GEOGRAPHY OF BELONGING: NOSTALGIC ATTACHMENT, TRANSNATIONAL HOME AND GLOBAL MOBILITY AMONG ROMANIAN IMMIGRANTS IN SPAIN

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This article explores how human global mobility is linked to a sense of home and belonging and outlines ways in which European Union (EU) enlargement could contribute to broader debates about migration, both empirically and theoretically. To accomplish this aim, I use the context of migration in three waves of Romanians to Spain, the country that since EU enlargement in 2007 has emerged as a major destination for this collective. The main argument of the paper is that transformations in the EU over the past 20 years through its open border policy have changed migrant workers into EU movers, and this change affects people's perceptions about sense of home. This analysis is prompted by a qualitative and narrative turn in migration studies, and an emphasis on new mobility pathways in accounting for the embodied dimensions of migration. Key to the paper is an analysis of how people can maintain a sense of home while being on the move. It attempts to demonstrate that migrants' experiences of belonging in their host country may vary greatly depending on the wave of movement and the politics of EU borders, on the circumstances of mobility, and on according with personal and individual situations.

Key Words: belonging, global mobility, transnational home, mobile citizens, Romanian immigrants, nostalgia.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, the theoretical frameworks of human mobility studies have undergone profound changes in the enlarged EU (Cresswell 2006, Sheller and Urry 2006). The rise of transnational and border analysis, the formulation of the embodied experiences of migration, the increasing interest in migrants' attachment to place and sense of home have coalesced to enrich our understanding of human mobility (Meinhof 2002; Recchi and Favell 2009).

While the EU opened up the possibility for the construction of identity through a less exclusionary practice of temporal difference, human geographical and cultural mobility have, since the 1990s, 2004 (first enlargement) and 2007 (second enlargement), become more

important in the discourse on European sense of home and belonging (Alleyne 2002). Enlargement towards Eastern Europe has favored travelling and mobility and this has had a huge impact on belonging (Martínez-Guillem 2011). In fact, one could say that the world is constantly changing and thus our sense of home and belonging are constantly readapting and readjusting to the new realities (Wiles 2008; Passerini *et.al* 2007).

The migration process of Romanians to Europe began in 1990 following the fall of the Berlin Wall. While faint at first, and as the transition towards democracy and a free market in Romania became evident as part of EU policy, the flow of immigrants increased during the second decade, especially after 2002 and the opening up of the Schengen area to Romania. Border dynamics transformed Romanian migration into an intense movement, in both temporal and spatial circuits, throughout European territory. The intense flow of mobile citizens from Romania to Spain included young people who left their country in search of professional opportunity (Marcu 2012).

This article focuses on the ways in which geography is created within migration/mobility by considering the differences between the ways in which migrants and people on the move express their attachment to homeland. Prior studies (Brown 2011; Christou 2011) make clear that the study of mobility and belonging is a vibrant and interesting theme, with much room for further investigation.

The contribution of this article is original in that it focuses on how the gradual opening of EU introduces new ways of interpreting the meaning of home in the context of transnational and global mobility, while trying to highlight how the movement of people across Europe is changing the cultural geography of belonging.

I argue that mobility and EU border regimes influence migrants' feeling, and create differences in their attitudes about home and belonging. Therefore, my specific approach to understanding the connection between mobility and sense of home is linked to the way in

which EU enlargement affected perceptions of migrants, taking into account the choreography of the opening border, and the subsequent economic EU crisis that on the one hand, favoured the circulation, and on the other increased human mobility.

The research presents the narrative of migrants who have moved from Rumania to Spain, in three migration waves. I have chosen the mobility from Rumania to Spain because Romanians represented the largest group of foreigners living in Spain, with 922,826 registered individuals in 2013¹ (Figure 1) and high rates of migration (Figure 2).

Drawing on interviews with immigrants as the empirical point of departure, I discuss how these migrants describe and interpret their sense of home.

Firstly, I analyse how the migration process influences interviewees' perceptions about sense of home and belonging.

By analysing the first wave of migration, I investigate the ability of migrants to maintain their sense of home. Does the time that has passed since they emigrated produce in them nostalgia, disorientation and loss? The article aims to capture whether being far away from the place of origin influences or reinforces the sentiments of nostalgia and memory linked to the homeland, the idealization of home and the imaginary return.

