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Borders: A Resource for Underground Economies

Abstract

This article is about border practices circumventing the law – "clandestine" migration, smuggling, psychotropics – and questions the function of border spaces. Indeed, when borders imply economic, legislative, and social disparities, they create their own economic opportunities outside of the legal frame. From the Hispanic-African border, I try to show how different populations seize on these disparities, how borders are diverted in favour of some people and to the detriment of others – most of them clandestine migrants – and, finally, how these crossings are in the heart of vast underground markets that are intermingled with official economic sectors. Thus, a question is posed about the socio-economic specificity of border spaces.

Introduction

The border is usually understood as a state border, this is to say as a sovereignty and territorial competence limit within a state. However, globalisation, merchandise flow and human circulation make borders fuzzy and question classical control mechanisms of the Nation-States, a model that would be in crisis. Thereby, the EU borders become a matter of concern, focused on international migrants – notably undocumented – that states perceive as a "security matter". Consequently, control measures are multiplying, immigration laws are hardening[1], and the EU assigned a guard role to its borderlands – partly devoted to bordering countries such as Morocco. Even so, border controls do not stop people and goods from flowing and *border crossings circumventing the law* do not concern only undocumented

[1] This desire of border closure is mostly aimed at the foreigner regarded as "ethnic and poor". See Lucas (de) J., 2002, "Une réponse juridique virtuelle: le cadre légal de l'immigration en Espagne", *Migrance*, 21, pp.140-154 ; Miles R., Thränhardt D. (eds.), 1995, *Migration and European Integration - The Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion*, London: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ Press.

migrants[2]. Indeed, when borders imply economic, legislative, and social *disparities*, they create their own economic opportunities, outside of the legal frame.

Then, the question posed in this article is not *why* but *how* officially closed areas can become "footbridges". Through the examples of contraband, clandestine migration, and psychotropics, I try to illustrate the modalities of these crossings and their local socio-economic implications. I base this on a survey in progress at the Hispanic-African borders, notably in the regions of Valence and Andalusia[3]. Indeed, these have important foreign presence[4] and underground economy sectors[5]. But if Valence seems to be economically developed, Andalusia is still one of the poorest Spanish regions[6]. Therefore, these regions allow us to understand how individual wills, social networks, institutions and economic sectors are interwoven.

From Contraband to the Development of a *Bazaar Economy*: The Example of Alicante

[2] Spain is the principal way for Moroccan cannabis and Latin-American cocaine to enter the EU, and for stolen cars to leave for Africa (Interpol reports).

[3] During this two-month ethnographic survey in Alicante, Cádiz, Almería, and Melilla, I met association, trade union and administrative leaders, police and customs agents, and migrants from different countries such as Morocco, Algeria, and Senegal.

[4] According to the "Secretariado de Estado de Inmigración y Emigración", as of 30/09/06, 31.955 foreigners were legally living in Andalusia and 361.318 in Valencia, placing these regions behind those of Madrid and Cataluña.

[5] The underground economy is hardly quantifiable but it has some indicators. In 2005, the labour inspection counted 18.156 infractions in Andalusia and 11.984 in Valencia, i.e. the most important figure of Spain. In 2006, the Spanish Bank indicated that 63,75% of 500 Euro bills were in Spain and notably in Valencia, Murcia and Andalusia (*Europa press*, 10/01/07). Finally, both regions have an important tourist sector linked with the services and building sectors and also with property corruption, that goes with the presence of international "mafia" groups, as shown by police and military operations.

[6] Valence is specialized in the industrial sector and Andalusia in the agricultural one. In parallel, the rate of unemployment in Valence is slightly below the national average, while in Andalusia it exceeds it by 4,69% (2005 data of the Insituto de Estadísticas de Andalucía and the Institut Valencià

Geographically close, Alicante (Valence) and Algeria keep an historical relation and, especially since Algeria closed its border with Morocco, an increased quantity of people and consumer goods transit on the maritime line which links Alicante with Oran and Alger[7].

