was used. The analysis of the information from the standpoint of codes, concepts, and categories identified key relations between the data obtained and conclusions reached (Charmaz, 2000).

According to the principles of theoretical sampling theory, data analysis began with the first interview and continued throughout the interviewing process. This research, in striving to apply a genuinely interdisciplinary methodology, drew upon approaches and concepts that span different disciplines in order to develop a more holistic understanding of the status of cross-border mobility of Eastern European citizens.

As Scuzzarello and Kinnvall (2013) rightly pointed out, boundaries, as narratives, have an ontological dimension. People use causal narratives to make sense of their position in the world and through this, they construct their experiences. Thus, in this article, I focus my empirical analysis on narratives produced by migrants.

IV. BORDER REGIME AND MIGRATION OF EASTERN EUROPEANS IN SPAIN

The first period of migration from Eastern Europe (to EU countries) is framed by the years 1990 and 2002, a period characterised by bordering and thus requiring entry visas for the four migrant communities to reach Spain. Between 1990 and 1995, there was temporary labour migration, with a lower rate of annual migration at around 3%. This was an era of exploration and the search for job opportunities that Eastern Europeans conducted for the first time, taking into account the harshness of enforcement regimes that until 1989 had prohibited any kind of exit, including any sort of relationship with the outside world. In order for migrants to emigrate successfully, they had to choose a destination with an important underground economy and sectors with an increasing demand for labour.

Between 1996 and 2001, the rate of emigration was around 7%, and some parallel trends emerged: besides long-term emigration, the phenomenon of circuit migration arose for the purposes of irregular employment (Sandu, 2006), along with human trafficking networks.

The flow of emigrants from the east to the EU and therefore Spain was reduced. At the end of 2001, there were 52,971 Romanians, 23,707 Bulgarians, 2,776 Moldovans and 20,267 Ukrainians in Spain[2]. (Figure1). Since 2000, Spain has signed agreements with Romania[3] (2001), Bulgaria (2003)[4] and Ukraine (2009)[5].

Figure 1
EASTERN EUROPEANS IN SPAIN
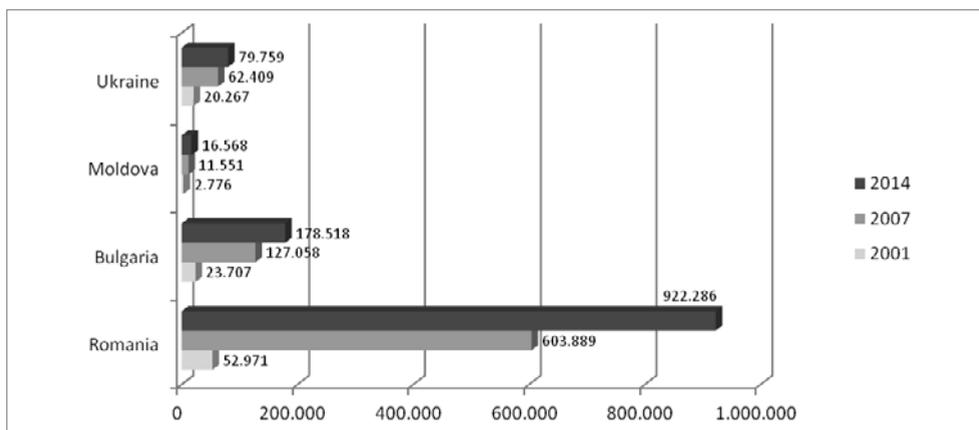
Source: Spanish Ministry of Labour and Immigration, 2014. Author's elaboration.

The second period of migration/mobility, between 2002 and 2007, was marked by the opening of the EU borders to Romania and Bulgaria. The elimination of the Schengen visa requirement promoted a rapid growth in circular migration, even to the extent that Romanians and Bulgarians who had previously been 'stranded' in Schengen countries were able to return to their countries to enter the circular migratory system. Circular migration led to an increase in the immigration routes from Eastern Europe to Spain (Figure 2). With the possibility of a legal three-month tourist stay, a sophisticated circular migration system developed, focused primarily on Italy and Spain. While its previsions liberalise cross-border flows of people and goods inside the EU, they also reinforce the barrier function of the EU's external borders (Meinhof, 2002).