Second, following the policy of opening EU borders, and analysing the second wave of migration, the paper attempts to capture the concept of the transnational home that emerges as both complex and contradictory. Can the home be here and there?

Finally, I will try to analyse the ways in which the *movers* claim to belong to more than one place. The paper aims to highlight how these migrants of the third wave, which began after EU enlargement in the context of economic crisis, perceive their home, by taking into account their intense mobility, as well as the role of communication technologies in their everyday life.

Methodology

The aim of this paper suggests the use of qualitative research. The analysis uses grounded theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss 1967); important components of this approach include developing theoretical sensitivities, theoretical sampling, memo writing, open axial and selective coding, constant comparative analysis, and reaching theoretical saturation (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1998).

The research was conducted between September 2010 and April 2011, in Spain, in the Autonomous Communities of Madrid, where the majority of Romanians have settled in Spain, (Figure 3) Castellon de la Plana and Valencia. I conducted 80 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Romanian men (40) and women (40) who arrived in Spain in three waves: 26 before the opening of the Schengen zone, 26 after the opening, and 27 following the entry of Romania into the EU. Those interviewed in the first group were between 46 and 60 years of age, those in the second were between 30 and 45 years of age, and those in the third were between 20 and 30 years of age.

Their education ranged from secondary education to doctoral degrees. Fifty-two per cent of respondent worked in lower-skilled occupations such as construction (25 per cent) or domestic work (27 per cent) whereas the 22 per cent were students and 26 per cent professional workers.

Conducting the interviews in participant's homes not only provided a comfortable research environment, but also prompted conversation and further insight into perceptions and experiences, recognising the important role of the home in belonging (re)creation (Ahmed *et al.* 2003; Blunt and Dowling 2006). Through my empirical work I ended up immersed in the everyday life, home rules, and home feelings.

Interviews were conducted in Romanian and were recorded with the participants' permission. In this work, all informants appear under pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity.

The author transcribed and translated the interviews conducted. The interviews were coded and analysed using the ATLAS ti qualitative analysis software. The analysis of the information from the standpoint of codes, concepts and categories identified key relations between the data obtained and conclusions reached. According to the principles of sampling theory, the data analysis began with the first interview and continued throughout the interview process (Strauss and Corbin 1998). It is thus that views emerged about home, perceptions about places, nostalgia, and imagined return to places or the role memory plays in interpreting feelings about home.

Furthermore, transcription helped reveal the theory as well as concepts such as mobility, belonging, and return, which are riven with all kinds of complexities, changes and juxtapositions, and so might call for a more nuanced data analysis. The way in which each group expresses their belonging within migration/mobility, reveals their very different emotional relationships with the homeland.

This study is structured as follows. First, I review the most relevant literature on the process of mobility and home on the move as it is linked to feelings towards belonging, return, transnationalization of home, nostalgia and memory. After a brief review on the mobility of Romanian in Spain and the EU, by means of a qualitative analysis of the discourse of Romanians living in Spain, the three waves of migration and mobility are reviewed. These waves are linked to feelings and ties that immigrants establish with regard to home and belonging. The conclusions signal the creation of a transnational and mobile space of belonging in a dynamic world in constant motion.

Theoretical Framework: global mobility, transnational belonging and nostalgic home

Mobility, return and belonging

In recent years, mobility studies have drawn attention to the myriad ways in which people and their cultural practices are not confined to a fixed territory but are parts of multiple spatial networks and temporal linkages (Greenblatt 2009; Cresswell 2006; Sheller and Urry 2006). The fact that many mobile people have become trans-mobile, that they find themselves in several places, similarly has important consequences for spatial concepts, such as belonging (Jones 1995; Niman 2009; Marshall and Foster 2002; Molgat 2002). Current debates surrounding borders have reinforced the importance of engaging critically with the notion of belonging and its centrality to people's lives (Yuval-Davis, Anthias and Kofman 2005). Belonging is the mediated representational practice of the diasporic condition articulated through experiences of home and migration. Therefore, belonging is shaped by mobility and the extent to which the nostalgic and affective spaces of home shape migrant identification. In this article, belonging is defined as a process of identification and contestation generated by migrants' struggles to understand their sense of home through place-based attachments (Christou 2011). Mobile identities emerge from the intense cross-border mobility, in which movers increasingly (re)construct identities that cut across fixed notions of belonging.