The movements through the harbour – where different public authority forces are present – are an opportunity to observe the crossing of consumer goods, meant for contraband on both sides of the border. Two passenger categories cross the border: Algerian immigrants living in Europe and their descendants who travel especially during the summer time and Algerian traders doing numerous back and forth travels throughout the year. For all of them, Alicante is a shopping centre where they find consumer goods offered and resold as European products even though a big part is made in China. These flows generate a number of non-declared jobs. Indeed, the traders or *"businessmen"*, who usually have a shop in Algeria and stock up also in the province, have to do their purchase in one or two days, so back and forth trips are organized between the harbour, Alicante, and neighbouring towns. *"Businessmen"* arrive with vans or use informal taxis or *"carriers"* waiting in the harbour and come alone or with *"soldiers"*, forming teams of three or four persons. Once bought, in order to limit the transported weight, the merchandise is unpacked and repacked in a big waiting-room by other informal workers. Finally, *"transit workers"* load and unload luggage between the ferry and European buses. All of these jobs seem to be performed by undocumented migrants or documented ones unable to work legally. Indeed, in several economic sectors of the whole country, a *black market* in employment contracts exists, in which lawyers sometimes act as middlemen between enterprises and *"contract clients"*. In some cases, this contract permits a regularization to begin, but does not include an employment, that is fictitious. This general organization allows the exportation to Algeria of clothes, shoes, electronic household goods, carpets, beauty products, but also auto parts and cars[8]. In the waiting-room, the luggage check-in service remains amazingly empty: the notice indicating a 20 kilos' weight limitation

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d'Estadística). Likewise, if in Andalusia the income per inhabitant is 23% below the national average, in Valence it is only 7% below (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas).

[7] Sempere Souvannavoung J.-D., 2000, "El tránsito de Argelinos por el puerto de Alicante", *Investigaciones Geográficas*, 24, pp.110-132.

per person serves as garnishment. The real difficulty is to unload the products once the ferry has docked in Algeria – from this moment they become smuggled goods –, an impossible operation without bribing some members of the police contingents.

From Algeria to Alicante similar crossings also exist, but they are much less noticeable. My encounter with Toufik – an undocumented Algerian here for the past 7 years – allows me to glimpse them. Indeed, Toufik multiplies his activities: a *"transit worker"*, he also sells smuggled goods such as fake brand-name trainers and cigarettes. His low capital limits the size of his trade; however, his example demonstrates the *competencies* necessary for illegal border crossings: how to create links, pass the identitary boundaries, and, in that case, how to take-advantage of one's alterity position. Indeed, these importations and their resale require the support of compatriots on each side of the border but also of police in the harbour. So, I observe that before circulating through town, Toufik entrusts the smuggled goods to compatriots, *"carriers"* or hostel manager, for being *only* a "clandestine" in case of police control. The Guardia Civil[9] of the harbour would allow him to work in tranquillity because he does not make any trouble and because he regularly helps them to solve some conflicts. His long presence in the harbour and his knowledge of Arab language allow him to enjoy a privileged status. He also told me of doing some favours for civil servants by finding *"things that they can't find"* for them, but I could not get more information because of my *stranger* status: "you want to see where you don't have to see, you can't know, it's like me before, as long as you're in front, you can't, once you're on the other side, then yes, 'cause you're a friend". Indeed, the fear that I could be an informer was omnipresent among the interviewees, which limited my fieldwork in the harbour as well as in the bazaars.

These flows of passengers and goods contribute then to the development of about twenty bazaars and many more restaurants, phone-taxis and hostels in the downtown district next to the harbour. Even so, it is not a closed economic system, in which only Algerian people participate.

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[8] This underground trade, which one can observe in the harbour, was confirmed by different interviewees and the "Dirección General de Protección Civil" data indicate the disappearance in Algeria of an increased number of cars (2561 by 01/09/06).

[9] Spanish military corps.

Indeed, Algerians, Moroccans, Pakistanis and Senegalese manage these bazaars, which are characterized by their specialization in products and by the fact that those who sell wholesale serve more varied customers than those who sell retail. For example, two bazaars specializing in the wholesale of shawls, tunics, glasses, belts, and cheap jewellery, sell not only to the ferry users but also to Spanish traders, to Algerians and Latin-Americans who illegally sell on the street, and to Spanish gypsy market sellers.

