Intra-European Migration and the Mobility—Enclosure Dialectic

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ABSTRACT

European migrants to Spain's coastal areas could be described as the archetypal elite transmigrant. Embodying Papastergiadis' spectre of placeless capital and the homeless subject, 'residential tourists' make creative use of modern communication technologies and increasingly accessible air travel to construct fluid migration trajectories, employing transnational affective and instrumental networks. However, research on British migrants to Spain has revealed a high incidence of social, cultural, economic, and political exclusion. Following a dream of starting a new life in a new place, some migrants do not wish to transcend the assimilationist model, nor have the resources to depend on transnational ties.Their dream is integration, but the tensions inherent in the mobility–enclosure dialectic – the contradictions between freedom of movement and the reassertion of the nation state, an ambiguous status in Spanish society, their own ambivalent attitudes – constrain both assimilation and their ability to transcend it and lead to marginalization.

Migration literature has accused mainstream social science of methodological nationalism and proposed (and celebrated) the concept of transnationalism as a more appropriate way to describe contemporary migrant identities and communities. However, others are increasingly noting the existence of counter-flows to globalization. This article uses the concept of a mobility–enclosure dialectic to explore the tension between processes that enable and induce movement and the ongoing processes of border maintenance that reinforce the continuing salience of place. The project reported here explored the meaning and experience of integration for north European migrants to Spain. Informed by the literature on transnationalism it looked at economic, political, social and cultural connections with home. True to the notion that places still matter, I was also concerned with experiences of belonging and the nature of concrete ties, friendships and social life within Spain. On the one hand the project found confirmation of earlier analyses, that European migrants to Spain's coastal areas could be described as the archetypal post-modern transmigrant. On the other hand, the project noted the existence of a less flexible and fluid trend of migrants who had simply moved from one place to another hoping to settle more permanently, but who are effectively excluded from various realms of social, economic, political and cultural life. This group of migrants are victims of a whole series of contradictions indicative of the tension inherent in a mobility–enclosure dialectic. They are motivated to move by the dynamics of globalization, especially the existence of Europe's open internal borders; however they are subject to contradictory state border controls. They have an ambiguous status in Spanish society of temporary migrant or 'residential tourist'. They express an ambivalent relationship to Spain, indicative of Britain's more general ambivalence in Europe, yet are frustrated not to be more integrated. Embodying the dialectic, they seem unable to escape their Britishness, yet remain not within and not outwith the new place.

The Globalization of Migration

Globalization literature describes an increased awareness of the world as a single place; a world characterized by complex mobilities and interconnections (Robertson, 1992); a world where boundaries and borders are increasingly porous (Inda and Rosaldo, 2001). In the globalized world the authority of the nation state is attenuated in the face of supra-national, transnational, and global institutions (Rosenau, 1997; Sassen, 1996). The globalization of migration has involved an increase in numbers of people moving within and across state borders, to the extent that what was once seen as a temporary aberration, a problem, is now considered the norm (even though most people never move). Travel and tourism is now the largest industry in the world (Urry and Sheller, 2004). Indeed, migration has been described as constitutive of modern life: in 'liquid' modernity we are compelled by the need to keep

moving even when we are no longer clear why (Bauman, 2000; Papastergiadis, 2000: 12). But, not only has migration increased, it has changed its form. Where migration was traditionally a one-off move to a new life in a new place, contemporary moves are multidirectional, blurring the distinction between migration and tourism (Williams et al., 2000). As a result (it is argued), space has a new irrelevance; it may now, literally, be traversed in no time (Bauman, 2000); home and belonging are no longer place based; and the local has become less meaningful, as we experience time–space distanciation (Giddens, 1990).

