

THE EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF MINORITIES

ROMANIANS ON THE MOVE

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1. Setting the Stage: Nationhood and Globalization

Taking as a starting point the most complex institutional apparatus man seems to have produced, the *Nation State*, this paper is intended, on the one hand, to stir up dust and ask how *nationhood* and *globalization* shade into one another (rather than collide) and, on the other, what the outcome of this symbiosis might be. Subsequently, the paper outlines the general architecture of the European Union, as well as the overall stance of the Member States relative to immigration. Further, the discussion spills over into the Romanians' stand in the emerging European federation of minorities.

In order to tackle the above issues, we primarily need to get acquainted with the concepts we are about to operate with.

At the beginning located only in the imaginary, **nationhood** thrivaly scaled the heights of its career in the 19th and 20th centuries. Its fusion with the State gave nation corporeality and full legitimacy propelling the Nation State into the ideal project of governance. In short, in its classical acceptation, nation is a monological construct aiming at homogeneity. When integrated into the state, nation is fenced in by official frontiers and has its own administrative institutions, educational system and army. As argued by Anne-Marie Thiesse¹, nation states necessarily need to spark a set of identitary landmarks: ancestors, history, heroes, a language, cultural monuments, typical landscapes, a specific mentality, official representations, folklore, particular identifications and a number of stereotypes. Since it is immutable, nation is religiously worshipped and the nation state is sacrificially defended (*"Pro Patria Mori"*). Citizenship is the political reward for a staunch loyalty to the national fiction. Citizens are the source of democracy by their electoral choice. Who favours plurality is taken for a traitor. Who is against nation is perceived as heretical. The nation state is, therefore, a geographical container where unequal energies are standardised by institutional bodies (named by Michel Foucault² "bio-power" or "governmentality" practices) and hobbled by pedagogical collective traditions and a single regulatory language conducive to a unitary will.

Globalization's roots are sometimes seen as clinging to the remote 1648 Peace of Westphalia. Theoreticians (Immanuel Wallerstein³, *The Modern World-System*) argue that the Treaty of Westphalia set the first official, albeit minimal form of interstate system. By all means, there have been numerous and at times contradictory globalization approaches. Their linchpin is, however, the manoeuvring of a series of concepts: geographical borders, social relations, transportation technologies. One of the most recent contributions to the understanding of the phenomenon is Saskia Sassen's theory (*Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages*). Sassen treats globalization not as a mere dissolution/shrinking of the territorial, or just as the expansion of social relations, but rather as a rearrangement of the national spaces. If "territory, law, economy, security, authority, and membership all have largely been constructed as national in most of the world", then "globalization is taking place inside the national" consisting of "an enormous variety of micro-processes that begin to denationalize what had been constructed as national."⁴

2. Governmentality – Euromentality: Globalizing the National

In Sassen's words, there is a "self-evidently global scale"⁵ – World Trade Organization, global financial markets etc. – and a second set of processes, embedded in the national, which is "oriented towards global agendas and systems"⁶ – human rights issues, environment, international monetary policies, worldwide non-governmental projects, diasporic

¹ Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La création des identités nationales: Europe XVIIIe-XIXe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1999).

² Michel Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique: cours au Collège de France (1978-1979)* (Paris: Gallimard & Seuil, 2004).

³ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

⁴ Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), <http://press.princeton.edu/titles/8159.html>, Chapter 1, 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

networks. This second group of processes is deeply interwoven in and usually obscured by the national.

At the **self-evidently level** of (European) globalization, the revisionist “process of switching”⁷ (from the national to the global) is obvious in the Founding Treaties (as well as the Amending Treaties) of the European Union. Involving preponderantly the first pillar of the EU (the *acquis communautaire*) and “low politics”, the transfer of sovereignty employs the **consented relocation** of some *governmentality practices* into *Euromentality practices*. Concretely, the 1951 pooling of economic resources, steel and coal, and subsequent common actions led to a body of European law known as the “new legal order”. The European Court of Justice’s sentences heavily contributed to the accretion of extra-national power by forging the doctrines of *direct effect* and *supremacy of EU law over the national law* as well as the principle of *mutual recognition* as regards the domestic legislation of the member states. Successively, the Single European Act (1986), the Treaty of Maastricht (1992), the Amsterdam (1997) and Nice (2001) treaties have bolstered the significance of the macro-regional institutions and, conversely, encroached on some important national attributions. Starting with 1999, 12 (plus one, in 2007) EU states participate in the Economic and Monetary Union devolving the levers of their economy to supranational institutions.