This heterogeneity also exists in the illegal sale of licit products, such as TV satellite cards, brand perfumes, trainers and tracksuits, which are sold in the bazaars and on the street. My observations show that the clientele on the street is primarily made up of Spanish people and foreign tourists, while the bazaars keep their illegal sales for migrants and ferry users. Mohammed – a Moroccan trader – pays four compatriots to resell perfumes during summer time, when ferry users and tourists are numerous, but he never stocks it in his bazaar, in case of police control. One day, while we were talking at the entrance of his shop, two Spanish men tried to buy brand-name trainers but Mohammed lied, saying he does not sell any, before suggesting to me the possibility that these Spanish people could be policemen or could inform the police. However, *trust* makes crossing the line possible: after some weeks of daily conversation with him, I could buy for ten euros two brand-name perfumes, which he usually resells for a higher price. This bazaar economy then brings together migrants, tourists and residents, foreign and autochthonous people.

Finally, some of these bazaars are linked up with those of the neighbouring towns of Crevillente and Elche and constitute a stopping-place in the *territoire ciruclatoire* built by underground commercial networks of migrants trading lawful-use products[10].

Thereby, the harbour of Alicante is in the heart of an *economic transnational mechanism*[11] which transforms the border into *resource*: the wealth differential between Algeria and Spain accounts for illegal crossing of consumer goods, therefore contributing to

[10] Tarrius A., 2000, *Les nouveaux cosmopolitismes*, Paris: Ed. de l'Aube. The *territoires circulatoires* (circulatory territories) include networks which are defined by population's mobility, with travellers obtaining their status from their circulation know-how without regard for national borders.

[11] The *transnationalism* idea suggests that migrants create social spaces, which cross over geographical and political borders and cultural boundaries.

some wealth redistribution between the North and the South[12] and to the commercial development of Alicante. But the underground economy generated by the border also depends on its geopolitical position. Thus, on the Spanish southern border, crossings circumventing the law concern other kinds of "merchandise" and flow into more diverse underground economies.

From Clandestineness as a *Know-How* to Clandestineness as an *Economic Resource*: Andalusia as an *Immobile Roaming Zone*?

In 1986, the entrance of Spain into the EU transformed Andalusia into an access door to the Schengen Area for African migrants – who often come clandestinely. Because of the reinforcement of security measures since 2000, part of these migratory flows moved to the Canaries. Therefore, the Spanish State – while it asks the EU for help[13] – highlights the efficiency of its border controls in particular as a result of the S.I.V.E.[14] development and the increase of repatriations[15]. Nevertheless, these controls also complicate the management of migratory flows.

The European dream led migrants of different nationalities to *organise* themselves in *transnational networks:* for Sub-Saharan migrants, the trip to Europe sometimes lasts several years and allows the emergence of *mutual aid* and *cooperation*[16]. These are conditional and

[12] Tarrius A., 2000, *op. cit.*

[13] El País, 19/05/06.

[14] Sistema Integrado de Vigilencia Exterior, whose function is to *"fight against the irregular immigration, the traffic of drugs and other illegal traffics"* (Press release - "Ministerio del Interior", 16/05/06).

[15] Press release of the "Ministerio del Interior", 15/02/2005 and 05/02/2006.

[16] Alioua M., 2005, "La migration transnationale des Africains subsahariens au Maghreb: l'exemple de l'étape marocaine", *Maghreb-Machrek*, 185, pp.37-59 ; Escoffier C., 2006, *Communautés d'itinérance et savoir-circuler des transmigrant-e-s au Maghreb*, Thèse de Doctorat en Sociologie, Université de Toulouse Le Mirail.

may depend on circumstances. Indeed, while collective organization and know-how transmission are useful to pass the numerous state borders and to enter Europe, migrants understood that they now entered a competitive world where everyone is fighting for work to regularize his status.

This Europe is reached by various ways: principally on a ferry – by hiding oneself in a lorry or by bribing civil servants – or on a zodiac**,** *patera* (small wooden boat) and *cayuco* (big one), or by climbing the barriers of the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta/Sebta and Melilla, in Africa. The migrants' *strategies* to enter Europe depend on an evaluation in terms of physical risks and economic costs: as a Cameroonian told me in Melilla, "one doesn't risk anything serious by jumping the barrier" and "to go into the zodiac of someone, you have to pay, but if you come to jump the barrier, you don't". They are also determined by the readmission agreements between Spain and African States[17].

