Swansea University, Department of Geography
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Thèse de doctorat

Exploring the role of new member state migrants in macro-regional integration in France and the UK

Explorer le rôle des migrants des nouveaux États membres
dans l'intégration macro-régionale en France et au Royaume-Uni

Mila SANCHEZ

Co-directed by Clarisse DIDELON-LOISEAU / Marcus DOEL
Yann RICHARD / Sergei SHUBIN

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Jury:

William BERTHOMIÈRE – Directeur de recherche, CNRS – Chair/Président du jury

Dr Kate BOTTERILL – Senior Lecturer at Glasgow University

Ségolène DÉBARRE – Maître de conférences, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

Dr Keith HALFACREE – Reader, Swansea University

Abstract:

The increase in migratory flows from the new European Union Member States (NMS) to the established ones, favoured by the dismantling of the Eastern bloc and the successive enlargements of the EU in 2004, 2007 and 2013, has led to an interest in the role of migrants from the NMS in the macro-regional integration process in Europe. Macro-regional integration refers to the construction of a region from the increase of interactions of all kinds (political, economic, social...) between societies and countries located in the same part of the world. Based on a constructivist approach and on the "new regionalism", this geography thesis shows how the mobility practices, spatial representations and feelings of belonging of NMS migrants contribute to the construction of a European space from below, underlying the one elaborated by institutional actors. By unpacking the notions of region and Europe, this research builds on previous work that has shown that Europe is a social construction, a fuzzy notion referring to a flexible, dynamic space of which the EU offers just one dimension. Methodologically, two types of data are mobilised: semi-structured interviews (103) and mental maps (83) were conducted with NMS migrants in a multi-phase and multi-localised research fieldwork in France (Nancy, Metz) and Wales (Swansea, Cardiff) in order to study individual migration experiences within urban contexts with different migration and integration policies.

Explorer le rôle des migrants des nouveaux Etats membres (NEM) dans l'intégration macro-régionale en France et au Royaume-Uni

Résumé :

L'augmentation des flux migratoires en provenance des nouveaux États membres de l'Union européenne (NEM) vers les anciens, favorisée par le démantèlement du bloc de l'Est et les élargissements successifs de l'UE en 2004, 2007 et 2013, conduit à s'intéresser au rôle des migrants des NEM dans le processus d'intégration macro-régionale en Europe. L'intégration macro-régionale renvoie à la construction d'une région à partir de l'augmentation d'interactions de toutes sortes (politiques, économiques, sociales...) entre des sociétés et des pays situés dans la même partie du monde. En s'appuyant sur une approche constructiviste et sur la théorie du nouveau régionalisme, cette thèse de géographie montre comment les pratiques de mobilités, les représentations spatiales et les sentiments d'appartenance des migrants des NEM contribuent à la construction d'un espace européen qui sous-tend celui élaboré par les acteurs institutionnels. En décortiquant les notions de région et d'Europe, cette recherche s'appuie sur des travaux antérieurs qui ont montré que l'Europe était une construction sociale, une notion floue renvoyant à un espace à géométrie variable dont l'UE n'est qu'une seule dimension. Sur le plan méthodologique, deux types de données sont mobilisés : des entretiens semi-directifs (103) et des cartes mentales (83) ont été réalisés avec des migrants des NEM lors d'un terrain de recherche multi-phase et multi-localisé en France (Nancy, Metz) et au Pays de Galles (Swansea, Cardiff) afin d'étudier les expériences migratoires individuelles au sein de contextes urbains où les politiques migratoires et d'intégration diffèrent.

UMR 8586 Prodig – Pôle de recherche pour l'organisation et la diffusion de l'information géographique – Campus Condorcet, Bâtiment Recherche Sud, 5, cours des Humanités, 93322 Aubervilliers

CMPR – Centre for Migration Policy Research - Department of Geography, Swansea University, Singleton Park Campus, Swansea, SA2 8PP

Declarations and Statements

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed: ███████████

Date: 14/10/2022

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Acronyms

- NMS: new member States
- NEM: nouveau Etat members
- EU: European Union
- UE: Union Européenne
- NRT: New regionalism theory
- OFFI: Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration
- CAI: Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration
- ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages courses
- ONS: Office of National Statistics
- UEFA: Union of European Football Associations
- NINo: National Insurance Number
- IFECO: Initiatives France Centrale et Orientale
- INFH: Initiatives France Hongrie
- SNS: Social Networking Site
- WRS: Worker Registration Scheme

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If it is traditional in a PhD to thank a certain number of people more or less involved in the conduct and success of the research, it is not by simple convention that I wish to thank all the cogs in this mechanism. Without the help, support, collaboration or mere presence of these people, this thesis would never have seen the light of day. In no particular order, I would like to thank the countless people who, over the years, have crossed my path and offered their support, including all those I will inevitably forget to mention. I am immensely grateful to them, for the help, backing and kind encouragement that has made this work possible.

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« *Peu importe la ville où l'on veut atterrir, c'est le voyage lui-même qui est la vie* »

Andreï Kourkov[1]

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[1] Kourkov, A. (2020). *Vilnius, Paris, Londres*. Liana Levi.

Chapter 1: General introduction

1. Origin of the PhD

This PhD results from a co-tutelage between Swansea University and Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University. The thesis project was born out of a meeting between two communities of researchers from France and Wales with common interests in international migration and regional integration. A successful application to the Labex Dynamite by the four supervisors of the PhD, Clarisse Didelon Loiseau, Marcus Doel, Yann Richard and Sergei Shubin, enabled the funding of this PhD, which was carried out over three and a half years in France and the United Kingdom between January 2019 and September 2022.

This thesis is in line with the research carried out by the Regional Integration research group within the Labex Dynamite and their collective book, *Le Dictionnaire de la régionalisation du Monde* (2018), which aimed to rethink both regional space and the notion of integration. This book, coordinated by Nora Mareï and Yann Richard, underlines the fact that the logic of globalisation has led the states to join forces in macro-regional groupings in order to compensate for their loss of power in the face of the rise of new factors, particularly economic ones. It insists on the fact that integration developed, at least initially, economically and commercially, far from the populations, and highlights the importance of building a sense of belonging that legitimises regional integration in the population's eyes and thus ensures their support. It underlines that little research has been dedicated to this process from "below", from the individual level, and suggests that international migration could be an interesting entry point for further research, as it is a regionalised social phenomenon. It is in this context that my thesis project emerged: it aims to contribute to the research on regional integration through the prism of individuals. Regional integration refers here to the formation of a functional region from the increase in exchanges and interactions of all kinds (economic, social, political) between countries and societies located in the same part of the world (Richard, 2014). In this case, we can speak interchangeably of "*macro-regional integration*" to clarify and distinguish this process, which takes place on an international scale, unlike that of regional integration, which can also refer to an infra-state phenomenon (Mareï and Richard, 2018).

This research topic, which forms part of the field of European studies, is rooted in the New Regionalism Theory (NRT), which argues that regional integration is not simply an institutional process that is steered from above by the governments. It recognises that populations who inhabit and practice the space, who invest it with meanings and representations are key actors, whose role in this process is still under-valued (Sérandour, 2020). As a result of my research during this doctorate, the various discussions with researchers in France and in the United Kingdom, as well as with numerous people during the fieldwork, I have come to the hypothesis that migratory flows from the new member state of the EU (NMS)[2] have geographical effects – that is to say, consequences for the territories and the societies that inhabit them. One of the first consequences is the production of increasingly close links between different neighbouring spaces, influencing representations and practices, to the point of producing a macro-region, which is understood as a continuous and functional multi-state entity (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000).

A macro-region, in this PhD is considered as a multi-state social construction resulting from the interweaving of the practices of actors of all kinds and at all levels: governments but also firms, civil societies, individuals, networks, diaspora (Richard, 2010). In contrast to a regional space deployed on a sub-state scale, a macro-regional space encompasses the whole or one or more parts of several neighbouring countries and forms a coherent and highly integrated continuous space. The macro-region, like the sub-state region, is a social construction, like any other form of spatial organisation (Paasi, 2010). As a social construct, a macro-region is a dynamic space with shifting, even blurred, boundaries (De Ruffray, 2007). A macro-region is not a fixed entity but can be made and unmade. A macro-region is not a purely formal construction, necessarily and only built institutionally, i.e., based on a regional agreement between the governments of neighbouring countries, but it can be produced more spontaneously by other actors in horizontal trans-state relationships.

The theorical contribution of this PhD lies in the fact that it offers another and more relevant reading grid for major contemporary issues in a context of globalization, by focusing on social dynamics that are taking place at a macro-regional level, considered as an

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[2] By NMS, I refer to the 13 countries that joined the EU in 2004, 2007 and 2013 (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Romania). These 13 countries were chosen because of their similarities including, among other things, recent entry into the European Union, membership of the former communist bloc, comparable socio-economic and political contexts, and similar emigration patterns.

intermediate scale between the local/national and the world. It considers that despite globalization, social dynamics, such as migration, are still partly determined by geographical proximity (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000). Thus, the macro-region appears relevant for dealing with some major issues such as international migration, which have been proven to be a regionalised phenomenon (Wihtol de Wenden, 2010). If the process of regional integration leading to the construction of a macro-region has been mostly studied from an institutional and top-down approach in disciplines such as economics, history and international relations, this PhD contributes to the field of regional integration by proposing a constructivist and bottom-up approach to this phenomenon.

2. Contextual background

23rd June 2016. As a result of a Brexit Referendum, the UK voted to leave the European Union. While the EU had been through many crises since its inception, the Brexit crisis was unprecedented: for the first time a member state, namely the UK, which had been a long-standing key player in the European construction,[3] went backwards and initiated the first stage of a laborious exit process that would take more than three years to complete. The 31st of January 2020 was named as the official date of the implementation of Brexit before the transition year.

This vote, which was rooted in the growth of right-wing nationalism and populist parties across Europe that supported the narrative of a European migration "crisis", can be interpreted as the symptom of a rise of Euro-scepticism in Europe. It can also be read as signalling the failure of the European community project and the lack of recognition of the British citizen in the project of European construction through the labour market. Although the economic crisis was a decisive argument in the vote, Brexit above all signified an identity crisis (Burrell and Hopkins, 2020): immigration was at the heart of the Brexit campaign and the constructed image of the foreigner appeared as the manifestation of an identity withdrawal whereby "us" is opposed to the "others". According to the survey Ipsos-MORI,[4] which was undertaken a week before the vote, immigration had become the number-one issue ahead of the economy for one in three voters and one in two Brexit

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[3] In 1973, the UK became member of the EEC, which replaced the European union after the Maastricht Treaty in 1992.

[4] www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3746/Immigration-is-now-the-top-issue-for-voters-in-the-EU-referendum.aspx Survey IPSOS-MORI, from 11 to 14 June 2016.

supporters (Charlot, 2016). A number of studies have shown a correlation between the negative attitudes towards immigration and the vote to Leave (Arnorssona and Zoega, 2018). While extra-European immigrants and refugees from the Middle East were particularly targeted, intra-European migrants were the first to be impacted by Brexit putting an end to the freedom of movement (Botterill and Hancock, 2018; Lulle *et al.*, 2018; Benson *et al.*, 2022). The Leave campaign supported the anti-immigration discourse, according to which the "uncontrolled mass immigration resulting from the right to freedom of movement" within EU was the reason for the strained National Health Service (Rzepnikowska, 2018). Brexit raised questions about British migration policy, particularly in relation to EU nationals: the right of EU nationals to live and work in the UK had to be rethought (Kone and Vargas-Silva, 2019). The supremacy of an exclusive and national identity, claimed by the Brexit voters, can be interpreted as the undermining of the European construction, as this was accompanied by a backtracking of Community rights.

The decade before Brexit saw a significant increase in intra-European migration: the last three waves of EU enlargement in 2004,[5] 2007,[6] and 2013[7] resulted in considerable migration within Europe, mainly from people moving from the new member states (NMS) into the old ones, from east to west. The exact number of NMS migrants living in Western Europe is difficult to estimate because having a visa is no longer necessary under the freedom of movement regime (Fihel *et al.*, 2006; Friberg, 2012; Kaczmarczyk and Okolski 2008). However, according to the World Bank (2006), 1.3% of Poles, 3.6% of Lithuanians, and 2.5% of Latvians left their countries of origin in the first twenty months after they joined the EU (Kaczmarczyk and Okolski 2008: 2; Van Riemsdijk, 2010).

The UK stands out among the old member states of the EU as a destination country, along with Sweden and Ireland, that opened its labour market to the NMS in 2004 immediately after the EU enlargement (Anderson *et al.*, 2006; Drinkwater *et al.*, 2010). Freedom of movement attracted many NMS migrants to the UK, especially Polish people. In 2015, Polish became the most common non-British nationality in the UK with 916 000 residents (16,5% of the total non-British national population resident in the UK according to the ONS). More generally, the ONS estimated that the vast majority of EU nationals living in

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[5] On 1 May 2004, ten new member states (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Malta, Cyprus and Hungary) joined the European Union.
[6] On 1 January 2007, Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU.
[7] On 1 July 2013, Croatia became part of the EU.

the UK, representing more than 50% of the 5 million foreigners in 2015, come from the countries of the former communist bloc (Poland and also the Baltic States, Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria). Hundreds of thousands of people thus have been affected by Brexit. In a short time, the migrants from the New Members States (NMS) went from being free movers at the time of their origin country's accession to the EU to being foreigners obligated to apply to the Settlement Scheme (*pre-settled/settled status*). The change in their legal social status, and the restriction on their rights and freedoms of movement have reignited debates around the integration of immigrants, reaffirming the primacy of borders and entrenching the divide between nationals and immigrants (Burrell and Schweyher, 2019; Botterill *et al.*, 2020).

The notion of integration appears as a multidimensional and fruitful aspect for understanding the geographical and social experiences of the NMS migrants, oscillating between dynamics of exclusion and integration in Europe. It is relevant to analyze how the NMS migrants' migratory experiences contribute to the construction of a European space, which is made from exchanges, representations, and mobilities.

It is important to clarify some positions taken by this PhD in this introduction. This thesis will not attempt to analyse exhaustively the dynamics and elements at play in the process of regional integration in Europe. Given the time and resources available to carry out this research, it was necessary to focus on one specific dimension of this process: without denying the role of institutions and state actors, as well as other social actors in regional integration, the focus is put intentionally on one single aspect of this construction. Indeed, regional integration is a multidimensional process, and it is not my intention to propose a complete and exhaustive definition of this process (assuming that this would be possible), but rather to show another way of approaching the subject by exploring the role of a specific population, namely NMS migrants, in regional integration. It is now appropriate to introduce the spatial and temporal framework of this thesis, before outlining the specifics of the theoretical framework. Then, the questions, objectives and organisation of the thesis will be presented.

3. In search of the European macro-region: does such a thing exist?

3.1. The spatial and temporal framework of the research

The regional level, even in the context of globalisation, has been presented as the key scale for understanding international relations, based on the fact that the vast majority of economic exchanges, political cooperation, and migration flows are concentrated at a macro-regional level (Mareï and Richard, 2018). Research has shown the determining role of proximity in migration flows by demonstrating that individuals are more likely to migrate to nearby countries, thereby contributing to the regionalisation of the world, or, in other words, to the organisation of the world into regional groupings composed of several close or neighbouring countries (Wihtol de Wenden, 2010). By studying these regional groupings, one is able to understand the spatial inscription of social, economic and political dynamics. However, this raises difficulties because depending on the criteria and dimensions considered, regional spaces vary.