On the other hand, as a backlash against a “too-globalized globalization”, there is a sense of wariness at the level of the Council of Ministers and the European Council. States’ overall aim is to curb, one way or another, the authority of the supranational over the national. The sensitive issues envisaged are the national social policies, health, culture, education and, to a showy extent, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and immigration policies. Therefore, the local governments’ misgivings tend to preserve the immigration issue mostly in the third pillar of the EU (justice and home affairs) as a matter of “high politics”, consequently the member states’ responsibility. Traditionally, **immigration** is seen as an exogenous (external) pressure impinging (from the outside) on the member states’ “privacy”.

Ironically enough, it is precisely what the local governments have stood against that is now forcing the member states – from the inside – to change their political architecture and become coterminous with globalization. As noted above, Sassen speaks of **a second set of global processes** that leads to the undercut of the national: “The state itself has participated in implementing many of these new arrangements, by contributing to the formation of the global economic system and advancing the consensus regarding the benefits of economic globalization.”⁸ And she adds: these processes “denationalize what had been constructed as national but do not necessarily make this evident.”⁹ In this light, states’ restiveness towards immigration becomes synonymous with reaping the benefits of what they themselves have sown.

To start with, although the third pillar of the EU was intergovernmentally set (that is, outside the EU law) it had been punctured from the very beginning by consented membership to the first pillar (the supranational dimension of the EU). In 1957 six strong nation states take as a guiding principle the idea of an “ever closer union between the peoples of Europe” and decide into signing the Treaty of Rome. In the first half of 1960s, “In part because economic growth was strong and incomes were rising, the member states refrained from invoking the various safeguard clauses contained in the treaty, and actually agreed to accelerate the timetable for completion of the common market.”¹⁰ But as the 1965 crisis of the “empty chair” arose, then the “spirit of the Hague” faded away in the early 1970s and the economic growth fell, the member states started posing themselves questions. Where by the 1950s Europe had been exporting population (some 50 million into the Americas only), the situation was reversed between the late 1950s and the early 1970s. The ties between France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK with their former colonial countries (economically and as regards population transfers) had always been in place. The treaty of Rome was cementing them. Moreover, because of the labour shortage during the European economic boom, the member states were absorbing “**guest workers**” who, later on, were to become *permanent*

⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁸ Saskia Sassen, “Immigration Policy in a Global Economy”, in SAIS Review – Volume 17, Number 2 (Summer-Fall 1997): 1.

⁹ Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). <http://press.princeton.edu/titles/8159.html>, Chapter 1, 2.

¹⁰ John Van Ouedenaren, *Uniting Europe: an introduction to the European Union* (Lanham, Maryland : Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 38.

immigrants: workers from Southern Italy and from the non-community Spain, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Turkey, North Africa. Although 1974 brought out the closing of the European borders and imposed the “zero immigration policy”, newcomers continued to break in. Some under the family reunification scheme, others seeking asylum or arriving illegally.

Between 1989 and 1993 a number of events shaped the amplitude of a new immigration wave. The conflicts in the Balkans, the crises in Africa or the collapse of communism, they all combined with the dismantling of internal European borders effected by the single market programme. “Member states were dismantling their national controls, but they had not put in place at the Community level common policies on the control of external borders or procedures of sharing information about organized crime, illegal immigration, and other cross-border matters.”¹¹ As a reaction, member states set off looking anew at the matter of immigration, but again within the same intergovernmental and protectionist framework.

The Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 was beginning to lay groundwork for an official procedure of restructuring nation state’s position regarding immigration. Unlike previous meetings (where self-centred, non-binding, and unanimity-based conventions had been negotiated) Amsterdam was coming up with some new provisions. The supranational European Commission sets the agenda of the member states; (co-)decisions are made by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers; the Council shifts from the unanimity voting to the qualified majority voting; the European Court of Justice (ECJ) receives more authority over immigration. The third pillar relinquishes, thus, a good deal of its content over the first supra-institutional pillar. It goes without saying, the national reluctance was not removed altogether. The Amsterdam Treaty was only highlighting the fact that after the member states had taken the lion’s share of the economic globalization for years on end, it was high time that immigration found its voice and claimed its rights too.

Other means by which states involuntarily spurred immigration was the **human rights** issue. At the time of signing the European Convention on Human Rights, in 1950, nobody suspected that it would be a gesture of welcoming globalization and heavy internal changes. The states could not possibly foresee that in the following decades the national rights would be gradually replaced by civil rights and commitment to the ECHR or other conventions on fundamental rights were to support immigrants’ rights too. Put differently, the member states were deterring immigration as vigorously as they were fuelling and protecting it. Immigration was eventually granted supranational attention. According to the Amsterdam Treaty, “The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States.” The 1999 conclusions of the Tampere European Council looked on the matter of third country nationals residing in the EU. A particular stress was placed on the efforts of matching the national laws with immigration, the fight against discrimination and the conditions under which third country nationals could obtain the nationality of the member state where they resided¹². In December 2000, a Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union was proclaimed in Nice by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

Human rights values bring on cultural changes, and this is something the local or international non governmental organizations fighting for the rights of the excluded are perfectly aware of. As stated earlier in this paper, the internal global processes are not meant to recreate the nation state *ad novo*, but to step up its renovation from the inside. Since human rights are only corrective instruments, they are “Always respecting those customs which do not violate human rights, preserving them or letting them change as time and life change ideas, experience and customs.”¹³ (Cristina Sganga). At the same time, human rights promoters aim at forging a “global ethical system” or a “global consciousness” about human rights which obviously contradict the traditional national behaviours and induce transformations in the state’s political settings. At the most concrete level, people (immigrants in particular) will know which their rights are and how they can develop a minimum form of self-protection. When such NGOs intersect the political, then Oxfam’s strategy is symptomatic

¹¹ Ibid., 237.

¹² Presidency Conclusions, Tampere European Council, October 15 and 16, 1999, <http://europa.eu/rapid/>.

¹³ Cristina Sganga, Amnesty International-Netherlands and Board member of the Human Rights Education Associates, “Re: Culture of human rights”, Index Global HRE listserv June 2002-May 2003, <http://www.hrea.org/lists/hr-education/markup/msg01134.html>.

for how these organizations function: “We influence powerful people”. Furthermore, “We strive to be a global campaigning force promoting the awareness and motivation that comes with global citizenship while seeking to shift public opinion in order to make equity the same priority as economic growth.”¹⁴

A snake in the grass for the concept of nationhood has been the **environmental education** as well. Similar to human rights promoters, environmentalists are overtly advocating the consolidation of a global civil society conducive to changes in the governmental attitude. The new form of patriotism environmentalists are fostering goes beyond the mere loyalty for the nation state. The national selfhood is reconsidered and stretched over a wider area of loyalties: interhuman relationships, sustainable development, peace, the concern with the survival of animal species and plants, pollution. New global standards are thus being phased in.

Not only have nation states incubated globalization and immigration through “**guest workers**”, **diasporic networks**, **human rights**, **environmental issues** or **NGO’s**, but they also assisted the upsurge of the “**global city**” as a knock-on effect of the global firms. International markets have allowed or, better still, pushed the national economies into transnational networks. As a result, “National states have provided new visas and renovated old types of visas for global firms and professionals.”¹⁵ Global cities are, thus, urban centres within one national territory where the “business class” of a good number of other countries meet, work and live.