During the 1990s migration literature began to accuse mainstream social science of methodological nationalism, of acting as if the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the world (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002a: 302), and to propose the concept of transnationalism as a more appropriate way to describe and explore contemporary, novel, migrant identities and communities (Faist, 2000; Glick Schiller, 1997; Urry, 2000; Vertovec, 1999). Alejandro Portes et al. (1999: 217), for example, argue that we have witnessed the emergence of a new social field in which mobile individuals and communities increasingly live dual lives, forging social contacts and making a living across national borders, while speaking the language of both countries and retaining both as home. Nina Glick Schiller and her colleagues use the label 'transmigrants' for the individuals who maintain these affective and instrumental relationships across national borders (Basch et al., 1994; Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002b). The transnational elites, a term used for highly skilled professionals in global cities (Beaverstock, 2005), are the archetypal transmigrant; the nomadic worker, the embodiment of flows of knowledge, skills and intelligence who occupy segregated communities in cross-border space (Castells, 2000).

However, while contemporary attempts to describe the modern world increasingly rely on such metaphors of mobility, fluidity, flux and flow (Bauman, 2000; Hannerz, 1992; Papastergiadis, 2000; Urry, 2000), others are increasingly noting the existence of counter-flows to globalization. Peter Kivisto (2001) has argued there is no reason to assume that all modern migrants are transmigrants. On the one hand, the mere fact they have not severed all ties with the homeland does not make them necessarily different from earlier migrants and, on the other hand, we should not forget the continuing lure of adaptation. Among others, Brubaker (2005) has argued there is no reason yet to herald the era of unprecedented porosity of borders and Faist (2000) notes that place still counts when the role of states is so crucial in determining the fates of migrant groups. Cunningham and Heyman use the concept of a mobility–enclosure continuum to acknowledge the tension between processes that enable and induce movement and the ongoing processes of border maintenance that delimit and restrict the movement of ideas, people and goods. Acknowledging that globalization has not been able to wipe out all aspects of the local, a range of studies have explored inter alia the roles that borders play in the contemporary world economy: struggles around state borders; identity documents and surveillance; the cultural construction of space and place; and ongoing nation-building and state-making processes (2004: 289–90). Borders are not simply territorial sites but 'ongoing, dialectical processes that generates (sic) multiple borderlands spaces, some of which are not located very close to the official international boundary itself' (Staudt and Spener, 1998: 4, cited in Cunningham and Heyman, 2004: 292). Borders are continually made and remade in the context of mobilities (of goods, people and ideas); they are 'places' where nation states play a role in shaping the lives of border people but also places where social identities are negotiated and contested.

The Project

North Europeans (especially British and Germans) have been migrating to Spain's coastal towns in increasing numbers since the 1980s. However, research has tended to focus on the migration of older people and/or retirement (Casado-Díaz et al., 2004; Gustafson, 2001; King et al., 2000; Rodríguez et al., 1998; Rodríguez and Salvà Tomàs, 2001). O'Reilly's (2000) ethnographic study explored the way of life of British migrants of all ages, but this research is now outdated. Since the free movement of individuals in Europe was introduced in the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, and increasingly since the late 1990s, Spain's tourist towns have experienced huge population growth and increasing European immigration, to the extent that the presence of a fluid, multinational migrant population is becoming a

feature of everyday life for people in towns such as those covered by this article. The effects of this mass migration at the local level have been augmented by the passing of time and continued property development; inland areas are being affected as people look for cheaper property and land away from the built-up coastal zones; and increasingly younger people and families are migrating to Spain. Spanish academics have begun researching the topic from the perspective, again, of retirement migration (Echezarreta Ferrer, 2005) and there is a growing literature on residential tourism (the phenomenon of second home ownership and seasonal, longer-term tourism, for example Aledo and Mazón, 2004), but little attention to the community as a whole.

The project reported here aimed to explore the meaning and experience of integration for north European migrants to Spain. Fieldwork was carried out between 2002 and 2004 in Fuengirola, Mijas and Alhaurin el Grande, in the province of Málaga.1 A multi-method ethnographic approach was employed, including a 53-item questionnaire survey of north European migrants;2 65 qualitative interviews with (mostly British) migrants and with Spanish individuals who have regular contact with migrants; eight group interviews with migrants (including children); and 48 essays on the topic of Living in Spain collected from children aged 12–14 years. Participant observation was undertaken over two six-month periods in various sites between 2003 and 2004, which included many further interviews. The growing literature on transnationalism, discussed above, informed a focus on friendships and social life, and economic, political, social and cultural connections with home. Nevertheless, true to the notion that places still matter, I was concerned with experiences of belonging and the nature of concrete ties within Spain.