Indeed, different relays are established in Europe to help migrants to join their families or friends already settled in Andalusia, or somewhere else in Spain or Europe. African migrants from countries signatory to a readmission agreement use the traditional entrance methods (*patera* or ferry to Andalusia) and try to avoid arrest. Thus, once they arrived, Moroccans phone to some compatriots who will come for them. The less lucky are sequestered by migrants already settled who ask a ransom from their families. But more often, it is about a service whose price depends on a negotiation based on the existence or not of links between the smuggler and the migrant family in Morocco. The others pass through private foster homes, often religious, and only those who cannot turn to some compatriots stay in these homes. On the contrary, arrest is a part of Sub-Saharan migrants' *strategy* because many of them are not deported once arrested. After 48 hours in a police station or forty days in a retention centre, they are "set free" with a deportation order in the pocket. In the harbour of Algeciras and the station of Almería, I met some Sub-Saharans departing for towns such as Barcelona or Valencia. An NGO had paid the bus ticket for them. Abdoulaye, a young Senegalese intercepted close to the Canaries, said: "The policemen put you in a bus till the airport. They divide people and send them to different destinations. They choose. When you arrive, other policemen are waiting for you and bring you to [this NGO]". A representative of

[17] Morocco, Algeria, Guinea-Bissau, and Mauritania.

this NGO confirmed: "When a Nigerian or a Senegalese leaves out from one of these centres and comes [to us], we manage to get him a ticket and some extra money, for him to arrive where he has to meet his family. Here in Almeria, often when they intercept them in a patera, those that they cannot repatriate, and as the centres are full, so they release them in the street, because they cannot stay more than 48 hours in the police station[18][...] we can say they share them out by town, no? […] they put them at [our] disposal". As he tells me, there is no "fixed agreement" with the State[19] even if this NGO is partly subsidized by the State.

This self-organization and these different familial, neighbourhood or institutional relays cast doubt on the authorities' discourse about the omnipresence of "mafias" in these crossings – who, paradoxically, might benefit from the perpetual border militarization – and raises the question of an *unofficial management* of migratory flows. This would be related with the lack of resources of the country, which is always asking the EU for more help to manage these flows, but also with the economical need of the country and the structural place of the underground economy.

"In Spain, there is no work for people who do not have papers […] mafias are giving a totally unrealistic message"[20], said C. Rumi – Junior Minister of Immigration and Emigration – last September.

However, the geopolitical position of Andalusia enables some economic sectors, as domestic service and agriculture, to benefit from a cheap workforce, particularly "clandestine", and "mafias" do not have anything to do with it. Indeed, to find a work, relays also exist: migrants refer to trade-unions and NGOs as "employment" or "interim" agencies; but more often they mobilize their familial or friendly networks to enter in contact with employer, notably to buy a work contract.

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[18] The Almeria province does not have any retention centre.

[19] Officially, in 2006 11.826 migrants were transferred from Canaries to accommodation centres in the Peninsula, most of them of NGO (Canarias7, 30/08/06) but, realistically, not all transfers are included in this data or in the accommodation centres.

[20] *Europa press*, 22/09/2006.