Jumping from one scale to another, the “**immigrant entrepreneurship**” is a reality that has been long overlooked too. As Robert Kloosterman emphasized, “entrepreneurs from less-developed countries have set up shop all over the Western world. A Pakistani wholesaler supplying confectioners, tobacconists and newsagents in London, a Taiwanese IT specialist in Silicon Valley, a Turkish cook selling kebabs in Berlin, and an Iranian couple running a beauty salon in Rotterdam are all examples of immigrants who start their own business.”¹⁶

Provenly, globalization “from below” has many a facet and provides answers to a great deal of questions about immigration. Unfairly, however, it is generally less acknowledged than globalization “from above”. Moreover, dwarfing these details leads off such absolutist prophecies as Samuel P. Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations*¹⁷, where civilizations are described as clearly delimited and antagonistic.

3. The European Federation of Minorities

Bearing in mind that “also the excluded make history”¹⁸, the more the minorities are downplayed, the more they come into the limelight and crack the hard shell of some important national characteristics.

The national has always cultivated the illusion that the *geographic space* of a state is congruent with a single *social space*¹⁹. From this state-centric perspective, as sketched in the first chapter, the geographic space was considered in an absolutist sense and led to the concept of “social-geographic container”. During the French Revolution (1789), for instance, foreigners (“Vendées”) were repudiated for “endangering the homeland”. Speakers of other languages than the nation’s parlance were linguistic minorities and were coerced to act as dissidents. The container was absorbing, thus, and trying to even out a very diverse reality. Adam Smith was writing in 1776, in the *Wealth of Nations*: “The proprietor of the stock is

¹⁴ Oxfam, “About Us”, <http://www.oxfam.org/eng/about>.

¹⁵ Saskia Sassen, “Emergent Global Classes and What They Mean for Immigration Politics”, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=490>, November 1, 2006.

¹⁶ Robert Kloosterman & Jan Rath, *Immigrant Entrepreneurship: Venturing Abroad in the Age of Globalization* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2004), i.

¹⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

¹⁸ Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), <http://press.princeton.edu/titles/8159.html>, Chapter 1, 10.

¹⁹ Pries Ludger, *New Transnational Social Spaces: International Migration and Transnational Companies in the Early 21st Century* (London: Routledge, 2001).

properly a citizen of the world, and is not necessarily attached to any particular country.”²⁰ In the 18th century Friedrich Schiller was refusing to be incorporated into a single territory and authority: I have swapped my country for the world, he said. Artists, the aristocracy, scientists (“the rootless cosmopolitans”) were favouring an internationalized space without limitative boundaries. Therefore, the 21st century breaks the egg at both ends: on the one hand it brings to the fore an international market and, on the other, it returns to a former plural social space, decentralizing the power into historical provinces and accommodating newcomers. Since the state does not lose its attributions in entirety, as argued previously, the national “absolute container” becomes a “relative absolute container”. Put simpler, the state takes notice of its segmentation, but it does not so much restrict the fragmentation of its territory, as it administrates it by means of supranational law. According to Eurostat (cited by Rainer Meunz), the stock of foreign-born population (that is, individuals born outside the country of their current residence) in 2005 was as follows: Germany – 10.1 million; France – 6.4 million; the UK – 5.8 million; Spain – 4.8 million; Italy – 2.5 million; the Netherlands – 1.6 million. In total, the 25 EU member states were summing up some 40 million people born outside their country of residence. In 2005, Spain received 652,000 immigrants, Italy 338,000, the UK 196 000, France 103,000, Germany 99,000, Portugal 64,000, Austria 61,000. Even the newly membered Czech Republic noted a net migration of 36,000. As Rainer Muenz observes, “Europe’s demographic situation is characterized by growing life expectancy and declining birth rates. This leads to a situation in which more and more countries are experiencing a decrease in the size of their native populations.” Moreover, “the EU as a whole and most Member States report population growth mainly driven by net gains from migration.”²¹