Transnational Elites

The project found some confirmation of earlier analyses, that European migrants to Spain's coastal areas (the Costa del Sol, Mallorca, the Costa Blanca) could be described as the archetypal post-modern transmigrant (see Ackers and Dwyer, 2004; Casado-Díaz et al., 2004; Gustafson, 2001; King et al., 2000; O'Reilly, 2000; Rodríguez and Salvà Tomàs, 2001). They take advantage of Europeans' right to free movement and construct fluid and flexible migration trajectories. Blurring the distinction between migration and tourism, they migrate, oscillate, circulate or tour between their home and host countries. Some retain a home in more than one place, some work in one place and live in another; others simply move, while others still simply visit. There are peripatetic migrants, seasonal migrants and temporary migrants, and any attempt to categorize their moves fails as the individuals themselves periodically alter their migration patterns and thus their legal status (Casado-Díaz et al., 2004; Gustafson, 2001; Williams and Hall, 2002). Embodying Papastergiadis' (2000) spectre of 'placeless capital' and the 'homeless subject', they make creative use of modern communication technologies as well as of increasingly accessible air travel to stay in touch with people at 'home' (Huber and O'Reilly, 2004). They have not moved for work or asylum, as most migrants; no one expects them to assimilate; they happily retain their own cultures and construct transnational communities that transcend place.

There are some restrictions to, and regulation of, movement in Europe, but many migrants find creative ways of moving around, within and between any borders and boundaries, seeming able to turn every new rule or regulation to their own ultimate advantage. Ackers and Dwyer (2004: 471), for example, found that 'many (intra-European) retirement migrants are resourceful in negotiating and re-negotiating the most advantageous welfare "deal" for their situation'. Younger, peripatetic migrants, conversely, can live and work in one country while actually spending leisure time amounting to legal residence in another. For these groups, living in transnational space is a positive experience. They are the highly mobile elite (Papastergiadis, 2000: 85) who move to new places in order to exploit local resources, but make little or no effort to invest in the local economy. They are taking advantage of lower property prices, a cheaper cost of living, and a good infrastructure (developed for tourism) in order to improve their own lives. They move on when things get too expensive in an area, increasingly seeking out the cheaper places to exploit. They chose Spain from a number of options, are often well travelled, and have expectations to continue to travel. They have often been expatriates in their working lives (Casado-Díaz et al., 2004; King et al., 2000). They may know how to 'speak local' (Papastergiadis, 2000: 88) but perceive themselves as belonging to a social space that is outwith nations.

The Continuing Salience of Place

However, it is important not to allow the focus on transnationalism to restrict our gaze, or to put it more poetically, 'when you take an intellectual ride on a metaphor it is important that you know where to get off' (Hannerz, 2000: 6). The representation of the British in Spain needs fragmenting to include people who want, to some extent, to settle in places but are victims of the mobility–enclosure dialectic and its struggles at border sites.3 My research participants include many migrants who do not exhibit fluid and flexible mobility patterns but have simply moved from one country to another in the hope of improving their lot. They are not attempting to transcend the old assimilationist model of immigration (Brubaker, 2005); they are unaware that theories of migration have moved beyond analyses of unidirectional moves. Following a dream of starting a new life, they have sold up and moved out. Much less likely than the elites to have lived abroad before, Spain is not a mere position on a migration trajectory but a final destination.4 Like the elites, they are taking advantage of lower prices and a good infrastructure, but this group emphasizes reasons for leaving Britain rather than the attractions of Spain. They wanted to escape a country that was failing them: they consider they have little future in the UK, or little to lose and the move was a last ditch attempt to make a go of things for themselves and their families.