The notion of a region has been addressed in several ways. These can be summarised according to three approaches: a naturalistic approach (referring to its physical elements such as reliefs, climates, and vegetation); a functionalist approach (based on the spatial relationships between different areas); and a constructivist approach (focusing on the cultural and social heritage). "Europe" is usually construed as a geographical or political entity in public and academic debates. Moreover, it is traditionally reduced to and examined through the prism of the European Union (EU), especially when it comes to its integration. By unpacking the notions of the region and of Europe, this research draws on previous works that have shown how Europe is a contextual, social construct, a fuzzy notion that refers to a space with variable geometries of which the EU is only one dimension (Toureille, 2017; Grataloup, 2009; Paasi, 2001). Indeed, several definitions of Europe overlap and cover different spaces.

Depending on whether Europe is studied from a political, geographical, or cultural perspective, the space in question varies considerably. The existence of "Europe" as a part of the World is commonly accepted, as shown by the Eurobroadmap survey (Beauguitte *et al*., 2012). However, its contours vary according to the criteria chosen and the factors involved

(Didelon *et al*., 2008). The multiple representations of Europe testify to the definitional vagueness of this geographical object and the lack of consensus regarding its identity and boundaries (Didelon, 2010). Europe as a continent is a construction situated in time and space (Grataloup, 2009) because the division of the world in continents is random: they are not natural physical units (given the continuity of its land with Asia, Europe is not one continuity of land masses and the tectonic plates argument do not apply to it).[8] Continental Europe does not, for example, share its form with community Europe (whose limits have been shifting from a group of 6 countries to 28 nations at its maximum), or the Europe of the Council of Europe (composed of 47 Member States), the Europe of the UEFA (composed of 54 members), or Europe defined as an area of civilisation by Huntington (1996). Nor does it necessarily coincide with the spaces to which the inhabitants belong, whose subjective contours are just as legitimate as those drawn for political or economic reasons. Though the European space varies significantly in its representations, it is often based on the integration of nation states.

The aim of this PhD is not to resolve the question of the contours of Europe since it would be impossible to go beyond the realm of the conventional and thus debatable. Rather, it will show that Europe is also not a homogeneous space: transnational links exist between several countries, constituting regional sub-groups within Europe, which are characterised by more intense interactions and exchanges between its spaces according to the criteria determined. The following map (see figure 1.1) presents examples of variable geometries that make up Europe, the shapes and limits of which contribute to the construction of a heterogeneous space.

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[8] "Europe" existed in representations long before there was any knowledge of plate tectonics – and even if one refers to this argument the limits of the European tectonic plate do not coincide with the Urals (it is a Eurasian plate).

Figure 1.1: Regional associations and organisations in Europe in 2018.

Les associations et organisations régionales en Europe

Légende:

- Pays méditerranéens de l'UE
- Convention alpine
- Groupe de Visegrad
- Benelux
- Conférence des Etats des Balkans occidentaux
- Zone commune de voyage
- Conseil nordique
- Assemblée balte
- Conseil des Etats riverains de la Baltique
- Organisation de Coopération économique de la Mer Noire
- Initiative des Trois Mers (3C)
- Forum 16+1

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Source: P. Orcier, 2018.

Although this map shows how the European space has been structured by institutions and governments *via* macro-regional agreements, it does not in any way indicate how the space is actually invested by practices. These regional agreements could well be frameworks for exchanges, which did not lead to the emergence of concrete exchanges. However, it illustrates both the way in which the macro-regional space can be invested by different actors and how there are multiple ways of imagining Europe with variable geometries according to the criteria considered.

Recent approaches to space have introduced the notions of relationality (Malpas, 2012; Anderson, 2012), networks (Viard, 1994; Castells, 1996), or archipelagos (Veltz, 1996) to deconstruct the idea of the region as a continuous space. Rather, they contribute to the notion of the region as a production of connections, interactions, and relations (Mareï and Richard, 2020). Paasi (2010) addresses the complexity and multidimensionality of a region and refers to it as an assemblage: "A 'region' is normally in a state of becoming, assembling, connecting up, centring, and distributing all kind of things. Yet it has not been always there: it has been constructed and will probably eventually disappear" (Paasi, 2010: 2299). This approach allows us to consider the region as a dynamic process and this requires us to address the temporal dimension. It also leads one to reflect on the notions of disconnections and boundaries in order to understand how a region is produced in differentiating a portion of space from other units of space in a fuzzy and a fluid way.

The phenomenological approach to space according to which our perception of reality is the product of a mental reconstruction leads one to conceiving of the region in terms of representations: the region only exists for the perceiving subject (Saint-Julien, 2004). According to this framework, the notion of a territory is fundamental (particularly in the context of the European construction). It also recalls the importance of social appropriation in producing a region, relying on the representations and feelings of belonging felt by the populations that inhabit and practice the space (Frémont, 1976; Ripoll and Veschambre, 2005).

In the face of these tensions and limitations of the definition of a region, the word "Europe" will refer in my PhD to a macro-regional space, a construction based on a regional imaginary with no boundaries defined *a priori*. The fixed limits of a supposed "European region" will be regularly questioned and I will use the word "Europe" as a deliberate abuse

of language to refer to the member countries of the European Union and their close neighbours. This PhD is in line with the theoretical debates of the 1980s and 1990s, which replaced Paul Vidal de la Blache's idea of the "natural region" with the idea that regions are not geographical facts, but social, political and cultural constructs that are influenced, for instance, by space. This study will consider regions as social and political constructs, based on "imaginary communities" (Anderson, 1983). Drawing on a definition of regions as spatial and temporal processes, which can be made and unmade, one is able to move away from the idea of regions as geographical facts or as ontologically given. Bearing in mind the possibility of shifting and non-definitive boundaries, Europe can be envisaged as a non-finite, dynamic, a multiple object with variable framings. The purpose is not to determine one boundary or study one specific and unified space, but to discover which macro-regional space makes sense for the NMS migrants without referencing to it directly.

The temporal boundaries of the research are based on the migratory' trajectories of the respondents and their timeframes. Migrations from the NMS will not be studied in an quantitative and historical way; the general dynamics of the flow and the migratory waves will form a necessary background with which to explain the results and analyse the interviews of the respondents. A few general historical lines will be presented in Chapter 4, which overviews the migration flows from the NMS.

3.2. A bottom-up approach to regional integration

Europe, as a macro-region, appears to be the result of a co-construction by various actors and dynamics but it is often studied from a politic and economic point of view. Only a few studies in Geography have questioned this macro-region through the prism of the population. By choosing to study the macro-regional integration from below, *via* the role of intra-European migration (especially from the NMS), this PhD develops a bottom-up approach. My research takes into account the fact that the regional space is never acquired in geography, unlike in other disciplines, and therefore mobilises a social-constructivist approach. This approach shows that regional integration in Europe is not only the result of dynamics implemented "from above", by governments and institutions, but that collective and/or individual practices also contribute to the construction of this geographical object that is commonly called "Europe". In my PhD, I decided to focus on mobility practices (rather than on other practices or on spatial practices in general) because the practices of mobilities,

at an international level, and in particular at a European level, are especially relevant in studying the creation of a European macro-regional space, since they provide information on the way in which the space is crossed, practised and invested by NMS migrants. Indeed, this type of mobility practice (rather than practices that take place at a local level) reveals the existence of the relationship that the respondents have with the European macro-regional space. This kind of mobility practices reveals the existence of this space as a macro-regional space that is inhabited and regularly (several times a year) crossed by NMS migrants.

While some researchers prefer to use the expression "from below" (such as Sylvie Strudel (2000) about "citizen's representations"), the use of the expression "bottom-up approach" is intended to place this research in the continuity of works (Bennafla, 2002; Pasquier, 2003; Diouf, 2006; Mareï and Wippel, 2020; Hettne and Söderbaum, 1998) which have shown that regional integration is not only a process that emanates from a political will, but also which results from the interests, decisions, practices, and representations of an individual or collective non-state group (Werlen, 2005). These studies do not deny the role of state actors but invite us to consider the importance of spontaneous and informal, even unintentional, dynamics that are driven by civil society and not piloted by governments. The interest in using this expression is therefore to look at regional integration beyond regional organisations and the stato-centric prism, and to underline the role of a category of actors that is little studied, or even minimised, in the field of regional geography (Sérandour, 2020).

Mobilizing a bottom-up approach to study European regional integration is relevant when considering the deep political crisis that the EU is going through. Accompanied by the development of nationalism, highlighted by Brexit, and exacerbated by the COVID-19 health crisis and the disunity of the Member States on various issues including migration, this crisis has undermined the European model of integration, belonging, and mobility. It is therefore a whole process that needs to be rethought. If the very idea of the construction of a European territory, which is driven from above by governments and public institutions, seems to be disqualified, it is not the integration process itself that is being questioned but the type of players driving it. The focus will thus be on NMS migrants, whom are international migrants and civil society actors.

International migrants are difficult to define. Since the 1990s, the general increase in migration around the world and the multiplicity of phenomena and forms it takes have generated confusion around the question of what constitutes an international migrant. Aurore Flipo, in the introduction of her PhD (2014), states there is no universal definition of international migrants since it varies according to each legal-administrative apparatus. She points out that the migrant status is intrinsically linked to a State's definitional criteria and differentiates international migrants from expatriates and other forms of mobility such as tourism, or cross-border migrants. Krausova and Vargas-Silva (2014: 3) also state that "there is no consensus on a single definition of a 'migrant.'" They explain this by the multiplicity of definitional criteria chosen in the databases available from which the number of migrants vary as the social contexts are numerous. Depending on the various databases available, migrants can be defined according to their country of birth, nationalities, passports, length of stay, reason for migration, or by the fact they are being subject to immigration controls (Krausova and Vargas-Silva, 2014).[9] The definition of international migrants proposed by Heaven Crawley (2013) is interesting because it includes the length of migration, the space, and also the "intention": "An international migrant is defined as someone who has, or intends to, change his or her country of usual residence for a period of at least a year" (Crawley, 2013: 1). It is this latter definition that will be used in this PhD because it refers directly to the individual's life course and is not based on an *a priori* institutional framework.

Within the EU, migrants function as key players in the construction of Europe as a space of mobility. 3% of residents are international EU citizens and 10 to 15% of the European citizens have lived in another EU country at least once in their lives (Recchi, 2021). In this general intra-European mobility landscape, migration flows from the new member states[10] (NMS) to the old ones (Mendes, 2007; Nacu, 2010) stand out. On the one hand, the dismantling of the Eastern bloc and the successive enlargements of the European Union in 2004, 2007, and 2013 have favoured the establishment of a new circular system of intra-European migratory (Favell, 2008), characterized by the increase in flows from NMS to the

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[9] The number of migrants varies as when the country of birth is the reference, some people who are born abroad to UK citizen parents are included; when the nationality is the reference, migrants who have acquire UK/French citizenship are excluded and many France/UK-born children of migrants, who have themselves never migrated (but who do not have the French/UK citizenship), are included.

[10] By "new member states" we mean the thirteen countries that joined the European Union in 2004, 2007 and 2013: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Romania.

old ones (Mendes, 2007; Nacu, 2010). On the other hand, the migration preferences of NMS nationals show a strong intra-European concentration of migration flows: more than 80% of Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Romanian emigrants left their country of origin to settle in another EU member state in 2018 (Eurostat, 2020) and five main countries (Germany, Spain, France, Italy, and the UK) absorb 70% of all EU migrants (Constant and Zimmermann, 2017). This "regionalisation of migration flows" (Diminescu *et al*., 2003; Dubucs and Mourlane, 2017; Gildas, 1996; Rey and Saint-Julien, 2005) is understood as the more rapid increase in migration flows between countries in the same part of the world than with the rest of the world. This can be seen as the visible expression of the bottom-up regional integration in Europe (Favell, 2010) and as a consequence of both political decisions taken by the states within the European Community framework (such as policies on free movement and access to the labour market), and individual mobility strategies.

3.3. An international comparative approach

The international comparative approach appears to be an appropriate method to study the macro-regional integration in Europe, international phenomenon that cannot be studied on the basis of the observation of a single country. The comparative approach allows us to reveal observable dynamics that can be generalised from one space to another by facilitating the analysis of the conditions under which an international phenomenon occurs, in this case the macro-regional integration. The fact that the same phenomenon appears in comparable (similar but not identical) contexts makes it possible to identify the variables that determine it. I have chosen two national configurations (France and the UK) with differing institutional frameworks (EU member *versus* non-EU member) in order to analyse a migratory phenomenon that affects a large part of the EU member countries (the NMS are composed of 13 countries). This allows us to pinpoint the national specificities while exploring the transnational scope of the NMS migrants' integration.

If the situation of the international co-tutelage obviously influenced the choice of the fieldworks (France and UK), there are several arguments for studying macro-regional integration in these two countries the political, economic, and social contexts of which are similar. France and the UK represent two of the largest economic powers in Europe and are among the top four countries in terms of immigration, particularly from the new member states. For example, today Poles constitute the largest foreign population in the UK, which is

also the preferred destination country for Lithuanians and Romanians, while France is traditionally a host country for Francophile eastern European migrants from Romania, Czech Republic and Poland. From a historical and political point of view, France and the UK have played and continue to play an important role in the construction and evolution of the European Union since the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. The victory of Brexit, influenced by the media construction of antipathy towards immigration (Somerville, 2016; Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Moore and Ramsay, 2017), seemed to be a relevant context for studying NMS migrants' integration in a different institutional context than that of France, and for understanding regional integration dynamics where an institutional form of regional integration, such as the EU, has been rejected by the population. Finally, the differences between these countries in terms of migration politics make their comparison relevant: France and the UK did not have the same policies concerning the access of migrants to their labour market at the time of enlargement of the EU (in 2004, France, unlike the UK, decided to restrict the free movement of workers for a transitional period of seven years).

The fact that Wales voted mostly in favour of the Brexit was also a decisive argument (Jones, 2017).[11] Though Wales has lower migration levels than the UK average (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019),[12] studies show that international migration in Wales, especially migration from the NMS, has been increasing since the 90's (Crawley, 2013; Woods and Watkin, 2008). Today 5.5% of Wales residents have been born outside of the UK (Krausova and Vargas-Silva, 2014). Poles, who represent the largest foreign population in the UK,[13] are also the largest group of migrants in Wales,[14] where most migrants come from the NMS, in particular from Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2011; Crawley, 2013).

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[11] Despite Wales is the region that has benefited the most from European Union subsidies, the inhabitants have voted to leave the European Union with 52.5% in favour of Brexit (www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/eu-referendum/electorate-and-count-information).

[12] According to the 2011 Census, the foreign-born population within the total population in Wales represents 5.5% while they represent of average 11% of the overall UK population. It is the region with the fewest EU migrants and non-EU migrants in general.

[13] Poles represent 15% of non-UK citizens living in the UK and 23% of the total EU-born population in the UK (https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migrants-in-the-uk-an-overview/).

[14] According to the 2011 Census, Poles represent 18 000 residents in Wales or 10.7% of Wales' non-UK born population and 0.6% of the total population of Wales.

4. Research questions and objectives

The aim of this PhD is to improve the understanding of the construction of the macro-regional space in Europe through the mobility practices, discourses, and representations of NMS migrants. "What is the role played by NMS migrants in the regional integration of Europe in France and in the UK?" This is the main question that this PhD will try to answer in the following chapters. From this general questioning, several research questions emerge.

1) Who are these "new" migrants, what are their aspirations, and how do they contribute to the construction of a European space of mobility?
2) How is Europe represented by NMS migrants?

3) Do NMS migrants' feelings of belonging reveal the existence of a European space that underlies the one elaborated by the European institutional actors? Can we consider it to be a discrete, socially constructed space that fully participates in European regional integration?

These questions rely on several assumptions on which all this research work is based:

- NMS Migrants have neither the same mobility practices nor the same representations depending on whether they live in Wales or in Lorraine.
- Social ties and networks influence NMS migrants' practices of mobility and reinforce feelings of belonging to a macro-regional space.
- NMS migrants' practices of mobility are likely to favour the process of macro-regional integration by facilitating European identities and a sense of belonging to Europe.
- The spaces of mobility revealed by migration trajectories, practices, and aspirations to migrate, are factors of macro-regional integration.
- Studying the NMS migrants' mental representations of Europe allows one to identify the determinants of these representations inherent to migratory practices.
- Feelings of belongings produced by international migration contribute to the construction of a macro-regional space by transcending the national scales.