Thus, the agricultural sector of Almeria constitutes a platform for status regularization and offers the cheapest contracts of the country. Along kilometres of greenhouses, which provide all Europe with fruits and vegetables throughout the year, migrants are working for several years without contracts and, once regularized, a new work permit forces them to work in the same sector and region for one more year before they can move on. Today, one can buy an employment contract for around 1500 euros, which is "found" by a compatriot already employed in the sector. However, this can take long: in El Ejido, I met some undocumented Moroccan workers, who had been living in a plastic slum close to the greenhouses for more than five years. Even when they are legally working, migrants receive almost always a salary below the basic one fixed in the agricultural collective agreement. This – in addition to the fact that owners are rather reluctant to rent flats to them – limits their accommodation possibilities, unlike what I have been told by a state representative in Almería: "If you have a work permit, you can work, you've got a salary, so if you live in a plastic slum, it's because you want it". The informal labour and the workforce overexploitation in this sector have preceded migrants' arrival, so the newness resides in the pattern researched, i.e. the one of a worker who disappears from the social universe once a workday has finished. This has been shown by the xenophobic attacks of February 2000 in El Ejido[21]. Then, as E. Martín Díaz explains[22], the multi-segmentation of genus, national or ethnic derivation, and juridical situation, builds the basis of a strategy aimed at making the agricultural workforce extremely flexible[23]. For all of this, some migrants feel "captive" in Andalusia: "I left my family and I came here. What am I doing? My family is on one side, I am on the other one and all of this for nothing. I put all my money in the trip. What future do I have here in Spain? How could I go back home and show myself to my family? I thought I could change my situation, and in fact it became worse" told Saïd, an old Moroccan in El Ejido.

[21] The murder of a local girl by a young unbalanced man from Maghreb was the pretext for these attacks done by a local population fraction, close to the economic circles profiting from the illegal work, which object to legal immigration increase. (Forum Civique Européen, 2000, *El Ejido, terre de non droit*, Paris: Golias).

[22] Martín Díaz E., 2004, *La inmigración extracomunitaria en la agricultura española*, Madrid: Fundación Alternativas.

I suggest that Andalusia is a de facto zone of *centralisation* of migrants, who are in a *roaming situation.* This led me to question again the notion of *sas migratoire (migratory impasse),* developed by A. Tarrius[24], i.e. Moroccan migrants who do not have relations to move further on stay in Andalusia.

Indeed, I could identify migrants who go or return there even if they have experienced other geographical areas or have migrant family members in other European regions. Then, the migrants whose regularization perspectives failed mobilize again their social networks according to the possibilities existing in other European regions, and the concordance of both elements will determine their next move. Aziz, a Moroccan migrant settled in the Netherlands, became undocumented after losing his student status. First, he thought of getting married in Belgium, but he could not afford it so he took advantage of the regularization process of 2005 and went back to El Ejido, to buy a contract there. Other agricultural workers who went from Morocco directly to El Ejido refuse to mobilize the family contacts they have elsewhere in Spain or Europe before their status regularization, because they fear to be arrested on the way, to discover that these family members will not help them, or they worry that they will be a burden on the family, unable to pay their share. Finally, migrant traders consider Andalusia as a territory where economic opportunities do still exist. Indeed, they can take advantage of the importance of tourism, or of the "return for holidays" phenomenon, created by the crossing through Algeciras and Almeria of Moroccan migrants and their descendants settled in Europe. But above all, the low numbers of migrant traders in Andalusia, as opposed to towns situated further north, may limit the commercial competition: "In France, there are no more opportunities now, because there are too many of us", told me Hedi, a young Algerian who came to Almería to open a phone-taxi service after having spent ten years in Germany and France.

So economic successes are possible in Andalusia and sometimes go with specific forms of relationship with the territory. The legality of the administrative situation, the seasonal character of the work, and the existence of the border allow migrants – such as

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[23] Indeed, this sector employs people from Maghreb, Black Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

[24] Tarrius A., 2002, *La mondialisation par le bas. Les nouveaux nomades de l'économie souterraine*, Paris: Balland.

Senegalese itinerant traders with a tourist clientele, or agricultural workers who settle in Andalusia only during the harvest period – to shuttle between Spain and Africa and live then in two different countries. Those successful migrants would be a minority and we can wonder firstly, to what extent their economic initiatives represent a strategy to avoid low-paying jobs, that usually the Spanish society imposes on them; secondly, if the migrants' settlements are partly a consequence of the social relegation that migrants may experience in Spain.

All of this questions the correctness of the Spanish immigration policy, that may not take into account forms of *seasonal settlement* and may create *undeportable* migrants. All the more so since migrants in an irregular situation in Andalusia (employees or traders) point out their relative tranquillity regarding police control[25]. Yet, according to police trade unions, clandestine entries of migrants are much more significant in big towns' airports and on the Franco-Spanish border than on the Mediterranean coast. However, the political and media focus on the Spanish southern border suggests the contrary.