Many of these migrants had low-paid jobs in the UK, were unemployed, redundant, or were struggling entrepreneurs. They describe their move in the context of escape – from stressful jobs or the threat of unemployment – but also from high crime rates, run-down inner city areas, and dangerous neighbourhoods. They worried about their children's futures and wanted to give them a better start or they were anxious about the quality of retirement that was looming ahead. They had doubts about the real value of UK pensions, or the ability to rely on sickness or unemployment benefit in times of difficulty, and expected to gain better quality of life for less money in Spain. They use language like 'getting out of the trap', 'escaping', or making a 'fresh start'.

Katy and Dave, for example, are in their twenties and moved to Spain because they were fed up of working in 'dead-end jobs' and could not afford UK property prices. Katy now works as an estate agent on commission only, and Dave works as a gardener for other migrants. They obtained a mortgage to buy a flat in Spain but Dave is not earning enough to set up a legitimate business and is currently working informally. Meanwhile Katy is struggling as house prices in the area soar and sales plummet.

John and Nicola moved from Yorkshire because their oldest son had been in trouble with the police three times and they were worried he would end up in jail. They had their own cleaning business which was failing, saw the television programme A Place in the Sun and, as Nicola put it, 'we thought, why not let's just give it a go? What have we got to lose?' They sold the business and their house, bought a property in the inland area of the Málaga province, put the children in Spanish school and looked for work. Two years later, Nicola has a job as a cleaner. John is still looking for work and is doing cash paid, odd jobs.

While transnational elites make creative use of 'distance eclipsing' telecommunication and transport systems to forge transnational lifestyles beyond states, other British migrants cannot afford to. Those who are working or have commitments in Spain cannot visit friends and family back home more than once or twice a year. Of the respondents to the survey 30 percent had spent less than two weeks at home in the past year and a further 30 percent had spent between two and four weeks. This is not evidence of a flexible migration trend. The migrants we are talking about here are taking advantage of modern communications – low budget airlines, online flight bookings, emails and text messaging – to stay in touch with family and friends at home, but this is not enabling them to live fluid, flexible lives. Indeed, access to computers and the internet is lower for this group because many are living in inland areas without access even to fixed telephones. Pre-migration cultures, networks and capital may remain salient but they do not replace place for this group. These migrants do not have, or indeed want, what Brubaker (2005) calls, in his analysis of the concept of diaspora, an alternative to life in territorially and nationally marked groups. Louise, for example, is 24 years old and moved to Spain to be with her family, but also to integrate with Spanish society. She said:

I don't understand why you would want to go and live in a country and not, you know, I mean you go there because you like the country and the people, and the life and so on.

But Julie and Richard, an early retired couple, feel disappointed they are not more integrated than they are. They went to Spain because they liked the country and the people and they wanted to mix and be part of things.

Similarly, while transnational elites embody placeless capital, other migrants do not. Some have simply sold up and moved, taking their savings with them. They have reinvested in Spain, in property or a business, are living off their savings until they (hopefully) find work, or, like Mike and Judith, who are both in their early fifties, have put their savings in a bank account and have calculated that if they are prudent this will last until they reach retirement age and can claim UK state pensions. Some have property in the UK, giving them a regular rental income. Others, like Peter, a 39-year-old man with three children, have a modest pension from an earlier employment period. But these people are not moving money around the globe to take advantage of fluctuating exchange rates and offshore tax breaks. They have simply transferred from one nation to another, and are finding assimilation a distant goal.