Spain, as a host country, employed Eastern European workers in the irregular labour market. According to sources at the Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Security, the number of Eastern Europeans increased in Spain, reaching the following levels at the beginning of 2007: 603,889 Romanians, 127,581 Bulgarians, 11,551 Moldovans, and 62,409 Ukrainians. Furthermore, during that period, Spain was experiencing substantial employment growth. Most of the growth took place in the construction sector and related services
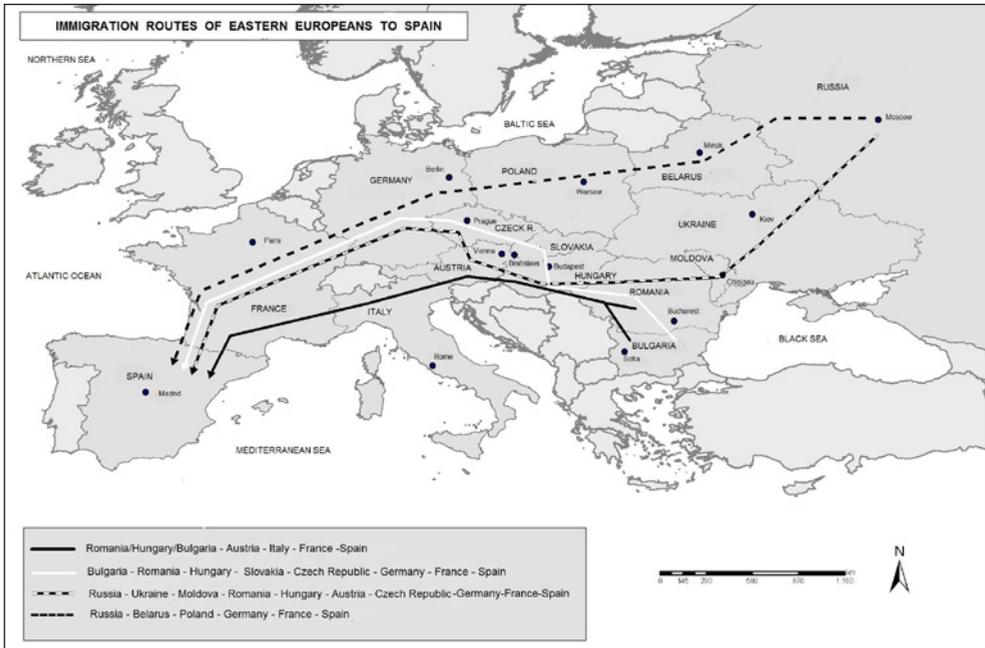
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2 http://www.empleo.gob.es/es/estadisticas/index.htm
3 http://noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Laboral/a191102-rum.html
4 http://ipv4.noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Laboral/a051103-aex.html
5 http://www.otrosi.net/article/acuerdo-espa%C3%B1a-ucrania-relativo-la-regulaci%C3%B3n-de-flujos-migratorios

Figure 2
IMMIGRATION ROUTES OF EASTERN EUROPEANS TO SPAIN

Source: Author's elaboration.

and manufacturing, as well as in the tourism sector. The unemployment rate decreased considerably and the demographics of the labour market were altered by the strong upturn in migration. The incorporation of women into the labour market was significant at this time; this also increased the demand for household services, which migrants provided at lower wages. In addition to these initial effects, the network effects are also essential to explaining the larger migrant flows observed in subsequent years.

The third period of mobility (2007) began with the enlargement of the EU to include Romania and Bulgaria. However, when in December 2007 the Schengen area was enlarged by nine new member states, it was accompanied by further (re)bordering of the external borders of the EU. Hence, while new member states can finally enjoy the benefits of being part of the Schengen Agreement, their neighbours in the immediate vicinity once again feel the negative consequences of being only a neighbour. After their accession, Romania and Bulgaria encountered temporary restrictions in the EU labour market. The overall transition period of seven years is divided into three distinct phases ('2-plus-3-plus-2'). Different conditions apply in each phase. The national law of the other member states regulates the access of workers from Bulgaria and Romania to their labour markets in the first two years. Member states can extend their national measures for a second phase of another 3 years upon notification to the Commission before the end of the first phase; otherwise, EU law granting free movement of workers applies (European Commision, 2011).