Such a diverse and growing mixture of populations naturally introduces the concepts of “multiculturalism” and “multilingualism” into the texture of the nation. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML), adopted in 1992 by the Council of Europe²², set a critical milestone in the direction of language acceptance. The criteria by which languages can benefit from the Charter are, except from differing from the official language of a state, the territorial basis (or the traditional regions of a state) and the widespread of the language within the state. After ratification, the signatories to the Charter acknowledged the national circulation of languages like Basque, Catalan, Galician (**Spain**, 2001); Danish, Frisian, Romani, Sorbian, Low German (**Germany**, 1998); Croatian, Slovene, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak, Romani (**Austria**, 2001); German, Croatian, Romanian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovene (**Hungary**, 1995); Frisian, Limburgish, Low Saxon, Romani, Yiddish (**The Netherlands**, 1996) etc. In 2001 the UK officially recognised Cornish, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, Irish, Manx, Scots, but recently the British miserably accepted an inescapable reality: the government set up bilingual (English-Polish) traffic signs in the Liverpool area, since, as decryed by newspapers, there are more Poles in Britain than in Warsaw.

Together with sharing “custody” of its territory and diluting its cultural homogeneity, the state also had to gear its national education. Where in the past the Western schooling model was designed to serve the national Grand Whole, now it has sharply lowered its patriotic resonance. Bringing up devoted citizens implied imbuing the consciousness of national borders, national history and literature, a galvanizing single language, faithful mass media, a specific public rhetoric. Gradually, however, for the reasons invoked in this paper, the nation state was weakened and its structures modified. The education system had, thus, to be reshaped in order to approximate the state to a multicultural population. By the same token, religion took on an ecumenical dimension, that is, placing the stress on wider values such as tolerance, integration, and communion.

²⁰ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 364.

²¹ Rainer Muenz, “Europe: Population and Migration in 2005”, Migration Information Source (June 1, 2006), <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=402>.

²² Council of Europe, <http://www.coe.int/>.

4. Romanians on the Move

Having laid the theoretical background, we can further argue that Eastern (in particular Romanian) immigration into the European Union is neither a “mass invasion”, nor an eccentric phenomenon.

With three months before elections, France’s right-wing candidate for Presidency, Nicholas Sarkozy took campaign trips to Britain and Spain in order to win the electoral support of the French living abroad. What exactly prompted the French (some 300 thousand in Britain²³, and about 150 thousand in Spain²⁴) to settle down abroad? In the same line, what prompts the Romanians to set foot and then put down roots on foreign lands?

Irrespective of nationality, following K. F. Olvig and N. N. Sorensen’s argumentation, people are set in motion by their quest for “better livelihoods”²⁵. It so happens, as presented previously, that nation states themselves have made it easier (consciously or not) for people to start looking abroad for better opportunities than those provided in their homelands. The weakening of the nation state, both as a result of globalization “from above” (economic expansion) and, more importantly, globalization “from below” (self-set traps), led to a fluidization of transnational relations and derived an exposure of the immigration phenomenon. The nostalgia for the pampering national welfare is, however, conserving a certain reluctance to acknowledge the authority of the supranational institutions in controlling immigration. Conversely, when facing immigration, the nostalgists employ a steamy discourse which more often than not leads to misconceptions relative to both the immigrants and their countries of origin.

Romanian immigration is usually referred to in connection with two events: the **collapse of communism** (1989) and the **sixth enlargement** of the European Union (2007). As noted, neither of these events *per se* produced an upsurge of immigration. Rather, as the traps of globalization are gradually being exposed, nation states airbrush out their own decisive contribution to the phenomenon of immigration and tend to emphatically pass on the responsibility solely to exterior factors.