Social Exclusion

One of the more surprising findings of the research was the extent to which British migrants of all ages were in effect excluded, along various dimensions. Social exclusion is generally seen as a combination of adverse social situations, for example unemployment, unfavourable market situation, low earnings, poor health and/or living conditions, plus the inability to build social networks. Or, indeed, social exclusion is 'the dynamic process of being shut out … from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society' (Walker and Walker, 1997: 8). This research revealed extensive evidence of British migrants working in the informal economy, paying no income tax or national insurance contributions, relying on emergency state health provision or inadequate private insurance, who are confused about what they are supposed to do to be legal residents, who are neither registered with their town hall nor have residence permits, who do not know who to turn to in times of difficulty, who cannot speak the language adequately and come unstuck when they need to call the police or an ambulance. There are those who, having moved to Spain, no longer have the right to use the national health service in the UK, have severely reduced their entitlements to UK pensions and social service benefits, yet are not addressing this through private or Spanish provision. I met many migrants who do not know whether their homes in Spain are legally built, who do not have deeds to their homes, or who bought land with planning permission which was later refused. I was introduced to families with children in private, International school who struggle to afford the fees, families with children in Spanish school who are not managing to learn the language or integrate, and families with children who are not even in school.

The results of the survey revealed the following: 78 percent of respondents were living in Spain all year, yet one-third of respondents never meet Spanish family, friends or work colleagues; 60 percent only 'get by' or 'speak a few words' of Spanish, while only 2 in 10 can hold a conversation (and this does not necessarily mean they are fluent). Only 9 percent have ever voted in an election in Spain, with half of those not voting either not having the right papers or enough information. Eleven percent admit they have worked informally or casually in Spain. Most of the 25 percent who are currently working are self-employed. There has been a burgeoning of small businesses and self-employment in southern Spain to the extent that, in one area to the west of Málaga, adverts for services in English fill an 80-page booklet (see http://inlandmagazine.com/ CMS/). Many of these are informal (unregistered) businesses. Half of the respondents do not have residence cards and a third are not registered at the town hall (this figure is probably an under-estimation since those who are legal are more likely to complete survey questionnaires). The head teacher of an International school explained how fees have to be kept as low as possible as many of her pupils are from lower-income families. Many of the pupils in this school had attended Spanish school but were not able to settle. All the children interviewed had experienced racist

taunts or abuse from Spanish children or knew another child who had. Most of this had occurred in the streets or in Spanish schools. All knew of other European children who were not even attending school.

The Mobility–Enclosure Dialectic

I want to argue, based on the evidence of my own and existing research, that permanent migrants are victims of a whole series of contradictions indicative of the tension inherent in a mobility–enclosure dialectic: the twin dynamics towards and against increased mobility; and the social, political, economic and cultural ambivalence around porous borders. The migrants in this study were motivated to move by the dynamics of globalization, especially the existence of Europe's open internal borders, but they remain subject to contradictory and ambiguous state border controls. They have an ambiguous status in Spanish society of, at best, temporary migrant or, at worst, tourist. They express an ambivalent relationship to Spain, indicative of Britain's more general ambivalence in Europe, yet are frustrated not to be more integrated. They are unable to escape the fact that they remain members of a nation state, and the attempt to loosen these ties is leading to social exclusion. The following paragraphs explore these proposals.

Mobility and Enclosure

The motivation to move is linked to the ability to imagine an alternative (Papastergiadis, 2000), and this alternative has been presented to British people through a media onslaught. Television programmes such as Get a New Life and A Place in the Sun, marketing the dream of a home abroad and a new life in sunnier and more tranquil climes, have been bombarding UK television screens for the past decade. It would be difficult never to have seen a programme tempting the audience with images of warmth, beauty, tranquillity and cheap property. The effects can vary from mere suggestion to a more direct effect. Billy and Susan, for example, in their early thirties with two young children, were actually funded for the first two months of their move to Spain by the Channel Four programme Get a New Life.

Fuelled by the dynamics of globalization, and especially the idea of free movement within Europe's borders, the idea of 'free' has been taken to its limits. Migration to Spain is migration to an idea: of freedom, escape and new beginnings (O'Reilly, 2000). Furthermore, fuelled by the increase in low-budget airlines, these immigrants have often spent holidays in the area they move to (O'Reilly, 2003; Williams and Hall, 2002), have met other migrants and, understandably, attempt to emulate the lifestyles of the transnational elite. As one migrant put it 'why should it just be the rich who get to live in the beautiful countries?' Of course, like all north–south intra-European migrants (whether retired or working, old or young, fluid or settled) they are attracted by warmer weather, the benefits to health, cheaper prices, and a good infrastructure, and, increasingly, the existence of compatriots who help them settle and offer a range of services in their own language (Casado-Díaz et al., 2004; Huber and O'Reilly, 2004).