Between 2007 and 2009, Spain imposed a moratorium that prevented Romanians and Bulgarians from freely entering the labour market. Despite the fact that after 2009 Spain lifted the moratorium and allowed free circulation of Romanian and Bulgarian workers, in 2011, due to the severe economic crisis in Spain and the incessant flow of Romanians (861,584 registered, 30% of whom are unemployed and 15.7% inactive), the European Commission[6] approved a temporary measure (Order PRE2072/2011) that restricted the right to employment for Romanians who emigrated to Spain as of that date.[7] Thus, Romanian workers currently have free access to the labour market of 14 of the EU-25 member states, while Bulgarian workers have free access to the labour markets of 15 of the EU-25 member states.

Despite measures to restrict labour and Spain's current acute economic crisis, the number of Romanians continued to grow, reaching a total number of 922,286 people registered at 2014. Similarly, there was an increase in the number of Bulgarians to 178,518. The main receiving country of Bulgarian nationals in the EU-15 is Spain, which attracts about 40% of those wishing to live and work abroad.

With regard to Moldovans and Ukrainians, they also increased in number. In 2014, Spain had 16,568 Moldovans, 1,391 of whom are citizens of the Community, as well as 79,759 Ukrainians, 5,957 of whom are members of the Community. In addition, there was the phenomenon of Moldovans and Ukrainians having European citizenship. In order to make the border flexible, EU countries such as Romania and Poland granted Romanian or Polish nationality (therefore, Community status) to Moldovans and Ukrainians who could prove ethnic and family ties (Marcu, 2009). In December 2007, Poland established a Polish Charter[8] which can grant some rights of Polish citizenship to people of Polish descent who do not have Polish citizenship and who reside in Eastern Europe (Ukrainians, Moldovans and Belarusians). Eighty-five per cent of all applicants were residents of either Ukraine or Belarus.

In Romania, the 1991 Law on Romanian Citizenship[9] provides the possibility of possessing dual citizenship by allowing the restoration of Romanian citizenship to former nationals. The main beneficiaries of the law are the inhabitants of the former Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova and the provinces of Northern Bukovina and Southern Bessarabia, in Ukraine. Thus, in 2013, 140,688 Moldovans and 12,664 Ukrainians had Romanian citizenship.

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6   European Commission (2011). Decision to Authorise Spain to Temporarily Suspend the Right of Free Circulation for Romanian workers (Regulation 492/2011) Brussels. 11.8.2011 C (2011) 5896 final.

7   While this does not affect self-employed workers nor those receiving unemployment compensation, Spain's decision to demand work permits of Romanians only affects those who are registered with Social Security. The effects of the re-activation of the transit period will be re-evaluated at the end of 2012, when Spanish government agencies decide whether or not to continue with it. The European Commission authorised these temporary limitations in view of Spain's economic climate, which has had serious consequences in the labour market: 1) the highest rate of unemployment in the EU (21% as compared to the 9.4% average for the EU and 9.9% for the Eurozone, b) slow economic recovery, with only 0.3% growth in GNP during the first 3 months of 2011 as compared to the previous 3 months, and to 0.8% in the EU and the Eurozone (Spanish Ministry of Labor and Immigration, 2011).

8   Polish Charter was established by an act of the Polish Parliament dated 7 September 2007 and called the Act on the Pole's Card (*Ustawa o Karcie Polaka*, Dz.U. 2007 no. 180/1280), which specifies the rights of the holder of the Card, the rules for granting, loss of validity and rescission of the Card, and the competencies of the public administration's bodies and procedures in these cases. The law came into force on 29 March 2008.

9   Romanian citizenship Law 21/1991 http://legislatie.resurse-pentrudemocratie.org/21_1991.php,; http://www.romanianpassport.co.il/english/romanian-citizenship-law/ accessed 22 September 2013.

V. CROSSING THE CLOSED BORDER: BORDERING AND CONTROL OF CIRCULATION

During the first period, eastern European migration to Spain was highly dependent upon passports, visas, residence permits and labour qualifications, (Urry, 2007:10). The first step was an application for a visa, a document attached to passports or travel documents which permits the holder to arrive at the border of the issuing state and, subject to further checks, to pass that border for a period of time. A standard visa is for short-term purposes and lasts for 90 days. It allows entry for non-business and non-employment purposes. As Guild (2009) rightly pointed out, anything beyond those basic entitlements requires a special permit, such as a residency or work permit. There are several broad stages that respondents went through when planning their move: the decision to move, the trajectories, waiting for approval and confirmation that the move would take place. As highlighted by Carling (2002) and Van der Velde and Van Naerssen (2011), the ways in which these stages manifested varied according to the context of people's moves: moving with a relative or employer; moving independently; moving with family (not moving alone) or for a longer period of time.