Mobility is developed within the framework of strong relationships between the countries of origin and destination, based on the premise that migrants have the freedom to decide when to move (Gustafson 2009). In order to mobilize local resources, both the social ties and border symbols established by migrant pioneers are needed (Faist 2007). A migration chain develops place if mutual mechanisms, family solidarity and social relationships work and if there are networks created within the country of destination (Goldring 1996). The emergence of this self-perpetuating dynamic might then give rise to a voluntary migratory chain which embraces the phenomenon of return as a form of mobility. Therefore, rather than dissolving the concept of return, the transnational paradigm is actually broadening it by treating it as a

process, sometimes reversible, sometimes partial (as among those who choose to live bilocally and/or transnationally (for example, dividing their time between two homes in two different states).

In this paper, I follow Long and Oxfeld (2004) in making the distinction between return migration – a physical relocation of the migrant with the intention of staying for some time, maybe permanently, in the place of origin – and return, a broader concept which includes return migration but which can also be imagined or provisional, encompassing various short-term visits such as holidays. Within this picture, as Sinatti (2011) notes, return can be understood both as an aspiration fuelled by the memory of and emotional attachment to the distant homeland and as the reason pushing many individual migrants to engage in transnational practices, thus consolidating transnational social fields.

Once the dream of return is realized, returnees may re-evaluate ‘where’ home is located if the expectations of return do not meet the realities of homecoming. As King and Christou (2011, p. 460) point out, aside from the obvious fact that places and people change and so, in this sense, there can be no “complete” return, the question to be asked is “return to where, precisely?” Thus, return should be intended as one of the multiple steps of a continued movement so that the notion is able to incorporate a whole range of people with differing mobility patterns.

Transnationalization of home: two spaces of attachment

Due to global mobility, in the wider Europe, the traditional concept of home has taken on a changed meaning. As a result of the opening of borders, transnationalism has emerged as a field where migrants on the move for opportunities of work try to maintain and forge new relationships with their home country (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1992; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999), play an active role in shaping “transnational space” (Hannerz

1996), and modify their sense of place. In studying home on the move as a meeting place of social networks we can draw from research on transmigrants' feelings about home and belonging (Ahmed *et al.* 2003). These scholars have studied how migrants find home in transnational movement or how they make a home in transnational space. Clifford (1999) refers to this state as co-presence of here and there, in which 'linear history is broken', the present constantly shadowed by a past that is also a desired, but obstructed, future: a renewed, painful yearning.

In her work, Alzaga (2007) explores how people who do not dwell in one place create a sense of home a definition of home that rests on the continuity of an immediate materiality is left aside in order to take a more existential perspective into consideration. Although it is a new trend in the case of Romanians in Spain, cross-border mobility within the EU marks the emergence of what I call "second home". Lofgren and Bendix (2007) distinguish different kinds of second home, different geographies, and in the case of migrants, there are the double home arrangements born from immigrant longings to nurture the link to their homeland by planning and building a house "back home" used for vacations and often planned as a retirement retreat. This category represents not only the transnationalization of home, but it contains different dreams and aspirations although the migrants share aspects of the material concerns entailed in living in two different countries or places. For an understanding of how individuals invest their time and resources in a second home, it is necessary to grasp new forms of mobility in conjunction with new perceptions of what constitutes "home" and the organization of everyday life.

Increasingly, as Hess (2005) notes, it is also migrants who undertake economic migration and find themselves negotiating not only double homes but also family obligations and longings in a long distance fashion. Having and leaving two homes might mean all the work involved in getting two sets of everything. Travelling back and forth also may produce different

feelings of motion and emotions. This paper will provide insights into the way in which home is experienced by those who lived between two potential spaces of attachment.