5. PhD outline

This PhD is composed of seven main chapters, including this general introduction and the conclusion.

The first three chapters (chapters 1, 2 and 3) will set out my approach to the study of NMS migrants' role in the macro-regional integration in France and the UK. Following this introduction, chapter 2 of the PhD is dedicated to a Literature Review and will present the theoretical framework and main concepts. The aim is to show the theoretical issues of this research and what positioning and approaches I have chosen to address them. This chapter argues that the shift from the social integration paradigm to the regional integration paradigm is key for understanding NMS migration. Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology and presents the course of the research fieldwork and challenges it raised. It shows how the appropriate methodology (interviews and mental maps) was selected and how the participants were recruited during a time of pandemic.

Chapter 4 presents the general dynamics of the NMS migrations to France and the UK, through the drivers for migration, and the spaces and temporalities produced by these migrations. It demonstrates that the increase and regionalization of migration flows from the NMS to the old ones are low-key factors in the ongoing integration process at the EU level.

Chapter 5 explores the macro-regional representations through an analysis of the mental maps and the words associated with Europe. Europe appears as a fluid and dynamic region, a claimed or contested cultural, political, and social reality. This chapter identifies the relationships between mental representations of Europe, the length of migration, and the life course of the migrant.

Chapter 6 postulates the construction of a macro-regional level of social identification and political action. It argues that NMS migrants contribute to the European regional integration from below by developing a sense of belonging to Europe. After exploring the multiplicity of the NMS migrants' forms of spatial belonging, this chapter argues that European identity is a process of becoming.

The final chapter of the PhD, chapter 7, revisits the research objectives and concludes by drawing together the empirical chapters. It highlights the contributions made by this research to the academic literature and suggests avenues for further research.

To aid the overall understanding of this work, the reader will find throughout appendices and tables of maps, figures, graphs, and photographs.

Chapter 2: Literature review and conceptual framework

This chapter will address the scientific literature through the key notions mobilised in my research. The following discussions will make it possible to anchor my PhD in a socio-constructivist approach to geographical space (Paasi, 2010). Redefining the notion of integration through the prism of geography and macro-regional integration makes it possible to overcome the normative limits of the traditional stato-centric analysis of integration. This research will acknowledge that the process of integration is a complex assemblage, a rhizomatic and spatially dynamic process in the making.

This PhD places the issue of integration at the heart of the analysis. Since this word is invested with a variety of meanings and emerges from a great diversity of actors, any research work on this subject is undoubtedly very complicated. In this research, "integration" raises important epistemological and methodological issues because it covers two different notions, which are themselves polysemic: social integration and regional integration. In this chapter, I will present the definitional issues of these two concepts and will show why it is relevant to articulate them for better understanding the intra-European migration phenomenon. In order to study the notion of integration, it is necessary to address four basic questions, which can be summarised as follows: Who integrates? Into what? How? Why? This chapter will focus on the issues raised by these four questions and will tackle the challenges they imply. The paradigm shift from social integration to regional integration allows one to overcome the normative and methodological limitations raised by the issue of NMS migrants' integration in Europe.

First of all, chapter 2 will show that social integration is a complex, polysemic and multi-dimensional concept that has many limitations, notably epistemological and methodological, as it involves a normative dimension. The use of the rhizome theory is relevant in order to overcome some of the limitations inherent of the notion of integration, notably the question of unity, and to go beyond normative issues (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Finally, shifting the scale of analysis to the macro-regional level (when the notion of integration is mainly used in the context of national spaces) improves understanding of NMS migrations taking

place at a European level. The shift to the paradigm of macro-regional integration and the use of the New Regionalism Theory makes it possible to mobilise a constructivist approach and thus to reveal bottom-up dynamics, more specifically the way in which migrants from the NMS contribute to the construction of a multi-dimensional, complex and dynamic macro-regional space. Using the NRT makes it possible to analyse the way NMS migrants' representations and feelings of belonging contribute to shaping the European macro-regional space.

Before proceeding with chapter 2, it is necessary to clarify the notion of macro-region and more specifically its relationship with the notion of scale. If a macro-region is considered as an intermediate space between the national and the global space, it is not predefined by any specific size (Mareï and Richard, 2018). There are indeed macro-regions of different sizes, and their dynamic characteristic implies wide variations in scale. The notion of regional scale and more precisely of macro-regional scale is problematic because it is polysemous. It must therefore be understood as fluid, not fixed. Moreover, as the macro-regional space is the hypothetical, theoretical result of an ongoing process of continuous, dynamic and infinite regional integration, a macro-region cannot be considered as an accomplished space, but as one under construction (Palle, 2018). Based on the critical research on scales, according to which any scale is inherently problematic because it is a contingent social construction that can be made and unmade, this thesis does not consider the macro-region to be an *a priori* reality, or even a perfectly defined scale that fits in with the traditional state and global scales (Brenner, 2001; Delaney and Leitner, 1997; Marston, 2000). A macro-region corresponds in fact to logics of integration whose complementarity, opposition, or even competition with other integration dynamics taking place at other levels must be questioned and taken into account.

1. From the social integration paradigm…

1.1. Social integration: a complex, polysemic and multi-dimensional concept

This first section does not attempt to propose yet another definition of integration or find a way through a mishmash of definitions. Rather, it aims to synthesize the main approaches in order to show their limits and deconstruct the normative principles underlying them. A "de-complexified" and "de-complexed" use of the notion of integration seems essential for making it operational in the context of geographical research. This chapter will mainly focus on the notion of "integration" used in immigration studies insofar as this concept has been established in social sciences in close connection to both English-speaking and French immigration literature and has become a central notion of this field of research (Beaud and Noiriel, 1989; Berthomière *et al*., 2015). However, it is important to specify that "immigrants' integration", a phrase that has become widely accepted in the scientific literature, is only one modality of the integration process, which concerns the society as a whole when understood in its general sense (Paugam, 2014). This notion refers to a multiplicity of definitions and approaches that one needs to confidently handle in order to acknowledge the controversies regarding their uses in both the scientific and public spheres, both of which influence each other.

1.1.1. Genesis and origin of the notion of integration in social science

The scientific literature on integration is very abundant. This multifaceted and polysemic notion has been studied in various disciplinary fields – such as sociology, economics, and political or educational science – as well as having been applied to several subjects and themes including the working world, minorities, schools, and immigration (Rhein, 2002; Schnapper, 1991; Sintomer, 2002). As a result, this concept refers to a variety of situation and areas, which contribute significantly to its complexity.

In a synthetic way, there are two main approaches to social integration: a pragmatic approach and a theoretical approach, which can complement, nourish, and influence each

other (Rhein, 2002). A clear distinction must be made between integration in the pragmatic and political sense (integration policy) and the process of integration in the theoretical and sociological sense in order to avoid slippage of meaning and approaches.

From a pragmatic and a political point of view, integration refers to the modalities implemented by the public authorities to allow or to promote the participation of populations into a given society. These modalities vary not only from one country to another (Berthomière *et al.*, 2015), but also from one time-frame to another, and are thus constantly updated to adapt to changing social, economic, and political contexts. These modalities, described as "structural" by Schnapper (2008), can be manifested concretely in various administrative processes: in the implementation of policies for economic redistribution and access to public services (Lapeyronnie, 2003); in access to education (Jamet, 2011); or in the conditions of participation in the community life, for example through access to citizenship or voting rights (Schnapper, 1991).

The role of institutions is crucial in the pragmatic approach, since they are the guarantors of the legislative apparatus supporting the integration process. In France, the notion of integration has been shaped since the 1980s by the succession of governments that have constantly created, recomposed, or redefined the public framework of integration, making it a political priority following the "Marche des beurs", which took place at the end of 1983[15] and raised the question of the place of immigrants in the French society (Hajjat, 2013). The creation of the High Council for Integration in 1989, a Secretary of State for Integration in the early 1990s, and a Minister of Employment and Social Cohesion in 2006 in France is the manifestation of the pragmatic approach to integration, expressed through the implementation of public policies (Schnapper, 2007). The implementation of the "Contrat d'accueil et d'intégration" by the French government, setting out the rights and duties of immigrants and offering training in language and rules of collective life has contributed to the establishment of a French integration model (see 1.1.2.). In the UK, integration policies have been put in place since the 70's and, following the 7 July 2005 terrorist attacks in

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[15] The "Marche des beurs", which took place from 15 October 1983 to 3 December 1983, was an anti-racist march for equality that followed numerous racist, tragic acts and clashes between the police and people of immigrant background. This march took place in a political context of rising anti-immigration nationalism and led to the implementation of two main measures (even if they were not part of the initial demands of the demonstrators): a ten-year residence permit and the right to vote for foreigners. More broadly, this march helped to raise the question of the place of immigrants in the French society (Hajjat, 2013).

London, the Home Office created a commission on integration and cohesion. These public integration policies, both in France and the UK, show that the pragmatic approach to integration focuses on the free participation of all populations in community life. If "integration" is such a controversial word, this is because behind it rests political decisions and actions, which are of utmost important in that they raise questions about a model of society and collective living. It is interesting to highlight that, in both contexts, it is in reaction to social crisis and in the face of dysfunctions and drifts observed within institutional policies, that both the public and scientific debate on integration has taken root.

From a theoretical point of view, the notion of integration in social sciences was developed in correlation with the constitution of sociology as a discipline in France with Durkheim and in the United States through the Chicago school in the early 20th century (Schnapper, 1991; Safi, 2011). In France, Durkheim, in his doctoral thesis *De la division du travail social* (1893), introduced and theorized the notion of integration by including it in a reflection on social cohesion. The analysis of the transformation of the forms of social bond during the transition from traditional to industrial societies leads Durkheim to consider a socialization based on the division of labour as the guarantor of different forms of solidarity and interdependence between the members of a society. Therefore, work, as well as other instances such as the family, the school, the welfare state, and the Church, are guarantors of social integration, which is understood as a process of socialization and of learning the norms of the society in which an individual or a group of individuals is embedded. Integration, for Durkheim, results from two main dimensions: the number and intensity of interactions between individuals and the sharing of common values. This first definition has since become a real theoretical foundation that is almost systematically used in all research on integration (Beaud and Noiriel, 1989; Schnapper, 1991; Rhein, 2002; Tiberj, 2014), but never without criticism, updating or deviation, particularly from the 1960s and 1970s with the emergence of neo-Marxist, action-oriented, and critical sociology (Rhein, 2002).

While the founding sociological works on integration in France initially showed little interest in the theme of immigration, focusing above all on the nature of the social bond in individualistic societies, those of American sociology are rooted in the studies of immigration by the Chicago school (Safi, 2011), which paid attention to the modes of an individual's or group of individuals' socialization within a host society after migration. The texts of Park (1928), Park and Burgess (1924), Thomas and Znaniecki (1918) on Italians,

Irish, Poles, or African-American migrants in the US are considered as precursors in this field of research and the theoretical foundations they have established are, like those of Durkheim, used as references and reflective bases in subsequent research on integration. As a result, social integration is a key and unavoidable concept in migration studies that refers both to the integration of individuals *into* society and to the integration *of* society as a whole (Schnapper, 2007). The theoretical approach proposes defining integration, not as the desired outcome of a state-imposed normative programme, but as a process of interaction between different groups (majority and minority). However, the question of social integration is considered in highly political terms since it involves thinking about the processes by which individuals and populations can constitute a single nation.

1.1.2. The construction of theoretical integration "models" as analytical frameworks for national contexts

It was from the 1950s that research on immigration and the specific forms of integration that resulted from it was intensified in France (Safi, 2011). In the 1970's, the sociology of immigration was institutionalised in particular through the creation of an interdisciplinary research network, the GRECO 13, on immigration promoted by the CNRS and the Ministry of Social Affairs (Tripier, 2004). During this decade, political and structural changes, such as the suspension of the regular labour migration in 1974, contributed to the intensification of research on the integration of immigrants. The lack of reception policies for immigrants, the post-colonial context and the rise of unemployment resulting from the economic crisis are all manifestations of institutional dysfunctions, which fuelled the debate on immigration and moved the notion of integration into an ideological realm.

French literature on this subject quickly insisted on the French particularity of "republican integration" and the French tradition of welcoming foreigners (Schnapper, 1991), which was henceforth established as a model. The origin of the French integration political model, called "assimilationist", dates to the Revolution and the constitution of the nation-state (Wahnich, 1997; Hajjat, 2011; Bauman, 2009). It raised the idea that the cohesion and the unity of the nation are supposed to be achieved through linguistic and cultural homogenization, *i.e.*, the convergence of individual characteristics towards a declared national model. This universalist vision is fundamental for the constitution of the Republic and was intended to be in opposition to fragmented and communitarian models of society as

well as those based on filiation (Tripier, 2004). Until the early 1990's, naturalization policies, and article 69 of the Nationality Code, repealed in 1993, used the word "assimilation" as the main condition of the French citizenship acquisition.[16] According to this framework, immigration, in European nation-states, was seen as a challenge to the construction of a national identity based on cultural entity and political organisation and became the main theme associated with integration both in the civil society and the scientific literature.

In the scientific sphere, the founding works of sociology also used the word "assimilation" to describe the integration model of immigrants: Durkheim made a clear distinction between the integration of society as a whole and immigrants' integration (or, as he called it, "the assimilation"); researchers of the Chicago school, moreover, introduced this word in the anglophone scientific literature (Beaud and Noiriel, 1989). While the word assimilation is still used in English-speaking literature, despite several criticisms of the normative discourses and practices of "assimilation" in the English-speaking world (Bauman, 2009; Jansen, 2013), there have been major controversies in France since the 1980s. The word's usage in colonial discourse (Hajjat, 2011) and in the public sphere by some far-right political parties, such as the Front National (Beaud and Noiriel, 1989) led many researchers to criticise and gradually condemn the word "assimilation" along with the integration model it implies. We are witnessing at that time in France a shift and generalization of the definition of "assimilation" as a one-way process by which a migrant must adopt the cultural behaviours of the host community, often at the expense of his/her own characteristics and cultural identity (Beauchemin *et al.*, 2011; Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore, 2017). Defined as such, the assimilation process underlies an asymmetric harmonization of the society through the convergence of migrants' practices and values towards those of the host society. In this theoretical framework, the characteristics and behaviours of immigrants are compared and analysed according to their conformity or non-compliance with the norms and behaviours of the host society. In reality, this definition shows misuses and deviations from the original theoretical meaning of the word: Park, in *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, the founding book of the Chicago school, did not consider that national unity implied ethnic and cultural homogeneity. Moreover, whereas its use in the public and the

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[16] "Nul ne peut être naturalisé s'il ne justifie pas de son assimilation à la communauté française, notamment par une connaissance suffisante, selon sa condition, de la langue française."
https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/article_lc/LEGIARTI000006524046/2021-04-17/

political debate in France leads to ethnocentric and evolutionist drifts, the Chicago school used it as a militant act to invalidate arguments of intolerance (Beaud and Noiriel, 1989).

From the 1980s onwards, a branch of the French literature emerged, which invited us to cautiously use "assimilation", and explained the derives of the model of society implied by this notion. It proposed a profusion of synonyms to avoid using this word without changing the meaning of the process. This "battle for words"[17] (Schnapper, 1998: 407) led to a "semantic overload"[18] (Rhein, 2002: 194): depending on the disciplinary area and the scope of study, other words are privileged such as *insertion* in economy, or *adaptation* or *acculturation* in psychology or in anthropology (Beaud and Noirel, 1989). The abundant literature on the use of words associated with the integration process highlights a particular French concern insofar as it results from a political interpretation and appropriation of the process and lively controversies in both the public and the scientific debates. It also reflects the weight of a certain political ideology and of historical guilt in a post-colonial context (Safi, 2006). Due to historical, public, and theoretical controversies, the definitional and terminological challenges of the integration process are approached very cautiously by the French literature: the political and racist deviations have made this field of research quite sensitive.