Regarding the laws that are applied equally to the citizens of the four countries represented in the first stage of mobility, it is clear that during this period there were few differences between the trajectories of Eastern Europeans. Emigrants resorted to the strategy of irregular immigration by means of falsifying passports, or trips as tourists (Marcu, 2011, 2010).

Interviewees' discourse is structured around memory, which concerns mainly the reasons for their departure:

> *In Romania, I was nobody; so I said 'no' to Romania.* (Female, age, 50, Romania)

Voices are torn and become diluted in their memory. Maruska remembered:

> *I had a three-year-old daughter and a 17-year-old son who wanted to study, and I was very embarrassed that I could not help my children nor buy food. It was very difficult, because it was as if life had stopped: there was no work or money, so I decided to leave.* (Female, age 52, Ukraine)

The main causes of the decision to move from Eastern Europe to Spain are of an economic nature, including a desire for higher income potential and better working conditions. The interviewees told me they had travelled or obtained visas for other countries within the Schengen territory, but it was impossible to settle in them *«because they did not know the language»*. However, Spain was more attractive because *«I learned a little Spanish by watching romantic television dramas»*, or *«because the people there are friendlier than in Germany»*.

None of the interviewees from this first stage obtained an entry visa through the Spanish consulates; therefore, all of them obtained visas on the black market. They note that *«it cost up to US$1,300 per person»*, or *«someone [they] knew in Bucharest arranged things for [them]; «it took some time to obtain the visa since [they] started in March and [they] got it on 30 November.»*

The expressions of interviewees reflect the remembrance of the anguish they experienced while going through the procedure of obtaining a visa, as well as the moment of crossing the border. Practically all of them travelled through other European countries in order to reach Spain. As Ion explained:

> *There was a travel agency there that organised trips to France. I had a visa for France but not for Spain. I left Romania, went to the Czech Republic and then France. From there I took a taxi and got to Spain with two Romanian friends. Since I only had a visa for France, once I left that country, I was illegal.* (Male, age 52, Romania)

Ukrainians have experienced travelling to various European countries such as Austria and Germany, noting that *«in Ukraine if you have money you can get the type of passport you want and you can go where you like»*, or *«You can only go to Russia with your real pass-port»*. They also note that *«there are travel agencies you pay your money to and they take care of everything. For me, my arrival cost about USD$500.»*

In turn, Moldovans emphasise the misfortunes they suffered and the money lost in their attempts to acquire visas. As Dorina noted:

> *They sent me an invitation, but it turned out to be fraudulent. They did not admit me, and I had to find a go-between: someone who would help me. But it cost me a lot of money, and it turned out that a poorly-made passport was sold to me. Then, I got a travel agency to arrange for my exit, but it cost a lot of money. Altogether, I think I spent more than €2,000 to leave.* (Female, age 45, Moldova)

Nonetheless, all of them note the relative flexibility shown by Spanish border guards upon entry via road or rail: *«But upon entering Spain, it was different.» «Fear came upon me later, because I didn't have papers; upon arriving they allowed me to enter.»*

Still, since 1990, the former Iron Curtain has been gradually replaced by paper-wall (re) bordering, consisting of visas, invitations or declarations (Pijpers and Van der Velde, 2007). Yet, the eagerness to learn reflexively from experiences of the first stage of mobility, using up-to-date expertise, greatly helps in finding ways to circumvent paper walls.

VI. BETWEEN NETWORKED BORDER AND (RE)BORDERING

In this period, we witness the opening of the EU borders, which facilitated the mobility of people. Romanians and Bulgarians received a green light to circulate for a period of three months within the Schengen territory, and both Moldova and Ukraine were now on the road towards entering the EU. In fact, there is tension between accounts of the openness of borders, and accounts which draw attention to processes of securitized bordering (Rumford, 2006: 156). Thus, we refer here to two categories:

1) The first category comprises Romanians and Bulgarians who had the support of European laws regarding the opening of the Schengen region. Respondents brave the borders

despite knowing that they cannot travel if they cannot show that they have enough money to meet their daily expenses during their stay in Spain. As Vasile recognized:

> *We came as tourists, in a bus with 47 people, from Mures; we had to show that each of us had €700 in order to prove that we could travel in Spain* (Male, age 40, Romania).