Nostalgia and memory of home

The relationship between memory, nostalgia of home and movement is one that should be underlined. The collective identity of migration is based on a common country of origin, national particularities and/or ethnic identities. However, the home is not always remembered in the same way. The process of expressing a connection to the homeland from afar is prompted by a sense of emotional longing (Brown 2011) that can take different forms, identified by Rubenstein (2001) as “nostalgia”. Immigrants’ stories are the best narratives of nostalgia-not only because they live through nostalgia, but also because they challenge it. These stories are often framed as projections for the nostalgia of others who speak from a much safer place.

Following Boym, (2001) the migrants in my study demonstrate the divide between reflective, restorative and prospective nostalgia of home. As she argues, restorative nostalgia stresses the *nostos* (return home) and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of a lost home, and ends up reconstructing emblems and rituals of home and homeland in an attempt to conquer and spatialize time. Reflective nostalgia cherishes shattered fragments of memory and temporalizes space thriving on *algia*, the longing itself. In turn, prospective nostalgia can also be a romance in one's own fantasy; it is a juxtaposition of 'two images - of home and abroad, past and present, dream and everyday life'. These contrasting responses to homeland can reflect the different circumstances of emigration and the nature and length of their settlement elsewhere.

Thus, I consider nostalgia as a fluid, multifaceted, and performative force operating at different scales and levels: on the one hand, an unconscious phenomenon in the years following Romanian migration, intertwining with the uncanny and bringing to the surface ‘unwanted’ memories; on the other, a powerful device increasingly exploited for the construction of a ‘cosmopolitan memory’ (Barthel-Bouchier and Ming Min 2007).

In turn, memories play a role in the individual’s struggle to construct a social and personal identity in a world in which subjectivity is both fragmented and fractured. Memory has an active life; it is never static or finite. Memory may look back in order to move forward and transform disabling fictions to enabling fictions, altering our relation to the present and future. However, McDermott (2002) argues that it is impossible to maintain this distinction and indeed it may be unnecessary to do so because nostalgia is a necessary ingredient of memory work. Burrell (2008) and Fortier (2000) make it clear that a multi-sensory memory about home and place may constitute an important means of an interior dialogue with the homeland and participate in creating a sense of belonging.

In order to understand the echo of feelings as perceived by immigrants, it is necessary to use the qualitative technique of in-depth interviews and explore not only the social, economic and political dimensions of human mobility but also its psychological complexity.

Romanian Mobility in Spain

The fall of the Iron Curtain (1989) meant the first exercise of freedom along with the fall of a totalitarian system for the people of Eastern Europe. After 1990, Romania’s transition brought about a sharp decline in the levels of satisfaction with the living standards caused by higher unemployment rates and increased poverty. Working abroad seemed to be one of the few strategies available for coping with rapid economic and social changes (Lazaroiu 2003). From 1996 in particular, Romanians’ international work routes started to converge towards the

southern region of Western Europe. That said, the scale of Romanian migration to other EU countries has been increasing steadily since 2004. Upon its becoming an EU member state on 1 January 2007, Romania was Europe's largest source of outward migration flows. Official government estimates for late 2006 indicate that between 1.2 and 1.3 million Romanian citizens were legally employed in EU member states (Ban 2009, p. 6). During the period 2007-2009, the number of Romanian citizens residing in the EU-15 reached 2.1 million (EU Report 2011) while the main destination countries for migrants from Romania, are Italy and Spain.

Romanian emigration to Spain took place in three stages. The first stage, 1990-2002, was a trial-and-error exercise in terms of labor migration. According to data from a 2006 survey², from 1990 to 1995, Spain attracted a very small number of Romanians departing for work abroad (about 2%) (Elrick and Ciobanu 2009). However from 1996 onwards, Romanians' international work routes converged towards the southern region of Western Europe, with Italy and Spain as the main destinations. Labor demand, language learning ability, degrees of tolerance and the existence of already established Romanian networks influenced the increase in emigrant streams towards Spain (Marcu 2012). Romanian immigrants moved to Spain with all of the baggage that comes with the migration process: a break with what one leaves behind, and the attempt to settle into a new reality that because of its newness is disruptive. The context of EU law making influenced this dynamic by way of the severe visa restrictions imposed. Therefore, the main option was to emigrate irregularly (with a tourist visa or in clandestine way).