However, freedom of movement is tempered with the need for state apparatuses to control their borders. Even in Europe the notion of citizenship remains spatially delimited, not least because 'fiscal practice and actuarial processes presume a more or less static and bounded populace and a "normal" lifecourse that proceeds from a phase of contributions to a phase of claims' (Ackers and Dwyer, 2004: 463). The concept of mobility remains at odds with policies of stability. Europeans still have to determine where they live for tax purposes, for paying national insurance contributions, and for making claims. They have to decide which health service to use, and using one can mean losing another. And there are myriad and contradictory rules and regulations to abide by, as the institutions of state attempt to regulate, document and control even the elite transmigrants. For example, according to most sources (e.g. British Embassy web pages, Foreign Residents Departments in Spain, lawyers advising expatriates), Europeans resident in Spain for more than 182 days in a year are obliged to obtain residence cards and to register with their local town hall. Once registered as resident they are obliged to change their driving licence to a Spanish one and to change their car registration to Spanish plates. (This latter is being challenged through the European courts, but in the meantime drivers are being fined for non-conformance.)

However, while some sources say residence cards are obligatory, others say they are merely advisable. One lawyer advises all his clients to obtain residence cards while another insists:

Now it is not obligatory for people coming from other EU countries to have residency. If you have an NIE number, which is your fiscal number, if you are on the electoral role, the empadronamiento, and if you have an in-date national passport, then you can live quite happily here in Spain without applying for residency.

Employed migrants, especially, have been told they do not need (or indeed are automatically allocated, though they never receive them as such) residence cards. One British woman has been told (by the Spanish Embassy in Peru) that her Peruvian husband can only join her in Spain once she has her residence card, yet when she applied she was told by the national police in Málaga that she does not need one. Meanwhile banks are using the card as evidence of residence before they will allocate residents' bank accounts; and telephone companies are asking for the residence card as proof of residence in Spain before arranging mobile or fixed telephone contracts.

For people who are living fluid, flexible lifestyles with homes in one country and jobs in another, or moving back and forth between two homes, these rules are difficult to adhere to. Determining country of residence affects access to resources such as health care, voting rights, and pension eligibility in both countries. Some find creative ways of dealing with these ambiguities, switching place of residence to best suit immediate individual needs. Other migrants simply do not know the best way to weave through the myriad rules, do not know who to turn to (and cannot afford to pay) for advice. Given the existence of a confusing array of frightening rules and regulations on the one hand, and the possibility to simply stay quiet and hidden on the other, many opt to retain an ambiguous status between states – the status of the excluded. Because they want to avoid doing the wrong thing, they avoid doing anything.

An Ambiguous Status

The mobility–enclosure dialectic involves ideas about, attitudes towards, classification of, relationship with, and policies for mobile others. British migrants in Spain are viewed ambiguously in terms of mobility rather than settlement, and this affects actions towards them. The term 'residential tourist', for example, is being used increasingly by estate agents, council officials, the Spanish tourist board, local newspapers, and some Spanish academics to problematize this migration trend (Aledo and Mazón, 2004; Casado-Díaz, 2001; Rodríguez and Salvà Tomàs, 2001). It remains to be adequately defined but generally refers to property ownership and short-term residence that falls short of migration, and is commonly applied to all north European migrants without distinction or clarification. Meanwhile academics who explore immigration in Spain tend not to include Europeans (King et al., 2000).