The mistrust of certain words, and especially "assimilation", has led to a questioning and a rethinking of the republican French model of integration (Rhein, 2002). The theme of the integration model has since become the subject of abundant literature in both the French (Schnapper, 1998; Bertossi and Duyvendak, 2009; Streiff-Fénart, 2009; Beauchemin *et al*, 2011) and anglophone research (Joppke, 1995; Bennett, 1998; Joppke and Morawska, 2002). The national models of integration – such as assimilationism in France, multiculturalism in the Netherlands and in the United Kingdom, ethno-racialism in Germany – have become frameworks for the analysis of integration policies and the societal differences in general between countries. The British multiculturalist model, which involves the establishment of political principles and rights to protect each culture (Taylor, 1994), is often presented as an alternative or even a solution to the issues raised by the French assimilationist model (Schnapper, 1991; Parsanoglou, 2006). These two models have long been considered as

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[17] Personal translation into English of the French expression "combat pour les mots" proposed by Schnapper (1998: 407).
[18] Personal translation into English of the French expression "surcharge sémantique" proposed by Rhein (2002: 194).

opposed to each other insofar as, unlike assimilationism, multiculturalism does not imply the erasure of cultural particularities but rather their coexistence (Joppke and Morawska, 2002; Summary, 2006; Simon, 2015; Tribalat, 2015). However, from the 2000s, multiculturalism began to be questioned as well due to the segregation it implies (Garbaye, and Schnapper, 2014; Jansen, 2013). The literature that tends to develop models, complete them, validate them, invalidate them, or highlight the issues resulting from them, is very abundant (Joppke and Morawska, 2002; Jansen, 2013). The failure of European integration models (Calvès, 2002; Wieworka, 2002; Entzinger, 2002; Pélissier *et al.*, 2004) is a growing research area, based on the observation of the excesses of these models: the assimilationist model has been associated with racism and Jacobinism (eradicator of differences through cultural homogenisation); and the multiculturalist integration model with segregation and communitarianism (Jansen, 2013).

1.2. Limits: the aporia of the scientific literature regarding this plural notion

While it is generally accepted that currently defined and redefined integration models are now worn out (Simon, 2015), it is only with great difficulty that a systematic and generalizable definition and survey methods can be developed. Indeed, the scientific literature on the integration of immigrants is constantly confronted with both epistemological and empirical obstacles.

1.2.1. Epistemological impasses

From an epistemological point of view, the profusion of the literature on terminology usages, mentioned above (see 1.1.2.), is particularly infertile and above all reflects individual preferences (Sayad, 1994). According to Schnapper (2007), the controversies raised by the word assimilation are more about personal rivalries than scientific debate because the assimilation policies did not imply the suppression of the specificities of immigrants but their confinement to the private sphere. In fact, whatever words researchers use, it is always the same process and research object (the place of a migrant in the host society) that remains at the heart of the analysis. As a result, an entire body of scientific literature devoted to the rehabilitation of the notion of assimilation has emerged in recent

years (Alba and Nee, 2012; Safi, 2011; Jansen, 2013). These works, aiming to return to the original definition of assimilation by the Chicago school, are based on the observation that the synonyms that have been substituted for "assimilation" have not really changed the meaning of the process and therefore remain unsatisfactory (Safi, 2006). Participating in this rich terminology debate no longer seems relevant at this stage: this concept must be decomplexified to be operational. The aim here is not to reduce its meaning but rather to consider another way of thinking and systematically approaching it in all its polysemy and multidimensionality.

Some researchers propose to classify the forms of integration in order to account for the multi-dimensionality of this process. Milton M. Gordon (1964) was the first sociologist that proposed to separate the integration process into several spheres. Subsequently, the American theory of segmented assimilation, which narrows down the meaning of assimilation and attributes it to specific social fields, suggests that immigrants assimilate into different segments of society depending on their socio-economic and cultural characteristics (Portes and Zhou, 1993). However, the determination of different spheres or dimensions of integration is based on a selective process and *a priori* identified criteria. As a result, depending on the authors, their interests, the criteria that they have chosen, and the definitions on which their analyses rely, the categories of integration vary. For example, Pennix (2005) breaks down the integration process into three dimensions (legal and political, socio-economic, and cultural and religious), while Landeker (1950) distinguishes four dimensions (cultural, normative, communicative, and functional) and Laurentsyeva (2017) defines five dimensions of integration (cultural and religious, general, behavioural, demographic, and political).

The limitation of this approach is that, while it is tempting to study each of the aspects proposed separately, they are in fact closely intertwined: the economic dimension, such as the integration into the labour market, is *a priori* linked to the individual's academic, cultural, and social skills. Moreover, and the political dimension, such as the participation in the community life, also partly depends on linguistic, social, and cultural skills. Safi (2006) tried to identify the interrelations between five dimensions of integration (socio-economic, cultural, diversity, norms, belonging) by conducting a factor analysis in order to visualise the groupings, the matches and mismatches that may exist between the dimensions. However, this study, which relies on quantitative tools to develop a uniform view of integration, does

not resolve the limitation of the arbitrary selectivity of the dimensions and raises another question central to any reflection on the integration process: into what is an immigrant integrated? The vagueness and lack of definition of what an immigrant should be integrated into weakens and distorts the attempts to define the integration process through the integrated/not integrated binary paradigm (Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore, 2017).

The assumption made in most case studies of immigrants' integration is that it exists a unified and central body of the host society, a "non-ethnic average" from which the characteristics and the behaviours of the immigrants are compared (Safi, 2006: 5). However, the group of individuals into which a migrant is or is not integrated is either not defined or schematically reduced to an unchanging and homogeneous "core". It can be argued that this core is not representative of what a society is nor of its entire population: societies, considered as artificial constructs (Adair-Toteff, 1995), are not fixed because they evolve and vary according to the scales, the criteria and the jurisdictions taken into account (Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore, 2017). There is a multitude of societies at different scales (local, regional, national, macro-regional, global) and they do not necessarily overlap and fit into each other: a society can refer to a nation, to a nation-state, to a group of individuals who share common characteristics, interests, and objectives (sportive, cultural, economic…). There are potentially a lot of different segments of society into which an immigrant can be integrated. Moreover, the plurality of life trajectories, the inequalities and stratifications witnessed in society contradict the hypothesis of a unified society and makes it difficult to define what an immigrant integrates into. In fact, anyone in the society, not only immigrants, could be affected by the dimensions of integration, such as, inter alia, integration into the labour market (Dustmann *et al*, 2005; Ciupijus, 2011; Dickey *et al*., 2018), social integration through relationships with others (Lima *et al*., 2017), or cultural integration through practising of activities or the participating in associations (Berthomière *et al*., 2015).

The difficulty of defining society lies also in the difficulty of defining the individuals who constitute it: the subject of integration must be considered when analysing the integration process yet is rarely discussed in terms other than demographic characteristics such as nationality, gender, age, or income. However, recent conceptual developments in migration studies and cultural geography have relied on post-structuralist theories to challenge the subjectivity of migrants, dismissing the existence of stable, absolute, and coherent identities

(Bailey, 2005; Shubin, 2011, 2012). Despite criticism of post-structuralism as being too relativistic or nihilistic and not scientifically rigorous enough in social sciences (Woodward *et al.*, 2009), this approach allows to understand the individuals as uncertain, unstable, fluid, and complex beings, "embedded within spatialized materialities" (Murdoch, 2006: 2). These materialities, including imaginings, emotions, landscapes, words, and meanings, influence the individual system of representation and identifications, which are indeterminate and contextual. Deleuze uses the phrase "larval subject" to describe the process of becoming of an individual who is perpetually reproducing its identity according to temporalities and contexts. Based on this definition, geographers that reject the idea of a coherent subject, have defined migrants as fragmented subjects existing in the plural and formed by continually fluctuating forces (Shubin, 2020). Drawing on these works, migrants' subjectivities can be presented as an on-going, changeable and transformative construction that cannot be self-articulated and self-possessed completely (Dewsbury, 2007). As a result, this leads one to wonder how best to reflect on the integration process of two unstable entities (the society and the migrant) that cannot be fully known. The integration process must be re-thought not only considering the unstable, open-ended and changing nature of the society ("in what?") but also of the migrants' subjectivities ("who?").

The very concept of unity often central to integration theories (focusing on how immigrants and the host society become "one") is problematic and must be challenged as it presupposes the existence of, at least, two distinctive and recognizable groups as well as the possibility of a convergence towards a unity. It is precisely this idea of unity that Marie-Antoinette Hily and Christian Rinaudo (2002: 1) criticize:

> *« Le paradigme de l'intégration des immigrés, tel qu'il s'est développé dans les sciences sociales françaises, ne permet pas de rendre compte de toute la complexité des modalités de production des appartenances collectives. En contenant l'analyse au niveau de l'organisation politique, on ne peut que constater les écarts entre les procédures qui tendent à clore les groupes et à les unifier à partir d'un appareillage institutionnel et la façon dont les acteurs tracent les limites de leurs appartenances, les déplacent et les négocient selon les circonstances et les contextes dans lesquels ils sont engagés. Les différentes approches de terrain présentées ici privilégient l'observation des relations sociales attachées à des*

territorialités où s'actualisent des logiques d'identification qui conduisent in fine à un réexamen de la problématique de l'intégration. »[19] (Hily and Rinaudo, 2002: 1).

This quote challenges the idea that the integration process is about constituting a "whole", a unity because defining "a" group in which the migrant integrates serves to create boundaries and remains frustrating to grasp and to understand the complexity of the integration process. The authors denounce the inconsistencies between social groups defined by an institutional apparatus and the logic of individual belongings. It is by analysing individual practices and representations, as well as their territorial inscriptions, that the researchers intend to renew the integration paradigm. The authors remind us that if finding "what is integration" is always unsatisfactory, we should focus on "what integration does" in order to understand and define this process. In the rest of this chapter, I propose in the sub-section 1.2.4. to question the notion of unity from the practical theory of multiplicity, the rhizome, in order to rethink the integration process.

1.2.2. Measuring integration: the example of language

From a methodological point of view, normative questions raised by the notion of integration weigh on empirical work and may hinder fieldwork. Since the 1950s, scientists have sought to measure integration, considered as an entity, based on the development of indices (Landeker, 1950). The correlation established between deviant, youth delinquent, drug addiction and criminal behaviour in general and the weakness of social ties, and therefore of integration, contributed to the presentation of integration, according to a teleological view, as a society goal, an injunction and even a kind of "social and political Edenism" (Sayad, 1994: 8), and served to place this notion in the normative field. In studies aiming at measuring integration, several criteria have been established in advance to determine whether a person is integrated with respect to these criteria. There are many different criteria, and their selection is arbitrary. It can be argued that they cannot be

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[19] Personal translation into English: "The paradigm of immigrant integration, as it has developed in the French social sciences, does not allow us to account for all the complexity of the ways in which collective belonging is produced. By limiting the analysis to the level of political organisation, we can only observe the discrepancies between the procedures that tend to close off groups and unify them on the basis of an institutional apparatus and the way in which the actors draw the limits of their belonging, shift them and negotiate them according to the circumstances and contexts in which they are involved. The various field approaches presented here focus on the observation of social relations attached to territorialities where logics of identification are actualised, leading ultimately to a re-examination of the problem of integration."

exhaustive, so they can only describe the integration process incompletely. The criteria are based on individual, social, economic, and political parameters such as income, employment, housing, the feelings of belonging, the mix and the intensity of social relations and the network and language level of the host country. The list of criteria is open-ended and do not apply equally to all individuals. These criteria, presented as objectives, hide preconceived ideas of what it means to be "integrated" that may run counter individual conceptions and feelings. A person who fits all these criteria could still not feel integrated and a person who does not fit any of these criteria could still feel integrated. An incomplete and normative chopping grid does not allow for a systematic approach to the integration process.

Language appears as a common subject in Migration studies and an essential prism for analysing the integration of immigrants (Esser, 2006; Wodak and Boukala, 2015; Wodak, 2011) perhaps because it is the most obvious distinctive and specific parameter for immigrants when the other parameters (income, employment, housing) can concern any individual in society. While it is a parameter frequently used by migration studies to measure integration, it is also a central parameter of immigrants' integration policies. After the Second world war, in response to the massive influx of migrant workers, the French government set up language training facilities *via* the Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration (OFFI) and the Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration (CAI) for migrants to enable them to learn French: these policies were based on the consideration that the social integration of foreigners was dependent on understanding and learning French (Adami, 2009). The Welsh government also consider that a commonly accepted language is the key element to promote integration by providing access to citizenship and enabling community cohesion (2012). The Community Cohesion Strategy[20], "Getting on Together", emphasises the importance of implementing a shared language to develop a "successful integration of new migrants" in Wales. Cohesion Strategy considers the lack of good communication skills as a barrier to integration into the community because "an inability to communicate in a host language can also affect an individual's opportunities to access their rights and public services, find employment and become an active citizen" (Welsh Government, 2012: 29).

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[20] "Getting On Together – a Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales – is part of the Welsh Assembly Government's *One Wales* commitment to achieve a fair and just society, a place where all citizens are empowered to determine their own lives and shape the communities in which they live." (Welsh Government, 2012: 29).

English for Speakers of Other Languages courses (ESOL) are therefore encouraged and supported by the Welsh Government.

Several studies highlight the influence of language on social integration by focusing on the relation between migrants' language skills and naturalization policies, *i.e.*, the role of language testing in the citizenship acquisition (Extra *et al*., 2009; Stevenson and Schanze, 2009, Extra and Spotti, 2009; Van Oers *et al*., 2010; Moline, 2018). Other studies tend to show that the role of language in international migration is multidimensional and covers economic, social, and political aspects as it is (1) a resource permitting the migrant access to the labour market; (2) a medium of communication which enables one to create social links and interactions within the various local communities; (3) and a tool for political participation and engagement (Adserà and Pytliková, 2015). These studies, establishing a correlation between language skills and integration, therefore consider integration as a measurable process and language as an assessable capacity, according to criteria that are intended to be objective (Armit and Bar-Lev, 2015). However, this position raises normative issues to be tackled.

Measuring migrants' integration based on their language skills hides preconceived ideas of both what it means to have "good" language skills and to be integrated. It implies the tacit establishment of arbitrary communication norms and a tipping point to be reached by the immigrant, beyond which it will be said that he/she is more likely to be integrated. Yet one "language" does not exist: the communication norms vary from one place to another (the communication norms are different in school, at work, or at home) or from one person to another (the communication norms vary according to the relation of intimacy or authority between the persons) and the language, defined as the capacity to express a thought and to communicate by means of a system of signs, is not reduced to vocal language – there are other forms of languages (gestural, graphic, tactile, olfactory) which can be considered and which play a role in the place the migrant has in a given society. The language, when described as a tool or as a barrier to integration (following the idea that the language proficiency of the migrant is shaping his/her access to employment, housing, education), is considered as constitutive of his/her "successful" integration. This position implies by contrast that there is "unsuccessful" integration and contributes to the marginalisation and the exclusion of immigrants who do not fit the communication norms. The existence of an implicit threshold contributes to the exclusion and to the marginalization of a part of the

population by implying that there are "non-integrated" immigrants (Hily and Rinaudo, 2002). A value judgment on what constitutes a "good" or a "bad" integration, based only on individual or societal arbitrary considerations and preferences, is therefore implicitly established by the very process of assessing integration. There is an inherent paradox that lies in the process of integration defined in such a way as it produces boundaries. Yet, boundaries are the exact opposite of what this process is about: integration is not about creating boundaries but about making them disappear.