The second stage, 2002-2007, was marked by the opening up of borders under the Schengen agreement, allowing Romanians free circulation within EU territory. The regularization processes implemented by the Spanish government in 2000-2001 and in 2005³, visa requirements having been eliminated at the beginning of 2002, and Romania's accession to

the EU (2007) were all important events. Similarly, economic growth in Spain at the time, especially in the construction and tourism industries, generated a strong and sudden demand for foreign workers. As a consequence, the process of temporary labor circulation, which was to reach unprecedented levels, began. The development of immigrant networks, together with the creation of an important number of associations, Orthodox Christian and Adventist congregations, or other Romanian cultural centers, developed immigrants' ties to their country of origin, while at the same time exposing them to the cultural values of Spain (Marcu 2012). The third stage began in 2007 and continues at present, and is marked by Romania's entry to the EU. 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, as a result of the acute economic crisis and the incessant flow of Romanians, in 2011, the European Commission⁴ approved a temporary measure (Order PRE2072/2011) that restricted the right to employment for Romanians who emigrated to Spain as of that date. The restrictions were lifted on January 1, 2014, and from this date, Romanians have the right to work in Spain (European Commission 2014).

The difficulty, and the need, to work in any sort of employment is a specific characteristic of the mobility among Romanians, who are perceived to be economic immigrants and are, therefore, relegated to low-skilled jobs (Ban 2012, Marcu 2012). Even in an economic downturn, such as the unprecedented recession hitting Spain, the new mobility strategies of migrants are visible.

Reconstructing home in memory

Participants in this first wave live in Spain with the customs of their primary home while remembering *native land* and *home of the mind*. They experienced a disparity between the way they had expected their professional status would be viewed by the receiving country and the reality they found. Hence, the concepts of belonging and professional career are closely intertwined for those interviewed. As Ion related:

I don't want to remember. It seems like someone else's life. I had been a respected member of the intellectual elite, and when I walked down the street I could not help but run into my friends and acquaintances once in a while. Now, I am nobody. From professor to construction worker (Male, age 50).

The past resonates in the voices of the interviewees and is reflected in the journey they have chosen to undertake with hope but also trepidation, mindful of dangers but determined to be courageous. Home appeared to be viewed both nostalgically and with an element of realism. Thus, migrants make trips back in order to identify the changes and transformations that have taken place in their homeland. They painfully discover that in their absence the homeland communities and their own identities have undergone transformations, and these ruptures and changes have serious implications for their ability to reclaim a sense of home. As Maria recognized:

My pain is that we now belong to the past. If you leave something and the rest have stayed there, you can no longer take part in things if you only visit once each year. This rupture is painful and the reality is clear. You have left. If I am not there, there is nothing. You can't be everywhere... Moreover, I have nothing in common with Spanish people (Female, age 54).

Interviewees say they have struggled, that they have attempted throughout their time in Spain to find a home, but their memories are still firmly anchored in their country. For Mihai, Romania remains a significant emotional frame of reference for belonging:

I want to find a home here, but my home is over there. My childhood... And later, when I would come home from university and my mother had kept food in the oven...that is a nostalgic and tender memory (Male, age 50).

They are nostalgic about the river, leaves, mud in the streets, and doors that squeak. This demonstrates the way in which they wish their Romanian identity to be presented to others and the dominant, visible presence of restorative nostalgia for Romania in their lives.

Maria describes her life in Spain as being ‘*not living but survival*’, waiting to return to live in Romania and begin her ‘*real life*’ once more. But what life? For them, Romania represented a perception of homeland common to migrants: “a place distant in time and space, and partly lost, but also ever-present in daily life. Thus, they occupy a space in which Romania is celebrated as an “imagined community” (Anderson 1983) (re)created in the context of their stories and memories which exemplify Boym’s definition of *restorative* nostalgia. Unified by their strong emotional desire to remember and enact the practices of their imagined homeland, this group has created an active community space in which to do so.

Interviews associate their ideal world with an imagined return. As noted by Cohen and Gold (2002), the myth of return has a symbolic function that impedes assimilation on the part of immigrants. I found that interviewees have a greater propensity to link imaginary return and their ideal home to the home that they left behind. As Ion points out:

The return to roots is the ideal, because there is our place, there is our root; I could perhaps die in Spain because it is difficult to return in any other way than in my mind. My ideal would be to live my final years there (Male, age 57).