At the 1989 Strasbourg European Council (8 and 9 December), the Member States were pledging: “The Community’s dynamism and influence make it the European entity to which the countries of Central and Eastern Europe now refer, seeking to establish close links. The Community has taken and will take the necessary decisions to strengthen its co-operation with peoples aspiring to freedom, democracy and progress and with States which intend their founding principles to be democracy, pluralism and the rule of law.”²⁶ In other words, once overthrown, communism was doomed to become dead history. So far, so good. Romania signed the *Association European Agreement (Europe Agreement)* in February 1993, setting the terms for becoming an associated country of the European Union. Further, the June 1993 Copenhagen European Council established three criteria under which “the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe can become members of the European Union”²⁷. A fourth condition (related to the implementation of the *acquis communautaire*) was added by the European Council of Madrid (December, 1995). In 1994 the European Council of Essen introduced a “pre-accession strategy” for the associated countries. The European Council of Cannes issued a White Paper (a “user’s guide”) that, together with the Europe Agreement and Phare Programme, established the hard lines for the accession stage. After being urged in December 1997 to devote more energy to reforms, Romania officially opened negotiations for EU accession in February 2000. The sixth enlargement of the EU granted Romania (and Bulgaria) full membership in 2007.

²³ Charles Bremner, “Sarkozy the Anglo-Saxon”, Timesonline (February 01, 2007), http://timescorrespondents.typepad.com/charles_bremner/the_world/index.html.

²⁴ International Herald Tribune, “French presidential candidate Sarkozy takes campaign to Madrid” (February 27, 2007), <http://www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2007/02/27/europe/EU-GEN-Spain-Sarkozy.php>.

²⁵ K. F. Olvig & N. N. Sorensen, *Work and Migration, Life and Livelihoods in a Globalizing World* (London: Routledge, 2001).

²⁶ Presidency Conclusions, Strasbourg European Council, December 8 and 9, 1989, <http://europa.eu/rapid/>.

²⁷ Presidency Conclusions, Copenhagen European Council, June 21 and 22, 1993, <http://europa.eu/rapid/>.

And yet, gradually, the ties between Western and Eastern Europe were starting to lose enthusiasm. On the venue of globalization, as Michael Ehrke²⁸ points out, two economic dialects were trying to hammer out a common language: the Western European capitalism and the postcommunist capitalism. On the one hand, there was an economic and social system equipped with both the buttresses and the practices of globalization, calmly phased in since the 1950s. And, on the other, there was an economic and social system with 45 years of communism behind and with no prerequisite structures whatsoever ahead able to uphold the pressing weight of globalization. It is, therefore, the aggressive burst of globalization combined with the disorganized struggle to tame it that shaped the postcommunist capitalism. Moreover, while the Western states were tackling globalization jointly (under the Treaty of Rome), the postcommunist states were mostly dealing with it on their own and bare-handedly. Subsequently, the emergence of global firms on Eastern land, that is, foreign investments, severely divided people into two categories: the select modern transnational sector and the wide segment of the needy. Unsurprisingly, this class of the impoverished developed what Oscar Lewis calls „the culture of poverty“: „The people in the culture of poverty have a strong feeling of marginality, of helplessness, of dependency, of not belonging. They are like aliens in their own country, convinced that the existing institutions do not serve their interests and needs.“²⁹ A solution out of this situation seemed to be, for a good number of Romanians, seeking their fortune abroad.

As suggested earlier, “better livelihood” envisages people’s right to hope for a better life. It is also worthwhile reminding that “mobile population” in search for new opportunities has always been in place and, in its overall sense, is not confined to a specific geography or social class. Additionally, better livelihood does not comprise only economic matters, but social and spiritual well-being too. In this light, the French migrating to Britain are as legitimate as, say, the Romanians leaving for Spain. All the more so as both the French and Romanian population mobility are the result of globalization “from above” (as presented so far) and “from below” (as will be presented in the following).