It can be argued that integration, concerning the becoming of an individual within a given society, and defined as an on-going, two-way process engaging both the migrant and the host society in general,[21] is not a threshold to be reached by immigrants (whether it be a language level, or other economic or social characteristics). Assuming the existence of a threshold goes against the inherent temporality of integration defined as an on-going process and thereby reduces it to a result. By considering it as a process, rather than a state, one escapes such measurement as it is by definition dynamic: it is not fixed and immutable. Essentially, evaluating immigrants' integration and seeing integration as a desirable outcome of the society places the analysis in the normative domain from the outset. Any attempt to measure integration cannot therefore be seen as independent of the normative framework in which it takes place. Subjective considerations must also be taken into account because, as mentioned above, the norms of what is a "successful integration" may not be shared by the immigrants: a person whose language skills would have been assessed "good" according to pre-established criteria could still not feel integrated and, by contrast, a person who does not fit the communications norms could still feel integrated.

1.2.3. The cultural capital to circumvent the impossible measure

The idea that cultural capital plays an important role in immigrants' integration is widespread in migration studies (Erel, 2010; Bauder, 2003; Nee and Sanders, 2001). Disciplines such as geography in particular have used the concept of cultural capital to interrogate the status of migrants and diasporas as cultural brokers and to analyse their migratory experiences through the prism of integration. Analysing immigrants' integration

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[21] Serge Paugam recalled that "the explanation of integration problems is no longer sought solely in the intrinsic difficulties of immigrant populations with regard to the norms in force in the country of settlement, but in the functioning – or, rather, the dysfunctions – of the institutions that are supposed to enable integration" (2014: 5).

through the prism of their language skills is a way to approach the integration process *via* the cultural capital, since language is a form of cultural capital, as originally defined by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron in their joint book, *La Reproduction, éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement* (1970). To avoid the normative pitfalls mentioned above which go against what the integration process is about (bringing people together instead of excluding and classifying migrants according to their skills), I will draw on studies criticizing the cultural capital as a resource that can be measured or as a characteristic to be validated by official institutions (Shubin, 2020).

After briefly introducing and defining the notion of cultural capital, I will show how the criticisms that have been made about this notion are relevant to rethinking the integration process. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron consider "the social space"[22] to be made up of "sub-spaces"[23], due to the differentiation of social activities, and within these conflicts between the dominant and the dominated take place. The place of each individual in society (as a dominant or a dominated but also within both groups) is determined by the degree of possession of four forms of capital (economic, symbolic, social and cultural), which directly orientate an individual's choices and preferences.

Cultural capital, presented as an instrument to legitimise an individual's position in the social space, refers to all the cultural resources that an individual has and is able to exploit. In his essay, *Les trois états du capital culturel* (1979), Pierre Bourdieu develops and distinguishes three forms of cultural capital: the embodied cultural capital, the objectified cultural capital, and the institutionalized one. The first one, the embodied cultural capital, designates every disposition acquired and inherited by an individual both consciously and unconsciously by a learning process: it is manifested through speaking, body behaviours, and habitus,[24] in other words through the character and way of thinking. The objectified cultural capital comprises an individual's material goods such as paintings, books, dictionaries, scientific instruments, and machines, that to say, all physical objects that an individual has in his possessions. Lastly, the institutionalized cultural capital refers to institutional recognition, in other words, a diploma or academic credentials, professional qualifications or skills, such as language skills.

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[22] Where all the social relations are inscribed.
[23] These "sub-spaces" are called "fields".
[24] The "habitus" is the individual's incorporation of the way of thinking, the feelings, the behaviours, and the way of speaking implied by the conditioning of the class he/she belongs.

This notion, used to measure social class differences, has been analysed as a means of perpetuating social inequalities and exclusion within the society, produced by the family environment and the school system. For this reason, this notion is widely used in sociology of education to explain the educational inequalities of children and the role of school in social reproduction (Draelants and Ballatore, 2014; Bourdieu, 1979). The hypothesis underlying this concept is that there is a continuity between the culture taught in school and the culture of children from the "dominant class", whom are thus better prepared than children from other backgrounds for the mode of speech, the interactions, and cultural orientations and knowledge of their teachers. While the majority of studies that adopt Bourdieu's cultural capital theory focus on the relation between cultural capital and education, this theory also has been used as a framework for other social settings, thus serving to broaden Bourdieu's definition of cultural capital (Emirbayer and Williams, 2005) and extend its role to the labour market system (Throsby, 1999; Al Ariss and Syed, 2011), to gender based issues (Dumais, 2002), to the use of internet and technology (Emmison and Frow, 1998; Nissenbaum and Shifman, 2017) and to migration issues (Pieterse, 2003; Erel, 2010; Waters, 2006).

The Bourdieusian cultural capital theory highlights the importance of the cultural field in the establishment of power relations and conflicts between different social classes. However, it has been criticised for focusing exclusively on social conflicts and power relations when some researchers have demonstrated the emancipatory role of culture (Vandenberghe, 1999; Halsey *et al*., 1980). In order to avoid reifying cultural capital and ethnically bounding it, I have drawn on critical work that develops the Bourdieusian definition of a "rucksack approach[25]" (Erel, 2010; Shubin, 2020; Kelly and Lusis, 2004). Thus, I will not analyse integration by studying a population group defined by its nationality, as the majority of integration studies tend to do, but rather based on individual characteristics such as the level of education, the occupation, the socio-economic and socio-demographic characteristics such as age or gender, transnational practices and behaviours (Dubucs, 2015). This transversal categorisation makes it possible to relativise the importance of the country of origin, by highlighting the diversity of cases within a migrant population. It also prevents one falling into a culturalist abuse, which simply compares the cultural norms of the origin and host country. By following this approach, I do not consider the nationality or the country

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[25] The assumption is that immigrants bring a set of cultural resources from the country of origin to the host country, which either fit or do not fit (Erel, 2010). These critics denounce the reification of cultural capital.

of origin as an explanatory variable and thus reject from the outset the assumption that a difference must necessarily exist between the different nationalities: I have deliberately analysed the interviews of the migrants from the NMS regardless of their nationalities, without neglecting notable differences due to nationality and the country of origin when it was a factor. According to this approach, nationality is simply part of a respondent's individual characteristics such as age, level of education, or gender. Cultural capital is therefore no longer deemed a calculable entity and a product of an environment (such as school, family), but as a dynamic process in space and time. It is no longer considered as a variable of integration but as one of its modalities.

By building on the critics and the redefinitions of the notion of cultural capital, it becomes possible to rethink the integration process and "qualify" it instead of seeing it as merely a quantifiable process. This approach relies on various studies, which follow a Deleuzian way of thinking, in that they focus on what the process of integration does to an individual in terms of feelings, identification, and the appropriation of space, rather than trying to measure, quantify and evaluate it (Shubin and Dickey, 2013). The notion of identification is particularly crucial: Sayad (1994) defines social integration as the transition from "otherness to identity" since it is ultimately a question of analysing how people "construct a collective identity" and can "live together". Mental maps (see chapter 3) are here very useful as they provide access to the respondents' representations of space and are a medium for revealing how feelings and emotions are related to a space (Matei, 2005; den Besten, 2008).

1.2.4. The rhizome theory: a new "way of thinking" to overcome the concept of unity

In order to go beyond normative issues and limits, which restrict research from a methodological point of view, an alternative way of thinking about the integration process will be proposed. The rhizome theory of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) is not about "what" the rhizome is, but about what the rhizome "does" (just as the research I conduct is not about "what integration is" but about what integration "does"). Drawing on the hypothesis that the integration process is not about constituting a whole, the aim here is to propose a new way of conceptualizing the integration process without seeing unity as its ultimate objective and purpose.

The rhizome theory introduced by Deleuze, and Guattari in *A thousand plateaus* (1987) is a practical theory of multiplicity. This theory is based on the image of the rhizome, which, in its material version, is the underground or underwater stem of certain plants (for example quack grass, iris or bamboos). The authors rely on the characteristics of the rhizome to conceive of a horizontal and linear plan system, that has no beginning and no ending point, no oneness, and no unity. In this system, there is no hierarchy and no base, for unlike a tree model, the rhizome has no root or trunk, and any element can thus affect or influence any other. The two authors specify the five main characteristics of the rhizome, which can be applied to the integration process.

The first two relevant characteristics of a rhizome are connection and heterogeneity, according to which "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other and must be." These two characteristics, likewise, enable us to consider integration as a process consisting of heterogeneous elements and dimensions that are intertwined. It appears as an open-ended combination of elements and modalities of different natures (economic, cultural, social, political, feelings, behaviors, events, representations…). As mentioned above, structural elements such as integration policies and administrative processes, which are implemented by public authorities to allow or promote the integration of populations into a given society, vary from one country to another, from one time to another, and are constantly updated to adapt to changing social, economic, and political contexts (Berthomière *et al.*, 2015). On a different level, individual and cognitive elements such as personal skills, adaptability, representations, feelings, and belongings play a role in the integration process. These dimension of integration and the elements that constitute it are connected: the social, cultural, economic, political, cognitive dimensions cannot be separated, studied, and analysed separately because they are intertwined and influence each other. The connections between them are also open-ended and multiple.

The third characteristic of the rhizome that can be applied to integration is its multiplicity. This characteristic refers to how the proliferation of elements composing a system is a never-ending process: Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 25) define it as an "and... and... and...", a sort of non-exhaustive alliance of moving elements. This conjunction, which structures the rhizome, de-essentializes this process and suggests it be understood as a combination. The multiplicity is also defined by the absence of order and hierarchy since all the elements in a rhizome are evolving in a single plan. This characteristic applied to integration helps one

avoid falling into normative issues by seeing that there is no tipping point or threshold to be reached. Indeed, this characteristic implies that no elements or dimensions are dominant, or more important than another to understanding the integration process. No single criterion can explain the process of integration on its own, but all identified criteria must be understood in their very expansion and proliferation. As finding unity in integration represents a limit in understanding the process, conceptualizing integration through the prism of multiplicity helps one to see that the elements and dimensions that compose integration are not fixed, but evolve, change, and vary from one person to another. The multitude of elements NMS migrants enumerate to justify their sense of integration (such as working, paying taxes, having a house and children, making friends, getting to know the town, or making acquaintances with local shopkeepers) are set out randomly in no order or hierarchy. Moreover, they are never sufficient to explain in full what they actually feel because they often conclude by "it's difficult, I don't know". This sentence implies that their definition of integration is never complete, always open-ended and made up of a multiplicity of elements.

The fourth characteristic of the rhizome that can be applied to integration is the "asignifying rupture", which refers to how "a rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines." Likewise, integration is not composed of predefined articulations and developments, and its temporalities and evolution are multifarious. The profusion of definitions and attempts to re-define the processes of integration and assimilation illustrate the concept of asignifying rupture. The instability of the process is emphasised by this feature which challenges the idea of permanence and continuity. This characteristic implies that the integration process is not experienced as a one-way trajectory with a reachable end point. Some events can break the lines and the connections between different elements such as feelings, integration policies, spatial representations, and belongings. These feelings can be re-shaped in another context, by other elements and dimensions: the process is on-going and reversible.

The cartographic characteristics of the rhizome lie in the idea that a map, defined as an interpretation and an experimentation of reality, is both a process image and a narrative. A map, such as a rhizome, has an original and unique layout. The data on a map is revealed simultaneously, without hierarchy or order of reading. If the same map can have multiple entries, the same space can be symbolised by many different maps. These characteristics can

help us conceive of the integration process as a narrative that expresses an interpretation of reality and can be read in a multitude of different ways.

Finally, the benefits of thinking about integration through the prism of the rhizome is that it thus becomes possible to reject integration as an evaluable process, as a threshold to be reached, as goal-oriented, and as headed towards unity. As a result, the rhizome offers a new way of thinking that overcomes the normative limits identified in the scientific literature. If the first part of this chapter has made it possible to reflect on three of the initial questions (who integrates, into what, and why?), the question of "how" has still not been addressed. Geography offers rich and interesting tools for analysing multi-scale social interactions and formations of territories: in the second section of this chapter, I will show that the notion of regional integration in particular helps us to analyse the logics of regionalisation, mobility flows and the NMS migrants' practices, as well as the resulting transnational identification logics.

2. ...to the regional integration paradigm for understanding NMS migration

2.1. Shifting the scale of analysis to the macro-regional level

Since Durkheim, the nation-state has been considered the common frame of reference in the analysis of migrants' integration, and it has not really been considered outside these national borders. However, the gaps between the national political integration model and the observed reality have been highlighted by several studies (Hily and Rinaudo, 2002). Considering the criticisms and normative excesses identified, some authors have challenged the classical social integration paradigm[26], which implies that integration is achieved when an immigrant has internalised the norms, values, and practices of the host society. They have argued that conceiving of integration within a stato-national framework and a univocal national identity is inadequate for addressing the multiple situations of the individuals, their complexity and all the modalities at play in the construction of a collective identity (Oriol, 1980). Indeed, classical doctrines of integration underestimate the major role of practices

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[26] At the beginning of the 1990s, Dominique Schnapper summarised the notion of integration as "the process by which individuals participate in collective life through professional activity, the learning of consumer norms, the adoption of family and social behaviour, and the establishment of relations with others" (1992: 18).

and socialisations, which take place outside the national framework of the host country, but which are also constitutive of an individual's identity. It has been proven that mobile populations practice several territories at the same time, appropriate different spaces and invent new sociabilities in networks connecting countries of origin and host countries, thereby allowing them to be both here and there. Transnational social networks in particular, working as resources and supports in migration, are determinant in the constitution of identities (Doraï *et al*., 1998). Alain Tarrius (2002) revealed the existence of trans-regional "circulatory territories" based on the economic and urban activities of Maghrebians in Marseille creating a real network of exchange and circulation of people and of goods. It is the practices, representations, and individual strategies that shape this Mediterranean circulatory space, non-existent from the point of view of institutions and planners and analysed by the researcher as the result of the failure of the French integration policy. In this sense, dynamics that occur in other spaces and on larger scales than the residential and national space, but which still play a role in constituting identities and in conceiving the integration process, become invisible when one approaches the issue of integration solely from a national and institutional point of view.

The integration of immigrants, whose practices are part of a dual (or even multi) territoriality, should be considered according to these transnational dynamics instead of being thought toward a national unity. Several studies have highlighted the role of NMS migrants in the construction of a transnational space, a non-state space, constituted by the social links and interactions that connect the country of origin and the host country (Favell, 2008). The integration process cannot be studied without taking into consideration all the spaces that support the practices and socialisations of individuals, which are international in the case of migrant populations. Thinking about the integration and identity of migrants outside of a stato-national framework seems to be essential for understanding that the space, as a mediator and support for identities (Di Méo, 2002), cannot be understood without taking into consideration the places of origin as well as all those in which the social practices of migrants are embedded. The idea is therefore not to study integration through the prism of the political organisation but through the understanding of the processes of identity construction in the different spaces that are meaningful for NMS migrants. I therefore do not seek to study the integration of NMS migrants on the basis of an *a priori* institutional limit of a space (such as the national space), but I am trying to see how immigrants' integration

can be understood through territoriality[27] and the appropriation of an extra-territorial and macro-regional space.

The notion of regional integration is a relevant analytical framework for thinking about NMS migrants' integration in an extra-territorial and macro-regional dimension. The main hypothesis is that the reference space constituted by the NMS migrants is not the one proposed and determined by institutions and that it cannot be understood without taking into account the transnational practices, socialisations and representations of the migrants. The hypothesis is that the reference space in which the collective identity of NMS migrants is deployed is not the one drawn by the national institutional apparatus: in other words, the reference scale is not national, but European.