The informants of the first wave of migration show that they resist the space they currently occupy while creating in their memories a home that acts as a kind of barrier to accepting the place, Spain, as home. The combination of their shared nostalgia for a common homeland and experiences of their country of settlement has forged a strong bond between members of this group which continues to be strengthened through their collective Romanian practices. However, their long-established settlement in Spain allows their only access to their homeland to be through the practices of restorative nostalgia and, sometimes, forces them to embrace a new transnational identity. This sense of transnationality is expressed comfortably by the second group of migrants in their enactment of everyday life explored in the following section.

Creating a transnational and double home

The second wave of migration from Romania to Spain occurred between 2002 and 2007, and was noted by the opening of the Schengen zone which thereby allowed the free circulation of Romanians within the EU. As a consequence, a process of temporary labour mobility began, reaching unprecedented levels. Networks created in the 1990s expanded while there was a parallel regrouping of families on a large scale (taking into account the unforeseen immigration regularisation in Spain in 2005). This refers to the increase in mobile immigration across all age groups (young adults being most prevalent) that circulated between Romania and Spain. These migrants classify themselves and their cohort as transnational migrants driven to leave Romania by the prospect of earning higher wages in Spain. As Glick Shiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc (1992) note, they live a transnational existence, engaged in the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. However, the two countries clearly have different roles to

play in the minds of these migrants. Romania represents their cultural and social past and even present, with information and communication technology facilitating a vivid daily connection with their homeland.

For transnational migrants a sense of place and belonging is also acute. Despite adopting some aspects of Spanish culture and making social contacts, these developments are primarily seen within the context of improving employment opportunities. Building a house in their home country is perhaps the most prominent project for economically motivated migrants:

Our dream was to build a house with money earned in Spain. Now, we just think of returning each summer, and saving money for when we retire, so we can go back and enjoy it (Male, age 46).

Therefore, returning to the village or town they have left, holds an emotional as much as a material appeal; the dwelling is first intended as a base for holiday visits, but holds the promise of moving back completely when sufficient funds have been earned or one is ready to retire. Thus, the task of creating a new place, a new home in Spain, seems to be dominated by the efforts of re-building or re-establishing continuity with the place of origin. This process is realised over time and the fusion or transnationalization of two places, here and there. Living within the network amidst family and friends, immigrants share their memories about the country of origin while reliving their feelings about the past and creating a new sense of belonging. They are at ease there with the sound of their language, as well as with their acquired language, among Romanians and Spaniards.

This findings support the construction of an idea of home, both transnational and double. Interviewees suggest that part of their home can be transferred along with them, since both

family and friends can be transferred. It is in this manner that the fusion of two spaces creates a new transnational space that can become *their* home. As Adina noted,

My home...us...that is the idea we have about both homes, there and here, that may be just one in the space in which I live. When we go home, we return home. We have two homes, two places, from home to home. When I travel to Romania, I speak of my home here, and when I am here I speak of my home over there (Female, age 40).

This may indicate the fact that if home exists within a geographic scale, it can be at the same time quite distant from daily experience and, nevertheless, paradoxically linked to current experience since “*home in my country is part of me, and will be, even without being there*”.

This dynamic continues on the voyage between the past and present and may modify the sense of home in the two cases, while causing the individual to construct his or her own place formed by the intimate fragmentation of the two places. The choice of being in a single home is now impossible, since the interviewees have invested their emotions, sentiments and belongings not only there, but here as well.

When they are asked about their views on the place where they currently reside, interviewees portray a positive view of Spain while expressing both the positive and negative aspects of their life experiences. Radu said resignedly:

Madrid is my place of the heart, Spain is a country where we are allowed to live without working. They frequently exploit us, but we live (Male, age 42).

I noticed that owning property in Spain can influence the feelings people have about their idea of home, and of belonging. As Doina pointed out:

We feel at home here because we have also purchased a house in Spain. We have two homes: there and here. Home, my house, is quite good...We have prospects, and we want to live well in both places (Female, age 44).

Thus, some participants find themselves living in two countries for many years. They inhabit a double-home (Lofgren and Bendix 2007), and their lives are pluri-local, involving Romanian and Spanish frames of reference that structure everyday practices, social positions, employment trajectories and biographies.