The Western economic boom (up to 1973) consentedly (and profitably) absorbed labour force from a range of non-community countries. Between 1960 and 1973 Germany alone imported some 18.5 million workers. About 4.7 million took roots as permanent immigrants. But there were waves of people coming from Central and Eastern Europe too. The first package arrived after the Second World War. The second reached in the 1960s, entailed by the European Community’s work shortage. These movements had further outcomes. Not only did the workers settle in the host countries, but they also increased their number after 1974, under the family reunification scheme. Put together, these factors led to new developments. The subsequent asylum seekers and illegal immigrants were not really taking a leap into the dark when setting foot on Western land. More often than not, they had established connections with relatives, friends or acquaintances already incubated in the West who could thereby facilitate the integration of the newcomers. Such tips for the new immigrants were nothing more than the receiving states’ own breaches produced on their triumphant march towards the self-evidently globalization: human rights issues or gaps in legislation that could be speculated and squeezed benefits from. As importantly, as a knock-on effect of globalization, the rich countries assisted the emergence of the so-called category of “rogue employers” who would disregard their own country’s laws and encourage informal labour. If (informal) labour hadn’t existed, has been argued, the immigrants would not have come.

Networks also provide explanation for the so far rather distortedly perceived immigration between 1989 and 1993. Once communism collapsed, two things gained wide visibility: the postcommunist countries no longer forcefully fenced their population within the national borders. And secondly, there was a heavy movement of population towards West. A third aspect, usually given a low-keyed importance, is related to networks. The opening of borders towards West was only one side of the coin. In fact, the way had already been paved by the Western countries themselves through the 1950s-1970s economic heydays, and then, gradually, by the self-induced breaches in the national structures. Seen through such glasses, the 1989 East-West immigration should be regarded more like a two-protagonist performance

²⁸ Michael Ehrke, “Postcommunist Capitalism: Economy, Politics, and Society in the New Europe”, “Noua Europă: Economia, politica și societatea în capitalismul postcomunist”, Fundatia Friedrich Ebert, http://www.fes.ro/html_files/docs/Ehrke_Studie_ro.pdf.

²⁹ Oscar Lewis, “The Culture of Poverty”, *Society*, 35 (January/February 1998):7.

than just as a one-man show. Concurrently, the “ethnic migration” was taking place. To refer only to German and Jewish minorities, some 156 thousand people left Romania in the early years of the 1990s³⁰. Germany was reunited in October 1990. The ex-communist German Democratic Republic as well as the returning Germans became part of the European Community. After living for at least 45 years in Romania, it is common-sense observation that these minorities had developed various types of connection with the indigenous people which were reflected, one way or another, in the process of Romanian immigration.

Just as the 1989-1993 East-West immigration was inseparably dependent both on contemporary events (the fall of communism) and previous European settings (the prosperous, albeit tricky common market), so was the immigration of the 1990s and early 2000s influenced by two other complementary events: the evolution of the postcommunist capitalism and the launch of the European single market (1993). On the one hand, Romania was advancing (at slow pace) towards meeting the (pre-)accession criteria and, on the other, it was still displacing population into the alluring European space.

2007 posed a threat only to those who refused to acknowledge that by that time the diasporic networks had already been consolidated and the powers of the state had proportionally left room for suprainstitutional policies. The internet, the better transportation technologies, the student mobility (as part of Erasmus programme), the NGOs, the businesses set up by foreigners, the associations for protecting and helping immigrants on the territory of the receiving countries, immigrants’ newspapers, churches, schools and artefacts, they had all contributed to the cementing of immigrant communities. The treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice were another incentive for the immigrants to embark upon a relatively quiet life. The culture of poverty was thus losing terrain in front of a reality which was not so much prosperous as reassuring: “When the poor become class conscious or members of trade union organizations, or when they adopt an internationalist outlook on the world they are, in my view, no longer part of the culture of poverty although they may still be desperately poor.”³¹. One must concede, however, that, still lacking a strong sense of collectivity/solidarity, the Romanians abroad have not yet completely surpassed the “trust” shortage nourished by post/communism. Ehrke³² notices that communism, as well as its capitalist aftermath, are marked by a sharp feeling of distrust both relative to politics and social relations. Trust implies morality and consciousness, elements which communism watered down and the postcommunist capitalism has not succeeded in fully resurrecting so far.