2.2. Recent research on regional integration in geography

Many disciplinary fields (economics, law, political science, history, geography) have studied macro-regional spaces and their construction process based on the assumption that, despite globalisation, proximity is still a factor influencing and concentrating the exchanges. The notion of regional integration, resulting from a multi-disciplinary input, refers to the emergence of an international region from the increase in relationships, exchanges, and interactions of all kinds (economic, social, cultural, political) between countries and societies located in the same part of the world (Richard, 2014; Baldwin, 1997; Siroën, 2000). The aim here is not to propose a complete and fixed definition of regional integration, as this is one of the purposes of the development and questioning of this thesis, but to offer a starting point to anchor the analysis, particularly by drawing on Yann Richard's research on the territorial construction of the region (Richard, 2010, 2014, 2018, 2020).

The expression "macro-regional integration" is sometimes preferred in the geographical literature as it avoids confusion and distinguishes the process, which takes place on an

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[27] Territoriality, as a system of interrelations, is defined by Claude Raffestin (1997: 165) as follow: "l'ensemble des relations qu'une société entretient non seulement avec elle-même, mais encore avec l'extériorité et l'altérité, à l'aide de médiateurs, pour satisfaire ses besoins dans la perspective d'acquérir la plus grande autonomie possible, compte tenu des ressources du système". Personal translation into English: "the set of relations that a society maintains not only with itself, but also with the outside world and otherness, with the help of mediators, in order to satisfy its needs with a view to acquiring the greatest possible autonomy, given the resources of the system." According to this definition, a territory is therefore a portion of land invested by the intentions and practices of the individuals who occupy it and manage it to ensure the satisfaction of their needs.

international scale, from one that would take place at an infra-state phenomenon and that would lead to the emergence of a sub-unit of a constituted nation (Mareï and Richard, 2020). In my PhD, both expressions, used interchangeably, will refer to the same process: the construction of a macro-regional space designating an intermediate scale between the national scale and the global scale.[28] This macro-region is not a space shaped *a priori* by institutional structures but results from the connections and the interactions between several portions of space having the same characteristics and facing the same issues.

Regional integration studies, in geography and political science, are usually approached by stato-centric analysis: institutions, including regional organisation (such as the NAFTA, the EU, the MERCOSUR) and national governments, are generally presented as the main actors of regional integration. It was from the 1990s onwards that political scientists criticized the neo-functionalist (Haas, 1968) and intergovernmentalist approaches (Hoffmann, 1990; Moravcik, 1993) by reminding us that states and international agreements are not the only actors in international relations (Hettne and Söderbaum, 1998). While at the European level there is little research on the role of actors other than governments and institutions in macro-regional integration, at the level of South American countries several studies have been devoted to non-state actors (such as firms, mobilities or trafficking networks) and also to more spontaneous and informal forms of macro-regional integration (Sérandour, 2020; Capron and Miret, 2009; Taglioni and Théodat, 2007). My research is in line with the New Regionalism Theory (NRT), along with a continuity of works which have shown that regional integration was not only a process emanating from a political will, but also resulting from social practices, representations, and cooperation between non-state actors (Bennafla, 2002; Pasquier, 2003; Diouf, 2006; Mareï and Wippel, 2020). According to the NRT, regional integration is not reduced to institutional or political logic and the roles played by state-actors and non-state actors are equally important (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000; Saurugger, 2020). Without denying the role of state actors, the NRT is particularly interested in non-institutionalized, spontaneous, and informal, even unintentional forms of regional integration, driven by civil society actors rather than being piloted by governments. It assumes that functional regions of different sizes are built independently of institutional

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[28] It is important not to confuse the use of the term macro-region in my PhD with the four macro-regional areas set up by the European Union since 2009 (Boulineau, 2016) and referring to defined perimeters of the Baltic Sea (2009), the Danube River Basin (2011), the Adriatic and Ionian Sea (2014) and the Alps (2015). This macro-regional strategy, implementing a new level of transnational governance, set up by the European institutions is part of a logic of cohesion and development of territories.

interactions, governmental decisions, and regional agreements. This theory relies on a social-constructivist approach to geographical space, thereby questioning the traditional divisions of the world (such as continents for example) and according to which no region is a given object and naturalized. Instead, they are seen as socially constructed in space and time by discourses and practices (Paasi, 2010; Vayrÿnen, 2003; Agnew, 2005; Gregory *et al.*, 2011; Pred, 1984; Thrift, 1996, 2008). This approach sits with the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari about the rhizome insofar as the multiplicity and heterogeneity of actors, their connections, and the absence of hierarchy between them are also reminiscent characteristics of the rhizome. According to this theory, a macro-region is not fixed: it is an on-going process akin to the rhizome: it is not a mere aggregate of states and national interdependences since its boundaries are blurred and shifting; the elements that compose it, like those composing the rhizome, are moving and do not form a stable entity. Relevant works include those of Sophie de Ruffray (2013) and Clarisse Didelon Loiseau (2011-a), as along with recent PhDs such as those by Étienne Toureille (2017), Audrey Sérandour (2020), and Camille Escudé-Joffres (2020) on the limits, the construction, and the blurred nature of regions. These studies have shown that the dynamic nature of integration gives shape to a fluid and a "fuzzy" region, defined as a spatial system with shifting, permeable, and blurred boundaries. They have pointed out the existence of intermediate spaces produced by a wide range of indicators and actors. The interdependencies, asymmetric, or complementarities between these interfaces and the region recall how permeable the spaces inside and outside the region are, and how difficult it is to delimit a portion of regional space, which is contingent and contextual.

Hettne and Söderbaum recognise that regional borders may not coincide with state borders and may include some parts of the state while excluding others. In their paper *Theorizing the rise of regionness* (2000), they proposed a reading grid to approach regional integration in a systematic way. They determined five degrees of "regionness" based on the idea that regional integration lies in the gradual transition from one degree to another. The five levels of "regionness" are: the regional space (understood as a geographical and ecological unit); the regional complex (cultural, economic, or political cooperation institutionalised by multilateral regional organisations); the regional society (resulting from cultural, political, and economic interactions); the regional community (resulting from common culture, communication norms and values); and the regional state (understood as a distinct and legitimate political entity). This approach, which expresses a certain evolutionary logic and

implies that a portion of space can be "more or less" a macro-region, is more a theoretical framework for the analysis of spatial processes than an effective chronological program because the Swedish researchers admit that regional integration is an on-going and spatially dynamic phenomenon, an expandable, retractable and even a reversible process: the levels of "regionness" and their gradualness respond to different timeframes and developments. This double dynamic of expansion and retraction is reminiscent of the rhizomatic system which experiences asignifying ruptures.

According to this theory, the regional integration process theoretically comes to an end when the constructed regional whole has been gradually filled with "economic, institutional, political, cultural and finally identity-related substance to become a system distinct from others and to be perceived as such" (Mareï and Richard, 2018). This final stage, synthesised through the creation of a collective identity, is only a theoretical state because the macro-region for the NR proponents is not a "being" but a "becoming", a "region in the making" (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000: 14). This dynamic conception of the region implies that any configuration is possible, that the region has no prescribed form, no beginning, and no end. Poststructuralist geography has also theorized the notion of "becoming" to describe spaces as unstable and extendable elements made of multiplicities, spatial practices, and belongings (Murdoch, 2006). According to Murdoch (2006: 18), individuals and spaces are entangled in the "heterogeneous process of spatial 'becoming'". In other words, practices and identity are produced and re-produced in an on-going movement of people, things, and ideas: they are not rooted and territorialized in spaces with fixed borders.

This approach enables us to consider a macro-region as a complex and spatially dynamic system in the making, which cannot be addressed without an understanding of its moving geographical contours, its temporal rhythms, its spatial modalities, and the widely shared common representations of which it is the object (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000). It reveals also that it is a multi-scalar and multi-dimensional process, which cannot be understood without considering social practices. The contribution of the constructivist approach is to recall that in addition to collective practices, norms, a shared identity, and representations common to governments, groups and individuals are constitutive of the region. Finally, this theory has the advantage of not conceiving the region as a finite and irreversible geographical element since regions can disappear.

However, the NRT raises several difficulties, particularly of a methodological nature, which need to be stressed. The first difficulty lies in the shifting and unstable nature of the region: how can we grasp and understand the forms and regional limits of a space, which is constantly being constructed and reconstructed by the spatial distribution of social practices, by feelings of belonging and spatial representations? Do the practices, feelings of belonging and spatial representations coincide perfectly and make it possible to identify a coherent and common space? The second difficulty lies in the multi-dimensional nature of the region going against the concept of unity mentioned above: is it even possible to capture all the dimensions (cultural, economic, political…) that play a role in the construction of a region? Are we not constantly confronted with an inevitable selectivity, making the attempt to define a region frustrating, unsatisfactory, and always incomplete? The third issue is that the NRT is based on "levels" of integration, thereby reminding us of the notion of threshold, which, as discussed above, is inoperative to describe a continuous process that has no beginning or end. The idea of "level" implies stages to be crossed: is it possible to deconstruct the normative character of integration and see it as a dynamic process by talking about levels? If Hettne and Söderbaum seem to think so, in practice it is difficult not to use the different levels of integration as a checklist and thus fall into the same drifts of the social integration paradigm that I have identified above. Finally, Hettne and Söderbaum consider that an institutional and economic structure must accompany the construction of a regional space. How then can we articulate fuzzy and shifting regional boundaries and more stable and delimited institutional boundaries? While from a theoretical point of view the NRT allows us to approach the regional space in a comprehensive and convincing way, from a methodological point of view it is difficult to concretely observe the regional space thus formed insofar as that it requires thinking outside the concepts of entity and unity (Richard, 2010).

Considering both the contributions and limitations of NRT, this research does not claim to describe the whole process of regional integration and does not aim to reveal the reality of the European macro-region. It does, however, aim to highlight the significant role of the social practices and representations of one group of the population in particular, the NMS migrants, in the European regional integration process. In short, the aim is to present one facet of this process, and thereby to contribute to the general understanding of the phenomenon of integration.

2.3. The European Union: a canonical model in the scientific literature on macro-regional integration?

The literature on the EU regional and cohesion policy is extensive and has contributed to the perception of the EU as a canonical and advanced institutional model for regional integration. Since it was only after the end of the Second World War that international institutions with legal personality and recognised by treaties, were set up to regulate international relations, the recent existence of macro-regional institutions constitutes the most visible form and manifestation of regional integration in Europe. The establishment of a free trade area, the customs union and then the common market, the political, economic, and monetary union are all elements demonstrating the institutional will to construct a macro-regional space. In parallel, the deep crisis of the EU has been interpreted as the symptom of the failure of the integration process (Saurugger, 2020).

However, some studies, which draw on the findings of the NTR and socio-constructive approaches to space, have assumed that this political crisis does not put an end to the regional integration process and instead invites us to rethink the European integration model outside of its institutional structures (Kahn and Richard, 2021; Mareï and Richard, 2018). My research is in line with these works for it argues that the macro-regional space remains to be defined and characterised: I do not start from the assumption that the EU is an integrated space, the fragmentation of which is evidence of the fragility of the model. Instead of considering the existence *a priori* of a predefined space (such as the EU), I aim to highlight integration dynamics, which are emerging, and which are not driven by institutions but by civil society.

To understand these dynamics and the links between macro-regional integration and NMS migrants, key dates of the intra-European migration must be identified. Stéphane Mourlane and Hadrien Dubucs (2017) have recalled the ancient role of mobile European citizens in the construction of Europe from antiquity to modern times.[29] They have stressed that it is only from the 20th century onwards that we have witnessed the political will to control migration. While policies and regulations help to date and highlight the role of migration in the construction of Europe, it is important to remind ourselves that they are not the only factors

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[29] The mobility of merchants, peddlers, but also agricultural workers.

in European mobilities: it is a contextual and structural framework, in which individual trajectories and preferences must also be taken into account. If industrialisation and mining have contributed to the structuring of international labour migration,[30] it was primarily the post-first and second world war periods which represented decisive turning points in the regionalisation of European migratory flows *via* the signing of bilateral treaties to meet labour needs. As a result, migratory flows were organised and structured from southern to northern and from eastern to western countries: France and the UK were among the leading countries of immigration when Italy, Ireland, Poland, Spain, and Portugal were the main countries of emigration. The creation of the European Economic Community through the Treaty of Rome in 1957 established the free movement of persons within its six founding countries, which took effect in 1968.[31] However, the free movement of workers did not abolish the boundaries between foreigners and national companies, as a residence permit is still required to establish oneself in another Member State. The Schengen Agreement institutionalised by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 aimed to strengthen the EEC free movement and unify visa, asylum and immigration policies.[32]

Beyond these migrations, which were structured and organised by the EEC, many people fled the communist regime from the Eastern bloc. Migratory flows to Western countries were intensified with the weakening of the communist regime in the late 1980s, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1991. The successive entries of the NMS into the EU in 2004, 2007 and 2013 were milestones in the regionalisation of intra-European migration flows. Depending on the country of origin and destination, however, the rights of NMS citizens were unequal: EU former member states, with the exception of the UK, Ireland and Sweden (which instantly opened their labour market to NMS nationals, except to Bulgaria and Romania), introducing a seven-year transitional period for new member states (with the exception of Malta and Cyprus).

2.4. Europe: an assemblage?

Sylvain Kahn and Yann Richard (2020: 135) described Europe as an "assemblage" in their paper, *Unthought and unrepresentable? The European territorial paradox* (2020), based on

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[30] The United Kingdom polarises the migration of Irish, and Poles and France of Italians, and Spanish.

[31] The founding countries of the EEC are Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

[32] The Schengen Agreement was signed 1985 by five members of the EEC (Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg).

regional studies of English-speaking researchers (Allen and Cochrane, 2007). They define the notion of "assemblage" as follows:

> *"The notion of assemblage assumes the presence of objects that are disparate but connected, while suggesting the difficulty of naming and characterising the result, since an assemblage is by nature complex and unlike anything already known (…)" (Kahn and Richard, 2020: 135).*

If Sylvain Kahn and Yann Richard addressed Europe from the perspective of an assemblage of political powers and governances, the concept of assemblage, theorized by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), refers to a process, a wider collection of heterogeneous elements interacting through space and time. These elements, which form an emergent entity, are not necessarily composed of the same nature: they can be physical objects, but also events, feelings, practices, movements, discourses, imaginaries, and various actors. These two French philosophers and psychoanalysts stressed that an assemblage is defined primarily according to its function rather than its characteristics when they stated: "we do not know what an assemblage is until we find out what it can do" (1987: 257). Accordingly, an assemblage is a constant making and unmaking process of forming territorialities (Macgregor Wise, 2017). This concept is useful for conceiving of space as "an open and ongoing production" (Massey, 2005: 55). This relational approach to space helps us to understand the region as being "formed out of a nexus of relations and connections" (Allen and Cochrane, 2007: 1162). The regions, "constituted by the social relationships which stretch across them in a variety of ways" (Allen *et al*., 1998: 5), are not fixed territories that can simply be delimited on a map as their shapes change over time: it is an evolutionary environment, a milieu of perpetual transformation (Parr, 2010) made of a complex assemblage of human and non-human interactions, which themselves can cross borders and cross scales, materialities, feelings, environments, representations, experiences, territorialities, practices, discourses, relationships, powers, governances and networks. By anchoring my thinking in these works, it is possible to understand that macro-regions do not have a fixed territoriality, and that it is a contextual construct, which is difficult to qualify, but which is formed by the coming together of random elements to form spaces.

Conclusion of chapter 2

This chapter has presented the different approaches to the notion of integration through the history of French and English-speaking scientific literature. It has also proposed some avenues for reflection to avoid certain pitfalls, particularly normative ones. By considering the socio-historical conditions of the scientific production, we have seen that integration is a central concept in French and English-speaking migration studies and have acknowledged the definitional issues raised by this area of research. Finally, this chapter has highlighted the contribution of geography and the concept of regional integration to the general theory of integration, since these make it possible to increase our understanding of the intra-European migration phenomenon by focusing in particular on the integration of NMS migrants within a territory that is not national, as is the case in most migration studies, but one that is macro-regional.