For the interviewees, return to their country is mostly partial. Some respondents were considering returning ‘*sometime in the future*’ because the desire to go home was ‘*always in the back of their mind*’ but a nostalgic view of home was tempered by a realistic assessment that they could not return due to family commitments in Spain or the ‘*mentality*’ at home. Others who said that they ‘*did not want to grow old*’ in Spain also acknowledged that they are currently enjoying successful careers and Spanish friends, suggesting that ideas about return are complex and diverse.

Because of their mobility and their psychological and emotional investment, immigrants can change the dynamic between locations, between here and there, and between the past and the future. Their emotional longing for their country is complex: they recognise the negative as well positive everyday realities of their homeland manifesting the “ironic, inconclusive and fragmentary” nature of reflective nostalgia as a form of longing (Boym 2001, p. 50). They exhibit *reflective nostalgia* through their relationship with Romania. Although some of the practices involved in the expression of belonging to a Romanian homeland are shared between first and second wave migrants, the following section reveals that it is the way in which the third group of interviewees take different forms and meanings which distances

them from the former two, and that, in fact marks the distance between immigration and mobility and draws a new geography of belonging.

Toward a mobile home?

During the third wave of migration, that began in 2007 and culminating with Romania's entry into the EU, immigrants became European citizens enjoying complete freedom of movement among EU countries.

For the Romanians interviewed in the last stage, the temporality of home is not just located in the past but in the future as well. In the interviews, I can see how the creation of a home and sense of belonging by mobile persons is not only a product of their desires: it also occurs by means of external factors such as the economic and social situations that affect interviewees' feelings. Interviewees' mobility helps them to acquire the practice when they create several places and homes to inhabit in the here and now. In trying to locate their own sense of home, multicultural third generation immigrants turn their own physicality into art forms. I observe that, while circulating within Europe, mobility helps them to situate themselves globally, to ignore and not set up well-defined borders between home and location or the places of belonging (Marcu 2012). Interviewees may navigate physically or virtually between several homes, by travel or by way of various forms of communication such as the Internet, web cameras or Skype, which actually allows them to see their family members, since, as Diana pointed out,

Now that I communicate via Skype, I can see how people move, as well as the things in my home, everything (Female, age 25).

In addition, participants are very well versed in the use of social networking media, are adept users of cut price telephone services, often subscribe to Romanian satellite television channels, and are frequent users of budget airlines operating between Romania and Spain.

Highly educated people relate the feeling at home to a relevant social status which is reached by getting an appropriate job. Therefore, the ideal work becomes the ideal home. As Bogdan recognized:

I am as eager to broaden my personal horizons as I am to expand my professional prospects. I want to find a job, and for now, I am enjoying my mobility, spending a year in Spain, another in England, another... I don't know, maybe in the US (Male, age 29).

These aspects of personality are manifested in the most motivated and ambitious people. They are impelled towards an objective: to change their lives, which is affected not only by crisis and scarcity but also by a lack of professional fulfilment. However, the difficulty and the need to work in any sort of activity is a specific characteristic of mobility among young Romanians who, as a legacy from the adult generation, are perceived to be economic immigrants and are, therefore, relegated to low-skilled employment. Thus, in expressing the difficulty they have had in their professional lives, interviewees reflected on precariousness and instability. As Ariadna confessed,

I left home at the age of 16. I studied in England, but I was also in Mexico, Japan and Ghana. In Spain it is hard: I study and work. It is like starting all over again, because it is difficult to move around in Spain's work environment. I worked in houses, in a restaurant, and now I work at Unión Fenosa in order to pay the bills (Female, age 26).

Concerning their feelings about the imagined return, those respondents interviewed who come during the last stage on Spain, say that linked it to multiple forms of belonging. For them, there is no going back. Returning would mean going backward rather than going forward. To return to the place from which one left is not a return; rather, it means learning once again from the journey because what was left behind is in constant movement, changing and dynamic. For respondents, one cannot go back just because there remain some childhood memories. Some rather more solid things are required. Alex recognized:

And if you do not return, not even to turn back, you again travel towards something new and almost unknown, because this is no longer what it was. And you have to return again. It is another journey, not a return, because returning means I leave everything here and go back there again. And besides, the word 'return' means a setback in your development (Male, age 25).