At the level of policy, clear European Union guidelines are established and there is, arguably, no need for a national policy on migration for Europeans. Solé and Parella (2003) have argued that Europeans are generally thought to be well-off, retired citizens who are in Spain only temporarily and it is left to local councils to decide how to deal with what can now be quite an influx of working and school-age immigrants in some areas. The result is ad hoc solutions to perceived problems, a confusing array of ever-changing rules and regulations, and a general dismissiveness. Local council offices in areas with high European populations are increasingly developing special departments to deal with foreign residents and 'residential tourists', but many combine services for tourists and migrants. The first Department for Foreign Residents, opened by Mijas Council in 1985, offers help for the foreigners residing (permanently or temporarily) in the area in various matters from obtaining a residence permit to filling in tax returns. However, they also spend a considerable amount of time arranging social activities for both migrants and tourists, thus blurring the boundary between migration and tourism. In the early years the foreigners' department and the tourist office were combined. They are now separate but their remits (and staff) still overlap.

The policy attitude is reflected in a popular one. It became clear in interviews that Spanish people confuse migrants and tourists, often appearing unable to distinguish between them. A Spanish youth, for

example, who was interviewed in an International school was asked how he felt about there being so many foreigners living in the area and he replied:

Well, er, it's, it's good for, for the Spanish people, tourism and, it's good for us, and we welcome to, er, to receive as many tourists as I can, and it's, er, and we, I, er, I have a good relation with the, er, the tourists that come here.

I replied that those who are at school are obviously not tourists though and he replied, 'No, well, I suppose they, they do come here as tourists and then they like it so, so they stay'. Spanish people also still see the British migrants as 'other', expressed in a lack of interest on both sides in any form of social integration. The reaction can be summed up by one respondent: 'I don't mind them being here, they are good for the economy, but they don't want to integrate, well most of them are not going to settle here anyway'. An Italian businessman told me: 'I actually think the Spanish would like it if the foreigners bought the land, spent their money here, and then left and gave them their land back'.

Ambivalent Relations

There is little social integration between Spanish and British people, as has been clearly demonstrated (King et al., 2000; O'Reilly, 2002, 2003; Rodríguez et al., 1998). For transnational elites, for whom place is somewhat irrelevant, this may not matter. For them integration is somewhat of a meaningless goal (Huber and O'Reilly, 2004). Others do want to mix but are finding it very difficult. Some feel very strongly that their efforts are being impeded. John, who studied Spanish for a number of years and intended to integrate fully, reported bitterly, 'you soon realize you can't integrate, they don't want you to integrate. There's too many stumbling blocks. I don't think they even like us.' And Scott, a 14-year-old boy, reported that he had wanted to be much more integrated but realized it wasn't going to happen, 'all my friends are English. We wanted to make friends with Spanish, but they don't want to know. You just give up in the end.'

Conversely, the migrants' relationship with Spain is fraught with ambivalence (O'Reilly, 2002). British people expressing a desire to integrate nevertheless spend most of their time within their own ethnic communities (Huber and O'Reilly, 2004). While considering Spain their home they continue to call the UK home on many telling occasions. Those who are working informally are usually working with and for other migrants. Many expressed frustration at the requirements to register their residence, see Spain as a place that symbolizes holiday and escape (and tourism), and declare a love of Spain while reminding each other 'we are guests here' (O'Reilly, 2000). They demonstrate a peculiarly British keenness to engage in associative life, but their associations are British ones (King et al., 2000). It seems the British people cannot escape their Britishness; they are an embodiment of the mobility–enclosure dialectic.

Ambivalent relations also lead to poor economic integration. Some migrants in this research hoped to work in the Spanish economy but this rarely happens in an area where the rate of unemployment is still one of the highest in Europe (Solé and Parella, 2003). Others do not even expect to be able to compete equally in the Spanish employment market, and establish entrepreneurial, marginal, often informal businesses within the local expatriate community instead (see Madden, 1999). Others still know that they can command higher wages working for their compatriots (especially for the transnational elite), and can avoid taxes. Ken and Ruby, for example, are both in their early fifties. Ken was made redundant as a mechanic and was unable to find re-employment in the UK. He calculated that if they sold their house in England they could buy cheaper in Spain and live off the equity until one of them found work. Ken hoped to find temporary employment until he reached pension age, but has only found irregular, low-paid cash jobs. As a result they have no access to public health provision and cannot afford private health insurance. Those who take this route often intend to join the system but time goes on and they either continue to avoid paying because no one has caught up with them or they continue being unable to pay. The fact that Spanish social security has to be paid for 15 years before it leads to a pension entitlement also puts off people who have simply moved to Spain to see how they get on, are muddling

along until they reach retirement age and can claim a UK pension, or are earning so little they are not sure they will stay.