Chapter 3: Methodology

At this stage of the demonstration, it is necessary to present the tools and methods of investigation, which have been chosen to analyse European macro-regional integration from the individual level. The construction of the methodology has involved developing tools, adapted to the target population, the NMS migrants living in several locations, in Lorraine and in Wales.

This chapter presents the qualitative methodology that has been carried out, namely the semi-structured interviews and mental maps, which were conducted with migrants from the NMS during multi-phase and multi-located research fieldwork in 2019, 2020 and 2021. It will demonstrate that these methodological choices are relevant and appropriate and discuss how the data was collected. In the last section, this chapter also presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

1. Finding the relevant methodology

1.1. Qualitative analysis

Thinking about the European macro-regional space from a socio-constructivist approach naturally leads to a questioning of its identity and how the people who inhabit and practice this space may appropriate it.[33] According to this approach, individual and subjective perspectives are central. This research uses qualitative analysis to address NMS' migration from an individual perspective and to apprehend the integration and place of this population category within a macro-regional space. It seemed appropriate to conduct a qualitative analysis to collect individual data and focus on a minority and understudied group of the population (Dickey *et al*., 2018) that often remains invisible in official statistics.[34] This

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[33] By the term "appropriation" I refer to the definition proposed by Fabrice Ripoll and Vincent Veschambre, the "affective and existential" appropriation, which means the attachment to places and the feeling of being at home (2005: 5).

[34] Only the main migrant populations are presented in national statistics both in France and in the UK because of confidentiality conditions and statistical secrecy constraints. In France, it was necessary to make a "PSM" request to INSEE to access census details by detailed nationality. A PSM request is only accessible for researchers who send an application signed by their research laboratory *via* this website: http://www.progedo-adisp.fr/psm_definition.php.

approach is part of the effort to reconsider NMS migrants by moving away from the theory of the *homo economicus* migrants, which states that migrants, mainly those with economic motivations, are rational and follow the maximisation logics of earnings (Massey *et al*., 2003). Semi-structured interviews, allowing for the production of verbal data, reveal sensitive migration mechanisms that go beyond rationality and the traditionally-emphasized economic logic. They lead to an understanding of certain phenomena, which are not visible or are difficult to collect using a survey or census data, such as emotions, feelings, and representations, but which are fundamental in terms of the socio-constructivist approach.

The interview, which consists of a conversation between two people (the respondent and the interviewer), is a very common method in research based on sociological approaches; a range of disciplines use it from anthropology to medical sciences, psychology, and the educational sciences (Barbot, 2012; Imbert, 2010). The semi-structured interview is generally structured around major themes and allows a greater freedom of response because the questions are more open and spontaneous than in a structured interview, which involves direct and concise answers. It differs from the non-structured interview, which is based on a general question rather than an interview guide. The openness of the questions and the freedom of the conversation means that the exchange is not confined by a normative and preconceived definition of integration, as criticized above. An inductive approach allows the respondents to express atypical or unexpected visions. It enables us to avoid thinking of integration based on predefined criteria and questions, as respondents can guide the interview and bring up elements that the interviewer would not have thought of.

NMS migrants are referred to in some studies as Eastern and Central European migrants[35] (Bauere *et al*., 2007; Woods and Watkin, 2008), or as A8, A2 migrants (CRC, 2007; Pollard *et al*., 2008), or by the most significant[36] nationalities[37] (Drinkwater and Garapich, 2015; Knight *et al*., 2014). They have been the subject of numerous studies, most of which focus on the impact of their migration on the labour market (Flipo, 2014; Jones *et al*., 2014; Harris

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[35] The designation chosen (Eastern and Central European migrants, A8, A2) depends on which point of view the researcher wants to emphasise. By choosing to speak of migrants from Eastern and Central Europe, the researcher is referring to a cultural area and a specific historical category that has been influenced by communism. When he talks about A8 and A2 migrants, the researcher chooses to focus on the entry of these countries into the European Union. If we chose to speak of NMS migrants, it is because some countries (Cyprus, Malta, and Croatia) are excluded from the A8 and A2 designations, which only include the main countries and thus indirectly creates a sort of hierarchy, which we want to avoid.
[36] With the largest number of nationals.
[37] The most numerous studies are on Poles, Romanians, Bulgarians and Lithuanians.

et al., 2012; Green *et al*., 2007-a; Chappell, 2009). These studies either use quantitative and statistical tools to assess the role of migrants in the economy or implement surveys and in-depth interviews of smaller samples of individuals. It is rare to find studies that use both qualitative tools, such as semi-structured interviews, and study NMS migrants as a whole, without any distinction and preconception of the respondents based on their nationality and/or on when their country of origin entered the EU (Shubin, 2020). Carrying out semi-structured interviews also makes it possible to overcome the limitations of the national and European statistics and to compensate for any of their imprecision. These statistics do not address individual migratory paths and mobility practices within the macro-regional space since they only show stocks of migrants at a given time. The migration dynamics are thus mainly reduced to two countries (a country of origin and a country of arrival), and do not consider a wider migration pathway that can take place within a macro-regional space. Semi-structured interviews, focusing on individual migratory pathways and experiences, enable us to apprehend a system of mobility that is not only unidirectional (migrating from one country to another), but also multi-directional and circulatory. Getting a large and representative sample to conduct a quantitative study would have been difficult given that the chosen category of population includes individuals whom are not easily accessible (see 2.1). Moreover, the conditions, timeframe, and economic resources of a PhD are limited.

Finally, as demonstrated in chapter 2 (see 1.2.4.), the characteristics of the integration process are comparable to those of the rhizome. By analysing integration as a process, one is able to take into consideration the dimensions of multiplicity and temporality. All interview situations are different: the discourses collected and the ways in which they are collected are thus heterogeneous. The scripts and topics discussed with the respondents are multiple and their course is not identical. When a questionnaire is administered directly and done in a specific period of time, the chronology of an interview becomes less unidirectional and systematic: the relationship developed with a respondent therefore becomes more intimate and individualized. Indeed, obtaining an interview requires several exchanges and meetings beforehand with the respondents and often leads to further exchanges afterwards. The data collected is never really finished and is enriched by the multiplicity of interactions that are necessary to conduct the interview. The implementation of mental maps is also appropriate for addressing the notion of integration in line with the rhizome theory. Yet, according to Deleuze and Guattari, a map has the same characteristics as a rhizome because it can be read in a multitude of different ways and is a narrative that expresses an interpretation of reality.

Mental maps are thus very useful for accessing a respondent's unique representation of space and reveals how their feelings and emotions are related to that space (Matei, 2005; den Besten, 2008). Conducting semi-structured interviews and mental maps was relevant for all those reasons.

1.2. Ethical considerations

While in France it is not necessary to set up an ethical protocol, validated by members of the university, in the UK it is compulsory before carrying out any fieldwork. Conducting semi-structured interviews involving the recording of personal information has ethical and legal implications for the research. Both the positions of the researcher and the respondents need to be addressed.

One of the unavoidable risks in researching in the field — particularly as a woman — was meeting and interviewing people I did not know. This I was also obliged to do on my own, for reasons of privacy and discretion. When face-to-face interviews were possible, I decided to arrange interviews in public spaces, in the presence of other people. Going to the appointment by bike was also a safety measure I implemented in order not to be followed after the interview. I also had an emergency contact to whom I would tell the place and time of the interview and who was responsible for checking with me that everything had gone well if I had not given any news after a certain time.

Regarding the respondents, I had to address three main ethical factors: consent, confidentiality, and data protection. First, an information sheet was provided, and a consent form was completed by all the participants beforehand (see appendices). Then, during the interviews the participants have been reminded several times that they could stop the interview at any time, or that they could not answering to any question they were not comfortable with. Finally, personal data and information were all anonymized, and the notebooks and transcripts were locked away securely. The data collected, audio recordings, transcripts, and notes, have been immediately transferred and stored in my secure, password-protected computer (to which no one else have access), and deleted from any software application or recording device used in accordance with both statutory requirements, including General and Data Protection Regulation and academic best practice.

2. A multi-located, multi-phased fieldwork: identification of representative and comparable research fields.

Our analysis is based on a sample of 103 interviews and 83 mental maps, which were carried out with NMS migrants residing in four main cities in France and in Wales. The 103 interviews and data collection were conducted both online and in-person in multi-locations at a transnational and national scale: they were carried out in (1) two different countries (France and Wales) and (2) four cities (Nancy, Metz, Swansea, and Cardiff). In this first part, I will show how the fieldwork was chosen to be representative and comparable.

The corpus of mental maps is composed of 83 mental maps. They have been conducted in parallel to the semi-directive interviews and were collected both in the field and online with NMS migrants living in France and in Wales. The discrepancy between the number of semi-directed interviews (103) and the number of mental maps (83) collected can be explained firstly by the refusal of some respondents to carry out the exercise, and secondly by the limits of the online interview context: in fact, several respondents did not send me back their mental maps, despite my reminder emails.

2.1. A multi-located fieldwork

2.1.1. The relevance of working on medium-sized cities

Big cities, such as London or Birmingham, are over-researched in migration studies that focus on cross-European migrations (Stenning *et al*., 2006; Knight *et al*., 2014; Berroir *et al*., 2009). Yet, several studies have shown that smaller towns and medium-sized cities are often a determinant stage within the migratory process (Dubucs, 2011; Giroud *et al*., 2011), especially for migrants from the NMS. Several studies use the National Insurance Number (NINo) Allocation database (Harris *et al*., 2012; Trevena, 2009), which is used to measure labour immigration in the UK and provide information at a local scale (Drinkwater *et al*., 2015).[38] These studies show that the geographical distribution of the NMS migrants does not

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[38] Harris *et al.*, 2012, have demonstrate the utility of the NINo allocations to measure migration. This database is an indication of the number of migrants legally working in the UK as all individuals engaged in formal work in the UK must by law obtain a NINo. This database provides information at a local level and has proven to be more accurate than the other traditional and official statistics (LGA Research, 2007).

correspond to the traditional immigrants' destinations (Pollard *et al*., 2008). Migration patterns from the NMS have been described as more dispersed and tend to move toward rural and smaller urban areas (Trevena, 2009; Stenning *et al*., 2006; Bauere *et al*., 2007; Green *et al*., 2007-a, 2007-b; CRC 2007; Chappell *et al*., 2009). Working on the scale of medium-sized cities seems relevant insofar as they are under-represented in cross-European migrations studies, even though they concentrate significant flows from the NMS and crystallise a certain number of migratory issues.

The fieldwork consists of two main cities, Swansea and Nancy, and two secondary cities, Cardiff and Metz, respectively in South Wales and Lorraine, in the northeast of France. Cardiff and Metz are "secondary" fieldwork cities because only a small number of interviews were carried out in these two cities.[39] The initial fieldwork (Swansea and Nancy) was extended to two other cities because I noticed functional links between both cities in France and Wales and I did not want to restrict the collection of migratory experiences: several migrants that I met during my research in Nancy were living in Metz, and several migrants in Swansea were living in Cardiff. In each case, the migrants living in Metz and Cardiff travelled often (several times a month) to Nancy and Swansea for work, study, leisure activities, or religious purposes. In addition to this, functional and structural criteria such as size (see 1.1.2) and geographical location, as well as the cities' influence (see 1.1.3) were taken into account when identifying the four fieldwork cities.

Characterising these cities as intermediate or medium-sized cities is debatable. A medium-sized city is an ambiguous category: "Un objet réel non identifié" according to Roger Brunet (1997: 188).[40] The criteria for identifying medium-sized cities vary greatly from country to country and from period to period, which therefore complicates international comparative studies (Santamaria, 2000). Are medium-sized cities characterised by their size, by their functions, by their geographical location, by their level of hierarchy, by their population density, by demographic trajectories, or by their economic specialisation? The definitions of a medium-sized city are relative and vary according to the scale of observation (Demazière, 2014). Though Swansea, Cardiff, Nancy and Metz are slightly larger than the commonly

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[39] Five interviews were conducted with NMS migrants living in Metz and twenty interviews were carried out with NMS migrants living in Cardiff.
[40] "An unidentified real object" (Brunet, 1997: 188).

defined limit[41] of a medium-sized city, categorising them as medium-sized cities allows us to understand their secondary role on the national scale at several different levels (demographic, economic, political), while also recognising their role as an interface between metropolitan areas and rural and low-density areas (Delpirou, 2013). Their regional and functional roles contribute to our definition of them as intermediate cities in the urban hierarchy.

2.1.2. The use of the TRADEVE database

To find comparable cities in France and in the UK, I first used the TRADEVE database (Guérois *et al.*, 2019). This database, funded by the University of Paris 1, and carried out by several European researchers, is a harmonised database, built for 29 European countries with the same definition of the city, the Urban Morphological Zone. The contiguity of the building blocks and minimal population are the two main criteria used (Guérois *et al.*, 2019; Zdanowska, 2020).[42] This database facilitates an international comparison between cities using the same urban categorisation system. Thanks to the TRADEVE database, Nancy and Metz were identified as comparable to Swansea and Cardiff because of their size. According to the TRADEVE database, in 2011 Swansea was the second biggest city in Wales with 284 264 inhabitants; Cardiff had 372 985 inhabitants; Nancy had 277 702 inhabitants and Metz 422 419.

2.1.3. Characteristic of the research fields

Size was not the only criteria for determining the research fields. The geographical proximity between Nancy and Metz and between Swansea and Cardiff is comparable and implies a similar system of relationships.[43] Moreover, these four cities stand out due to their regional influence as major university, cultural, political, and economic centres. The regional influence of these cities is manifested at several levels. Cardiff, as the capital of Wales, is the administrative, cultural, and economic centre of Wales. It is a port city that

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[41] "Selon les auteurs, la catégorie 'villes moyennes' commence partir de 20, 30 ou 50000 habitants. Elle s'achève à 100 000 ou 200 000 habitants dans l'agglomération." (Michel, 1977: 642).

[42] The population threshold is set at 2000 inhabitants and the building discontinuity must not exceed 200 metres.

[43] According to Google maps, the distance between Nancy and Metz is 33 miles and the distance between Swansea and Cardiff is 40 miles.

developed through the coal trade from the 19th century (Huw, 1989; Johnes, 2012). Swansea, nicknamed "Copperopolis" (Newell, 1990), grew from the 18th century due to metals and mining exploitation; it is also a former industrial port city specialising in the export of coal for steam engines and metal products (Hauck, 1925; Tallon *et al*., 2005). Nancy and Metz are the two largest and former regional political centres in the historical region of Lorraine, strongly marked by industrial activity (Martin, 1957).[44] South Wales, like Lorraine, is a former industrial region in decline, the economy of which has been suffering since the closure of the heavy industries after World War II. The four cities chosen for the fieldwork are thus characterized by a strong deindustrialisation context, defined as a succession of mass lay-offs, plant closures, and destruction of factories, which led to profound social transformations and economic and environmental issues (Fol and Cunningham-Sabot, 2010; Raggi, 2013).

Though the industrial development of these cities is not of primary interest to us here, it does have social and demographic implications, particularly concerning migration. There is a close link between the industrial development of a region and its migratory history: international migrants came to work in the copper, coal, and iron mines in both Lorraine and South Wales, making these two regions long-standing migratory areas (Hentschke, 2018; Noiriel, 1990; Boubeker and Galloro, 2008). With the development of the copper industry in South Wales in the 19th century, Swansea attracted a great wave of immigrants, mainly from Ireland and Italy (Hall, 2018). In Lorraine, the successive migratory waves of Italian miners from the end of the 19th century, and North African workers and Slavs[45] in the inter-war period, contributed to the development of its industrial activity (Bruno *et al*., 2008; Boubeker and Galloro, 2008). Due to an emigration convention concluded in Warsaw on 3 September 1919 between the French and Polish governments, the massive immigration of agricultural workers and Polish miners made the Poles the second foreign nationality in France after the Italians, with over half a million Poles recorded in 1931 (Le Musée national de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, 2009).[46]

Swansea and Cardiff concentrate the greatest number of international migrants in Wales with respectively 45 967 foreign-born residents in Cardiff (13.3% of its overall resident

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[44] The former region Lorraine has been assimilated into the region Grand Est on 1 January 2016.