Then, we can ask what is at stake at this border, what is the purpose of these controls: could it be that other kinds of networks and activities may present a greater conflict potential?

Illegal Success Opportunities: The Example of Psychotropics at the Spanish Southern Border

At the doors of Andalusia, border crossings circumventing the law between the African continent and the Hispanic peninsula are inscribed in an old story and do not only concern migration. Thus, the Gibraltar zone is an historic space of contraband: cotton and cloth gave way to tobacco, cannabis – Morocco is the number one world producer – and cocaine, which took the "African road" because of police pressure on Galician networks.

[25] For A. Rea, tolerance and control are two sides of a new European migration policy, which turns undocumented migrants into overexploitable workers. See Rea A., 2003, "Politiques d'immigration: criminalisation ou tolérance?", *La pensée du Midi*, 10, Marseille: Actes Sud, pp.106-112.

Some evoke a *border moral* that may limit the importance of the law in social practices and that, reinforced by the economic weakness of the region, may be persistent until to date[26].

It is obvious that this geographical space presents some facilities for those who want to get involved in these traffics. So, the town of Barbate – whose unemployment rate exceeds 40% – is famous for the *"busquimanos"* phenomenon, i.e. teenagers paid for recovering on the beach packs of hashish that traffickers throw overboard when the police are chasing them. Likewise, Manolo, a former hashish trafficker explains to me that this work is socially considered as "normal", in the way that only "two Ceutas" do exist: "the Ceuta of the workers and the Ceuta of the Cosa Nostra, as I say". When he was 15, school friends introduced him to recovering money from Algeciras to Ceuta/Sebta, he then climbed up the rungs and finished his *career* – before being arrested – at the end of the 1990s by passing up to 250.000 kilos of hashish in a month. He did several back and forth between these "two Ceutas" and once, he even tried to settle down by preparing the entry concourse of the Guardia Civil. To leave those networks is not a problem because "there is always a supply". Then, earning a living by hashish trafficking is part of "the field of possibles" existing in that Hispanic-African border. Besides, in the province of Cádiz, hashish crossings are linked with small local groups, originally from the fishing sector and the tobacco contraband with Gibraltar. Customs officers give them a stamp of *morality* – distinguishing them from Spanish and foreign "*violent mafias"* of Málaga province – and fear this will be lost with the arrival of the new generation.

But for Manolo, such a morality may depend on both the kind of product and individual. For instance, he never wanted to enter the networks of cocaine, weapons, prostitution, and migrants because he refused to "play with the life of people" and above all because of safety reasons: "the theme of narco-trafficking is yet another world…there is a lot of money at stake […] for every thousand kilos of cocaine you have to put ten thousand kilos of hashish". Moreover, in this social world, the one of hashish traffic, rules may exist and allow people of different nationalities to get on and cooperate. According to Manolo, violence appears when someone steals merchandise or practises "unfair competition" by taking the clientele of someone else. So, to succeed in that world, one needs "gentlemen", i.e. people you can trust and who have enough "cold blood" to be competent and, above all, a good technical

[26] Interview with the journalist J. J. Téllez, 2004.

and social "infrastructure" on both sides of the border to assure the transport. The social transnational networks also allow to "lift up the coat" to find the one who disappears after having stolen some merchandise. Despite advanced technical means at the border, Cádiz customers I met estimated cannabis captures at best at 10% of the total entering Spain – even if those have been regularly increasing since 1995[27].

Finally, the links with the "legal world" are numerous. Then, the economic benefits resulting from these crossings probably explain why they inevitably go along with the corruption of politicians and civil servants in the concerned territories. As Manolo told me: "though they would like, they will never be able to control very much, the coast is very big"; before adding half of the "border controllers" are bribed: "you have to watch here, but if you watch there, I give you 3000 euros... damn about looking here or there!" Likewise, incomes are laundered in the tourist sector, linked to the building sector[28] and often benefit from societies opened at the trade board of Gibraltar, the Britain's off-shore enclave in Spain. In addition, in Melilla, a political leader from the opposition indicated to me that contraband of consumer goods from Melilla to Morocco may allow the laundering of hashish incomes: goods are paid in dirhams, so some informal *cambistas* practise a better rate of exchange than banks and their euros would be the ones of European hashish traffickers.