The Romanian immigration in Spain engulfs a wide variety of human typologies. From the hard-working to the lazy, from the ambitious to the gregarious, from the bold to the humble, from the honest to the misleading, from the successful to the loser, from the civilised to the delinquent, from the educated to the illiterate. In other words, the Romanian communities are as sanely populated as any other national social space. With 200 thousand people working legally and other up to about 800 thousand (depending on the source) undocumented people, the Romanian immigrant community is the third largest in Spain, after Ecuadorians and Moroccans³³. Constructions, strawberry-picking, house-cleaning, catering, caring for the elderly, agriculture, but also tourism, entrepreneurship, education, information technology are their preponderant fields of activity. Territorially, the largest and most visible Romanian groups are located in Madrid (and its surroundings) and the Mediterranean Spanish Coast, ranging from Girona to Barcelona, Tarragona, Castellón de la Plana, Alcalá de Henares, Valencia, Alicante, Almeria. There are also other significant communities, albeit scattered away, in such places as Zaragoza, Salamanca, Bilbao or Castilla-León³⁴. Since the most invoked shortage is homesickness, the immigrants have started rekindling a Romanian social setting on foreign territory, conjoining business and pleasure in a profitable manner. In Castellón, for instance, there are three discos run by Romanians, as well as two bakeries (“Transylvania Bakery”) delivering Romanian specialties, five restaurants, one pizza-house,

³⁰ Philip Rees, and Marek Kupiszewski, *Internal Migration and Regional Population Dynamics in Europe: a Synthesis* (Population Studies No. 32, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1999), 42.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Michael Ehrke, “Postcommunist Capitalism: Economy, Politics, and Society in the New Europe”.

³³ Danny Wood, “Romanian influx challenges Spain” (31 October 2006), BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6098632.stm>.

³⁴ Rafael Viruela Martínez, “Inmigrantes Rumanos en España: Aspectos Territoriales y Procesos de Sustitución Laboral”, *Scripta Nova*, REVISTA ELECTRÓNICA DE GEOGRAFÍA Y CIENCIAS SOCIALES, Vol. X, núm. 222 (1 de octubre de 2006).

more than thirty construction firms, a massage and physiotherapy cabinet, ten butchers shops and Romanian products stores. In Alcora a "locutorio" (telephone booth) has been opened, but the Romanian owners also take the chance to offer the internet and money sending services, as well as Romanian foodstuffs and newspapers. To be tangentially noted that the Italian Porta Palazzo, the biggest outdoor market in Europe, is also crammed with "made in Romania" products whose labels nobody is bothered to translate anymore. By the same token, Romanian is widely used since Turin's second largest immigrant community is the Romanian one (after Moroccans). In Barcelona, there are at least three landmarks the Romanians let themselves guided by: the church (which also functions as a placement and estate agency for the needy), the Romanian Association and the pub.

In such a context, Spain recently allotted two billion euros for a smoother integration of the immigrants. The project is targeted at guaranteeing the civil, social, economic, cultural and political rights of the immigrants and runs between 2007 and 2010.

5. Conclusion

The idea this paper revolves around is that we are witnessing an all the more ostentatious transformation of Europe into a mosaic of minorities which, like it or not, overtly or stealthily, leads the way towards a rethinking of the traditional national structures. The nation states' choice seems to be, therefore, criticizing immigration and playing by its rules in the same breath; deterring and fostering it; fearing and needing it. It is this paper's idea that the outcome of this interplay will be, eventually, the political recognition of a reality which long ceased to be a mere tendency: the member states are loosening up their firm grip on national territory, monoculturalism and politics in favour of a guiding supranational authority. The patchwork of minorities not only modifies the national logics, but it will also push the European political structure into a federation.

At the entrance of the above mentioned Porta Palazzo, there is a notice which reads in forty (40) languages: "Love difference". It looks like the Belgians lovingly embraced politics, since the winner of the 2007 Belgian beauty-contest is a Romanian. In 1990, when the young lady was 5, her parents decided to leave Romania.

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