In contrast to the first stage, when people did not know exactly where their journey would end, during this stage they travelled to a destination where they knew that a relative, friend or acquaintance was waiting. During this period, the first networks created in the 1990s were expanded, while there was a parallel process of family reunification on a grand scale.

For Romanians and Bulgarians, circumstances changed: migrants were gradually transformed into citizens who circulate. Upon arrival in Spain, they tended to settle themselves more easily into the receiving culture. Because of the ties that they maintain with their home countries and the ease of travel, they were able to create a kind of fluidity of movement and thus approach the difficulty of crossing the border. It is here that transnationalism and the creation of a transnational social space (Faist, 2000a, 2000b) allow citizens to move and learn to live with the border. Both turbulence and insecurity remain, since Romanians and Bulgarians may only stay for three months in Spain and at the border there are continual demands for money, whether to prove that they can afford the cost of maintaining themselves in Spain, or from corrupt bus drivers and border guards.

Spanish law supported the mobility process with the extraordinary measure taken in 2005, when more than 600,000 people's status was legalised; a great number of these were from Eastern Europe. In fact, some 30% of those interviewed obtained their papers in Spain because of this extraordinary legalisation process. Turbulence along the border varies according to the country of origin, type of transport and customs, which are linked to all sorts of traps and deceptions of bus drivers. Ivan told us:

> *I came on the bus one week; it was hard because the driver had trouble in some tunnels. We got on the bus...they asked us for money to repair the bus; it was a journey for madmen. When I arrived, my legs were numb and swollen...* (Male, age 37, Bulgaria)

2) The second category comprises the Moldovan and Ukrainian interviewees; although they are still confronted with securitized borders, their experiences changed. The partial opening of the border to those who can apply for and obtain European citizenship grants them the status of being partially mobile and, therefore, they learn to leave, to take risks, and to learn from the lesson of the cross-border journey. If at first they hid their faces upon presenting their passports, they later took advantage of their experience and, with emboldened courage, discovered themselves and defied borders. Natalia confessed that:

> *I left Donetk with a group. For three days I was in Austria and then I arrived in Venice where I broke off from the group, took a train and went to Milan until finally reaching Madrid. I had a six-day visa and while I was on the train, the police*

came on board at night at the borders. They put a torch in my face, so I got angry with them and they left me alone and asked no further questions. In any event, this was the second time I had crossed the border and I had already learned how to do it. (Female, age 44, Ukraine)

Here, the emphasis is not placed on the physical line, but on the mind-set and mental binding of the human actors that practice mobility. Following Gielis (2009), for these migrants the border between the former and the current country of residence is not situated around their lives, but has moved to the centre of their lifeworld.

Those who have managed to obtain European citizenship highlight the difficulties, but in that stage, they learn new strategies and how to travel alone, and blend in with the receiving society in order to be unnoticed, if necessary. Victoria explained:

I went by bus to Budapest, and there I took a train to Milan and stayed a night in a hotel; there I took another train and changed trains five times. My friends told me: it is better for you not to join anyone because then they will know by sight that you are from Eastern Europe and they will stop you, they will interrogate you and examine the documents with more care. So I travelled alone and I came to Madrid where they were waiting for me. (Female, age 35, Moldova)

During this period, Ukrainians came to Spain by bus, because the market in the cities for the sale of false passports increased. By failing to adopt biometric passports, in order to legally acquire a Schengen visa, the number of documents required in Ukraine is high (between 9 and 21); according to those interviewed, it is *«very difficult to obtain a visa»*. Because of these difficulties, a road transportation sector arose within a 'grey zone', which is clandestine work or employment under dubious conditions. During this phase of mobility, there were people who purchased visas on the black market to travel to Spain by automobile or train. They talked about the bribes they needed to pay to customs agents when their hard-earned cash was found on them during return trips home. Respondents explained how one can circumvent the border regulations and overstay the visa without running into trouble by altering the passport stamp, having the passport illegally stamped or purchasing forged documents. Yuriy admitted that:

I crossed the border with a fraudulent passport purchased in Kiev. My wife and I, we took a bus. We were afraid, because there is a risk and, besides, you pay a lot of money. (Male, age 46, Ukraine)

Interviewees noted that the waiting time before crossing the border is very long, *«We were at the border with Poland for 15 hours.»* One interviewee, a bus driver who runs the Spain-Ukraine route, commented to us that the process for obtaining a Schengen visa for Ukrainian professional drivers to be able to enter Spain is quite complicated. They are required to show many documents and are interviewed several times. Altogether, the wait is more than 70 days. On certain occasions, the consulate may *«delay cooperation»* with the businesses without explanation. The visas are granted for one or more entries. In general,

first-time visa applications are granted only one entry. After making several applications, the validity of the multiple-entry visa is extended to several months or as much as a year, while its price ranges from €40 to €90. According to the International Labour Organisation (2007) report, in 2004, a group of Eastern European countries (Moldova and Ukraine among them) presented their technical notes to the Working Group on highway transport of the Committee on Domestic Transport of the Economic Commission of the United Nationals for Europe (CEPE). The notes dealt with the problems the members of their transport industry faced in obtaining visas for professional drivers.

VII. TOWARDS MOBILITY THROUGH CONNECTIVITY BORDER?

In this third-stage, for the Bulgarians and Romanians who were interviewed, for the most part, the border is unnoticed. Crossing it has become a journey, a change in venue *«like when you go on vacation, even though you are going away to make a life.»* The respondents mentioned the economic resources required to lift the border. Diana confessed:

> *Can you imagine how much money we Romanians now put in savings? Well, when my father left, it cost him more than €1,000 to leave Romania, but for me it costs nothing: only the airline ticket.* (Female, age 32, Romania)

Some mention the change encountered at the borders on their multiple trips taken since the fall of the totalitarian systems. Yavor remembered:

> *In past years, they were closed, and if you had your papers in order and came to Spain, you would have to go to the non-EU queue where they looked at your document with a microscope and appeared to overdo the enforcing; even so, personally, the agents always treated me well in this country. But now, everything is free: you pass through with your identity document.* (Male, age 47, Bulgaria)

After 2007, with the entry of their countries into the EU, Romanians and Bulgarians travelled less often by bus and more often by air, making use of low-cost airlines such as Easy Jet or Air Blue. The air routes multiplied for the biggest cities in Romania and Bulgaria to Spanish cities where there were the greatest number of Romanians and Bulgarians.

Respondents mentioned that *«the airliners resemble Romanian trains of the Communist era»* because *«many people are standing; in the aisles there are children crying and a great deal of luggage bearing Romanian and Spanish products.»*

We find ourselves facing a panorama wherein there is intense movement; a panorama in which mobility is practiced. Romanians and Bulgarians place themselves in the culture of mobility, which is facilitated by the use of the Internet and mobile telephone. Indeed, the interviewees themselves recognise this. Bogdan mentioned that:

> *Now we no longer emigrate; we are simply moving when we wish to do so, because if I want to go to my country on a Monday, I can even buy my airline ticket on Sunday night on the Internet* (Male, age 29, Romania).

Furthermore, immigrants from Romania and Bulgaria have experienced upward mobility; they have settled themselves and their families in Spain and have children of the second generation. These citizens have become integrated into the local structures, which are reflected in their social networks. As Guarnizo (2003) notes, «corridors» of mobility and transnational economic and social activities were created.

The Moldovans and Ukrainians who have European citizenship, for their part, comment on the flexibility of the Spanish frontier in comparison to other European borders: *«things are good in Spain»*. *«I got married and burned the miserable false passport; now the borders are open to me.»*

Ukrainians continue to come to Spain, for the most part, as tourists and with false passports that were acquired in the passport market in Kiev or Odessa, while pointing out that *«people continue to go where they will, to Russia or Europe, since in Ukraine there is no one living there.»*

The drivers who were interviewed mentioned the level of corruption along the borders of the EU, given that they paid an average of *«$50 in order to avoid delays along the Ukraine/Hungary border,»* which was for military, health and customs control, or related to the stopping place. *«If we had not paid, they would not have let us pass.»*