For respondents, one cannot go back “*just because there remain some childhood memories. Some rather more solid things are required*”. As remember us Gupta and Ferguson (1997) mobile people are rootless, have no bond to any particular place and their belonging is apparently de-territorialized. George noted that:

I am a little confused, I no longer feel at home anywhere, I belong to the world, and it does not bother me. You know? I have no nationality in my heart (Male, age 27).

Managing several places of belonging for the interviewees means finding a vital centre in the ideal that signifies home. Therefore, home also includes attachment to transportable cultural and personal values and ideas.

I found that mobile people forge places in the world for themselves. They work selectively to belong in Spanish society as well as in other meaningful translocal social contexts and they

consciously adopt practices and behaviours which facilitate their belonging; they develop strategies for creating the ideal home, belonging and professional stability.

Conclusions

In highlighting the importance of transformations in the EU over the past 20 years through the open border policy, in this article I have analysed the connection between migration/mobility and sense of home of Romanian immigrants in Spain. I argued that mobility and EU border regimes influence migrants' feeling, and create differences in their attitudes about home and belonging.

In response to the questions posed at the beginning of the article, I have reached the following conclusions:

First, I conclude that migration, in terms of wave of migration, influences and differences the perceptions of interviewees about sense of home, belonging and return. Therefore, interviewees who arrived in Spain during the first wave of migration appear to value their homeland and continue to be connected, sentimentally, to their place of birth. For them, home is always provisional, in the memory. Despite the present freedom to travel, the desire for stability and even the age of migrants influences and conditions their mobility and belonging. For them, return implies reconnecting not only with space but also with their memory, and, as Sinatti (2011) argued, as it is continually delayed, permanent return acquires the status of myth.

Secondly, interviewees of the second wave of migration appear to value the two forms of belonging, between here and there. They are also oriented toward integrating into the new environment and are more active in overcoming the various difficulties of adaptation. They also experience nostalgia, but later. Its appearance may be considered as a reflection of inner

integrative processes concerned with connecting up the old and new identity in a way that would have been impossible at the earlier wave of migration. They inhabit a double - home, they live in-between, and for them return is partial, inserted into the process of transnationalization of home and belonging. This privileged experience led to constructions of home that were often fragmented, complex, and situated in two locations. Second home ownership represents another arena within which to usefully explore changing ideas of mobility, place connectedness and belonging, at a time when society is rapidly becoming highly globalised.

Thirdly, the paper highlighted how the mobile citizens of the last wave of migration, that began after EU enlargement, in the context of the global crisis, perceive the home, taking into account their mobility. These interviewees, who demonstrated a significant level of mobility, cannot indicate the geographical location of their homes. I note they do not expect to spend their life in the same country. They enjoy mobility and view it as being necessary to gather the experience, ability, connections and credibility that will transform them from migrants into global citizens (Recchi and Favell 2009). Their unwillingness or inability to settle –to embrace and be defined by one or two places, only- draws them to each other. As noted in the sample, their sense of belonging is now globalised and their place in the world, their “feel at home in the world”, contributes to the ‘geography of mobile spaces’ (Voigt-Graf 2004).

Thus, mobility diminishes feelings for the homeland while it changes and amplifies movers’ visions. Mobile citizens come to include the place where they reside presently within a world that is globalised, even though it is not forever but *for the time being*.

Therefore, people who live their lives in movement make sense of their lives as movement. They become familiar with local and global communities, and use neither to escape the other. This takes physical and emotional presence. It requires spending time with those who live nearby and staying close to those who are far away.

I conclude that an analysis of the three waves of migrant influx from the same country offers a greater insight into the role of emotional attachment in shaping the construction of personal narratives of belonging.

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Notes

¹ Source: <http://www.mtin.es/en/index.htm> accessed on 20 March 2013.

²Source: Spanish National Institute of Statistics, *Population Register, national results*, 1996-2009, <http://www.ine.es/jaxi/menu.do?type=pcaxis&path=%2Ft20/e245&file=inebase&L=1>, accessed on 2 October 2012.

³ Some 604,357 immigrants in Spain were legalized in 2005. Ministry of Interior 2007.

⁴ 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.