So, this geopolitical space may represent opportunities that any inhabitant may seize but also anyone in a halfway point between an economic migration and the start of illegal activities. Khaled, a young Moroccan who is estranged from his family, was working in Larache as a fisherman in a *patera* before emigrating to Spain. One night, his captain offered him to convey something else than fish: "he wanted to make a trip with hashish […] an English man came to Algeciras, he went to a place called Ketama, he bought chocolate, 2.500 kilos of chocolate, then he organized the trip from the land to the beach, with a 4x4, bringing the chocolate to the beach, and we took it from the beach to the high-sea, where there was the yacht of the English […] I did not know there was this work that night, because I work with fish". Another day, his participation concerned the organization of another kind of trip: "with people, without drugs, we were working until the 26th of October, he prepared people of Beni-

[27] Annual Data - "Ministerio del Interior".

[28] Operation "Ballena Blanca", 2005.

Mellal and Fkih-Ben-Salah [...] he took people in his home, on the 26th, and this time, not with a patera, but with a 9 meters zodiac." Khaled was in charge of bribing the warrant officer of the maritime station and of storing the petrol necessary for the transportation to Spain of twenty five migrants. It was the opportunity for him to enter Spain, where he wanted to build a better future.

Thereby, Andalusia, because of its economic weakness, its recent tourist development and its geo-political position of multi-borders and area crossing opened to international migrations and to different kinds of licit and illicit products, seems to be a space providing some leeway for transgressing the legal frame; so much so that people who might know that a total border control is impossible do not reason in terms of *legality* but of *morality*.

Towards a Socio-Economic Specificity of Border Space?

The analysis of border practices circumventing the law shows two "distances": on one hand, the distance existing between legal rules and social practices; on the other hand, the distance existing between the social experience of moving populations – that goes beyond national frames – and a legal administration which is still being developed within these frames. Consequently, the idea of a hermetic border dividing two sides – the one which is attacking it and the one which is defending it – does not make sense.

Indeed, these crossings suggest that the border is in the centre of a *movement space*, where boundaries between opening and closing, between legal and illegal are confused. Smugglers and crossers develop numerous competencies, create transnational networks, traverse national boundaries, learn how to cross the border, hijack it from its inclusion/exclusion functions. Then, as several researchers explain[29], they *subvert* the territoriality and the state's power: they show them the limits of their control possibilities on

[29] Donnan H., Wilson T.-M., 1999, *Borders, Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State*, Oxford: Berg; Constantin F., 1996, "L'informel internationalisé ou la subversion de la territorialité", *Cultures et Conflits*, 21-22, pp.311-345.

individuals. But also, these crossings *transform* the border spaces, in a way they contribute to *interdependency* between the territories on each side of the border. Indeed, they enable the development of vast underground markets – psychotropics, property corruption, contraband, employment contracts... – but also of various official economic sectors - tourism, agriculture, small trade… The border and above all its clearing become a resource: smugglers, crossers and local economic actors, all partly depend on the existence of the border. For all of this, we can consider the border spaces as a *specific socio-economic system;* however, all are not equal in that system: undocumented migrants – notably those who do not benefit from mutual aid networks – become cheap merchandise within our democratic occidental societies.

But this specificity does not efface the diversity of border spaces. Those are meeting points but also convergence zones of multiple conflicts[30]. Now, we can assume that this increases with the multiplicity of borders and the disparities they imply, but also with the nature of the merchandise, or rather its financial value. Thus, thinking about the border from a standpoint of its circumvention enables us to understand the particularity of some EU regions, which would somehow be outside of their own working legal frame, and therefore opened to a *criminogenous* generalization[31].

[30] According to the terms of Ceyhan A., 1997, "États-Unis: frontière sécurisée, identité(s) contrôlée(s)?", *Cultures et Conflits*, 26-27, pp.235-254.

[31] A. Tarrius (2002, *op. cit.*) shows a moral boundary separating Andalusia from the rest of Spain, i.e. migrant networks of the underground economy of unlawful products from those of unlawful products. Crime extension would be so generalized in Andalusia.

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