However, among the interviews we had with returning Moldovans, we observed that their discourse appears to show some hope. *«I am now in the last phases of receiving a Romanian passport, so I will return legally.»* On the other hand, there is desperation since *«in Moldova nothing works, there is no help and, besides, it is not easy to settle down in Europe even if you do have help. How much help do you need when you have no rights?»*

Interviews claim that it would be good to lift the border with Romania so that all its residents may circulate and not only those who have Romanian citizenship, because *«borders are in our mind, borders anger people and it is best that people should move and learn, and then return.»* They recognise that they have violated borders *«because a person, if necessary, will jump over walls to survive.»* Thus, as van Houtum (2000) rightly points out, we note a mental, a psychological dimension of cross-border mobility, that places the process and the influence of the construction and reproduction of borders on behaviour at the centre of the analysis.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

This article highlighted the importance of borders in terms of the mobility practiced by Eastern European migrants who over the last 20 years crossed EU borders and came to Spain seeking a better way of life.

It makes manifest the fact that the more often the border is crossed, the greater the disposition towards mobility. It is argued that in the enlarged EU two perspectives of cross-border mobility are emerging: (re)bordering and networked border and connectivity. From both perspectives there is a need for conceptual development and mutual engagement.

Before summarizing the findings, it is important to note that despite the richness offered by the use of qualitative methodology this study presents limitations due to the small sample size, which does not allow us to draw clear conclusions or extrapolate the results to the extensive group of Eastern Europe migrants in Spain. However, the semi-structured in-depth interview technique provided us with direct access to detailed information regarding the behaviour of respondents practicing mobility and the way they perceive the border in the EU context.

In answer to the research questions posed at the beginning of the article, the following conclusions can be drawn:

First, it is clear that borders represent a resource rather than an obstacle to modern human mobility. This is proved by the fact that the more borders are overcome, the more provisions for mobility are acquired.

Secondly, the sample reveals that the flexibility of European borders facilitated human mobility coming from Eastern Europe. However, there have been problems observed at border crossing points (lack of sufficient personnel, the behaviour of agents responsible for border controls), and I believe that access should be improved, along with introducing joint customs stations, simplifying controls, increasing the use of information technology and communications, in order to facilitate mobility.

Thirdly, we can observe a change in the way that Eastern Europeans perceive borders while being on the move: while emigrants of the first stage had to confront borders as a matter of necessity and those of the second stage of mobility (with the support of transnational networks they found in the host country) had to live with borders, those of the third stage learn about mobility and practice it as citizens of Europe. In our view, mobile citizens live not only with state borders but also with various other kinds of borders, such as mental and symbolic ones. These mental processes create a kind of present-absent border. Thus, the concept of border is not an enemy of mobile citizens, but rather has become a «friend» who enriches our understanding of the complexities and ambivalences of movers' in-between lives (Recchi and Favel, 2009) .

It has also been found that while the experience of crossing borders became merely a trip for Romanians and Bulgarians as of 2002, and especially as of 2007, for Moldovans and Ukrainians it remains a challenging apprenticeship. After two subsequent rounds of Eastern enlargements, the EU now borders Moldova and Ukraine, and the idea of negotiating a visa-free liberalisation regime with the EU has become one of the most important objectives of Moldovan and Ukrainian authorities.

Finally, in the wider EU, human mobility will help cross-border liberalisation, because mobility has the ability to liberate localities from central authority and encourage new dynamics of connectivity in such a way as to confound both core/periphery expectations and conventional models of growth and competitiveness. Thus, following Rumford (2007), borders and border crossings constitute a resource for mobility, identity construction, self-actualization and sense of belonging. In order to live in multiple communities or to be at home with multiple identities, people must be comfortable with and adept at crossing and re-crossing borders. A fluid lives in and across borders (Hannam *et al.*, 2006; Urry, 2007). Therefore, more work needs to be undertaken to explain the variation in particular states' approaches to the regulation of practices, speech and other embodied forms of cross-border mobility. As D'Andrea *et al.*, (2011:157) argue, by attending to the empiric-conceptual mediations, the process of investigation of mobility phenomena can be positively rethought.

There needs to be a greater level of dialogue between scholars of mobility and scholars of border. An integrated approach in mobility research could help to highlight broader global trends in cross-border mobility. Therefore, we should look more frequently into the discourse of mobile people in order to interpret the issue of cross-border mobility in a changing world.

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