Conclusion

Of course, to some extent the idea of freedom of movement in Europe is a reality. It is possible, after all, to simply pack one's bags and go to Spain. One can simply rely on emergency or temporary health cover, can avoid paying tax and social security, can avoid registering with the town hall, and can work informally as and when necessary. There is always the feeling that if all else fails a UK resident can go home and turn to the welfare state for help. But most migrants in this study did not actually intend to stay on the margins, or to live precarious lives. They wanted to set up businesses, to learn the language, to settle permanently. They wanted their children to settle in Spanish school and to fully integrate, broadening their options in the Spanish labour market in the future. Judith and Mike have tried desperately hard to learn about the Spanish language and culture. Stuart and Maria intend to stay in Spain for the rest of their lives and have sent their children to Spanish school hoping they will thus see Spain as their future home and workplace. Peter told us his one dream was that his children would all meet Spanish partners and that they would become a multi-cultural family. Unlike the transnational elites, this group did intend to invest time, money and emotions in the new place. They do not see themselves as belonging to a place outwith nations. They could be blamed for not learning the language, for not discovering what the rules are and abiding by them, but perhaps they were simply realistic. This was never about integration. It was part of the globalization trend, but globalization is both nations and the world, mobility and enclosure, hybridity and reassertion of cultural difference. The outcome of the contradiction between mobility and place, for some, is social exclusion, and exclusion interacts with exclusion. In functionally differentiated societies there are various systems within which one can be included: the labour market, the health system, the political system, the economy, and the educational system, and exclusion in one functional realm precludes inclusion in others (Halfmann, 1998). Those who cannot afford to pay social security contributions are unlikely to pay income tax, and tend neither to register with the town hall. Those who are not on the town hall register cannot vote in local elections; those who do not have a residence card cannot obtain a resident's bank account or a mobile phone with a contract. Those who are paying no national insurance contributions have no access to sick pay, pensions, or unemployment benefit. People living on small savings and/or irregular incomes are unlikely to have health insurance, while only those who are retired or paying national insurance contributions have the right to use the national health service in Spain. People who know their home is illegally built are afraid to register with their town hall because they are not paying council tax on their property. People who do not register with the town hall continue to drive a car on British registration plates yet cannot obtain a legal certificate of roadworthiness. People who know they are working informally or their home is illegal are reluctant to become socially integrated in Spanish society, while those who are working in the marginal economy have no opportunity to integrate. Some can respond to the ambiguities of mobility and enclosure by occupying a liminal space in flows, for others borders are reasserted through rules and regulations, through cultural and language differences, through social and economic isolation, while assimilation remains elusive.

Notes

1
According to the town hall registers (www.ine.es) 9 percent of the population of

Alhaurin el Grande is European and 70 percent of those are from the UK. Seventeen percent of the population of Fuengirola are European and 33 percent of those are from the UK. In Mijas, 33 percent of the population are European, 55 percent of which are from the UK.

2
There are 340 individuals in the sample: 45 percent male and 55 percent female. The youngest is 10 and the oldest is 89. Twenty-nine percent of the sample are from Alhaurin el Grande, 40 percent from Mijas, 10 percent from Coín and 7 percent from Fuengirola. Other respondents are from nearby towns and villages. Although the sample includes individuals from 10 nationalities, 84 percent of respondents are British.

3
This may not be a purely British phenomenon, but the research reported here was undertaken where the British were in the majority among EU migrants, and so far there is little evidence that other Europeans exhibit a similar migration trend.

4
Though earlier studies have reported high rates of previous experience of geographical mobility (Casado-Díaz et al., 2004), 70 percent of respondents to the survey reported here have not lived abroad before.

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