[45] Especially from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Slovenia.

[46] https://www.histoire-immigration.fr/les-projets-dans-les-territoires/2009-journees-europeennes-du-patrimoine/les-mines-de-fer-et-le

population) and 17 233 foreign-born residents in Swansea (7.2% of its overall resident population), according to the 2011 census (Krausova and Vargas-Silva, 2014).[47] Beyond their long-standing migration histories linked to industrialisation, Swansea and Cardiff experienced two major migratory waves following the Second World War and the entry of the NMS in the EU (Crawley, 2013; Jones *et al.*, 2014). After the Second World War, many Eastern European migrants, (especially Poles, Czech and Ukrainian whom had fought on the side of the allies) settled in England and Wales because of the spread of communism. In the 2000's, the entrance of the NMS into the EU led to the biggest, unprecedented wave of international migration in Wales, which experienced an overall increase of 82% of its migrant population between 2001 and 2017, mainly in the four major Welsh cities Cardiff, Newport, Swansea, and Wrexham (Council of Europe, 2017). Poland-born constitutes the largest foreign-born population living in Wales with more than 18 000 residents (representing 10.7% of Wales' non-UK born population and 0.6% of the total population of Wales) and according to the 2011 census, the largest group of migrants to arrive in Wales came from the A8 countries, and more precisely from Poland and Slovakia (Crawley, 2013).[48]

In the same way that Rzepnikowska (2018: 67) describes Manchester, we can say that Swansea has a "migration-friendly narrative," which is expressed through local governments' support of asylum seekers and refugee-supporting organisations. Swansea is the second city in the UK to have become a "City of Sanctuary";[49] it is a cluster of asylum dispersals[50] and participates in the Syrian Resettlement Programme.[51] It is interesting to ask how NMS migrants, whom are not concerned by these programmes, can socially integrate into an *a priori* supportive urban context, and whether Brexit, which has ended freedom of movement, could lead to a need for support structures for NMS migrants.

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[47] The reason we use the 2011 census is because it is the latest census to be published. In the UK, the census is conducted every 10 years and the results of the 2021 census have not yet been published at the time of writing.

[48] Two thirds of A8 migrant workers living in Wales are coming from Poland and a sixth from Slovakia (Crawley, 2013).

[49] City of Sanctuary is a network of cities developed to welcome migrants fleeing from war and persecution.

[50] The policy of asylum dispersal, introduced by the *Immigration and Asylum Act 1999*, states that asylum seekers can apply for accommodation and/or subsistence support in a "dispersal area", where the local authority has agreed to take asylum seekers.

[51] This programme enables to support Syrians beyond the dispersal areas.

In France, the main fieldwork city, Nancy, is representative of the French migration dynamics of NMS by weight in the total population and by nationality distribution. Based on the population censuses of INSEE, the graph 3.1 (see below) shows that the weight of NMS migrants in the total population of Nancy and of France in general has evolved in a similar way between 1982 and 2016.

Graph 3.1: The weight of NMS migrants in the total population in ‰.
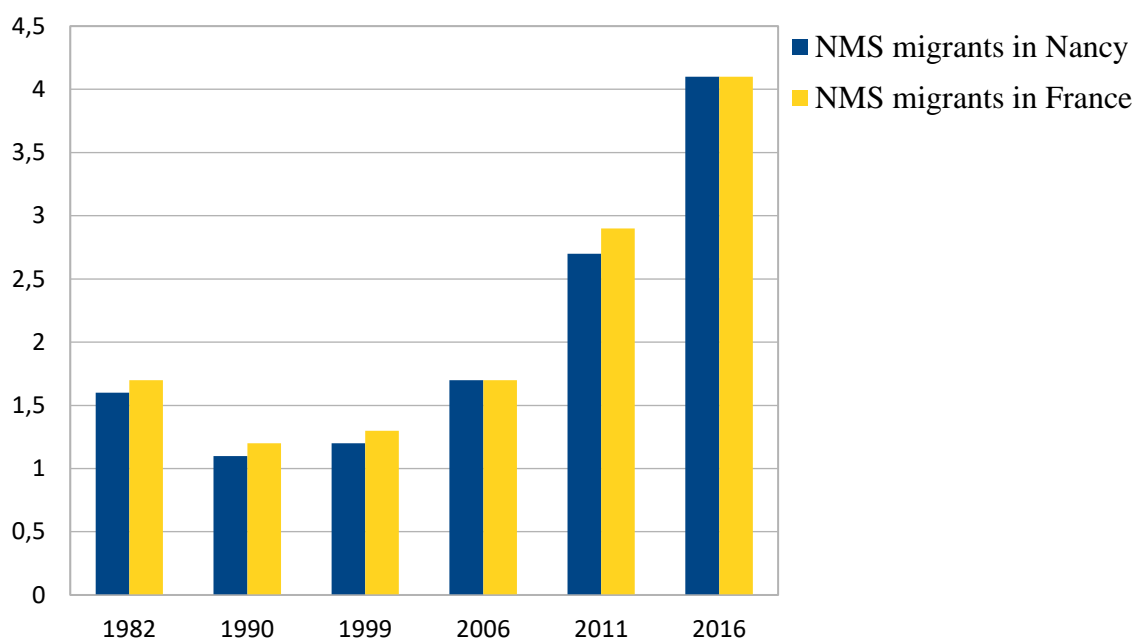
Source: INSEE population censuses of 1982, 1990, 1999, 2006, 2011 and 2016. Mila Sanchez, 2020.

In addition to having a comparable share of the population in Nancy and in France in general, INSEE population censuses show us that the distribution of NMS migrants by nationality is also comparable between 1982 and 2016 in Nancy and France. The two graphs below (see graph 3.2 and graph 3.3) present the evolution of the distribution of the NMS population between 1982 and 2016 by group of nationality.

Graph 3.2: Evolution of the distribution of the NMS population by group of nationality in France between 1982 and 2016
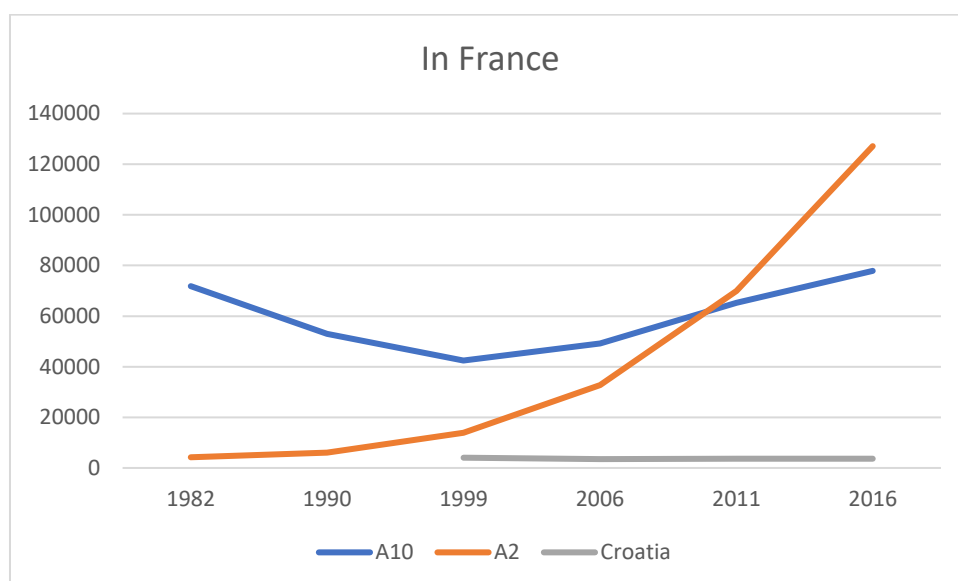
Source: INSEE population censuses of 1982, 1990, 1999, 2006, 2011 and 2016. Mila Sanchez, 2020.

Graph 3.3: Evolution of the distribution of the NMS population by group of nationality in Nancy between 1982 and 2016.
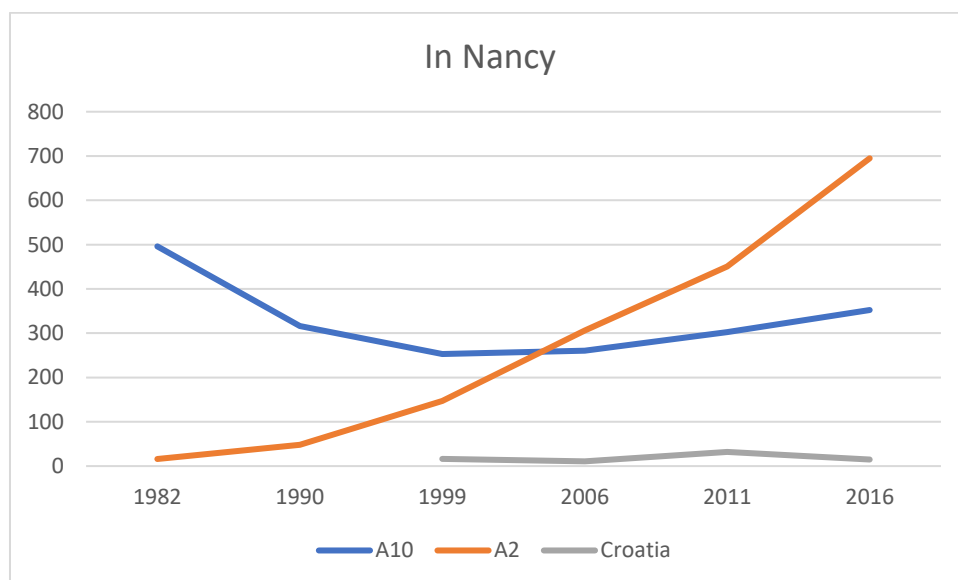
Source: INSEE population censuses of 1982, 1990, 1999, 2006, 2011 and 2016. Mila Sanchez, 2020.

The details of the census show that in France, as in Nancy, the four most represented nationalities of NMS migrants in 2016 are Romanians, Poles, Bulgarians and Hungarians.

Thus, the choice of fieldwork cities can be explained by both the general characteristics of the cities (size, function, location, industrial past) and their migratory distribution and evolution. A timeline showing key dates in the history of migration from Eastern European countries to France and the UK up to Brexit can be found in the appendices (see figure E.1).

2.1. A multi-phased fieldwork

Figure 3.1: Chronology of the multi-phased fieldwork
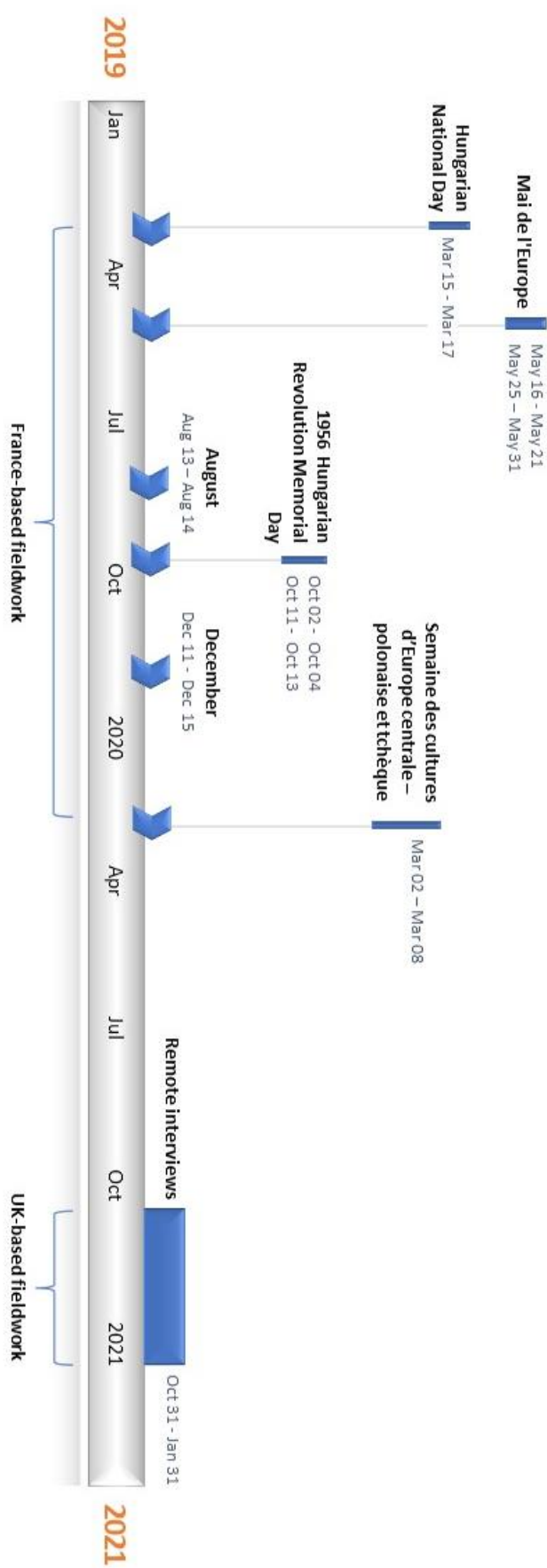
Source: Mila Sanchez, 2021.

The French fieldwork and Welsh fieldwork, carried out one after the other, did not take place in the same timeframes (see figure 3.1). The research fieldwork in Wales was straightforward and took place without any interruption between November 2020 and February 2021. It was almost exclusively conducted remotely/online, except for 9 out of 64 interviews. In Lorraine, however, the search for participants was a long, immersive process. The interview process in France ran for a year between March 2019 and March 2020; it involved different steps to gain the confidence of the targeted population and was interrupted because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The interruption of the fieldwork by the pandemic prevented me from completing the fieldwork as planned: I was planning to attend the same annual events in 2019 and in 2020. The 2019 fieldwork was supposed to be an exploratory fieldwork phase, dedicated to identifying and developing contacts with NMS migrants. This involved several short fieldworks whereby I attended events, and cultural and community gatherings, organized by cultural associations, to meet NMS migrants and develop bonds of trust with the respondents. Familiarity with migrants and repeated encounters facilitated access to people and information. The 2020 French-based fieldwork plans were disrupted: the annual events and gatherings organized by the cultural associations of NMS migrants could not take place because of the pandemic. Fortunately, it was possible to carry out enough semi-structured interviews during the first fieldwork phase.

3. In search of participants: how to recruit participants from a minority and invisible population during a time of pandemic?

The selection of fieldwork locations was also determined by the accessibility of NMS migrants. The search for participants was carried out in two ways: online and face-to-face. The online search for participants began when I first identified the fieldwork cities. Indeed, choosing relevant fieldwork locations required finding ones that are representative of the NMS migration trends (what the prior data-based research presented in 2.1.3. verified), as well as fieldwork in which it is possible to meet and recruit participants, which turned out to be a difficult task.

An internet search by keywords, including the city of the research field and the country of origin, or the nationality of the migrants,[52] was carried out to identify potential existing community groups, associations, or key actors linked to NMS migrants in the identified fieldwork cities.

In France, the Internet search by keywords allowed me to identify several "gatekeeper" contacts (Tracy, 2019: 111). The long-standing migration from Central and Eastern Europe to Lorraine is partly linked to the attractiveness of the industrial basin (Noiriel, 1988), and also to the policies in certain municipalities that welcome refugees (Étienne, 2016: 75).[53] This was accompanied, from the 1960s onwards, by the creation of cultural associations, particularly Polish and Hungarian, which are supported today by honorary consuls. Associations (Czech, Polish, Romanian, Bulgarian, Hungarian), honorary consulate (Polish and Hungarian), Facebook groups (see 3.2.2), academics (Czech and Romanian), churches (Polish and Romanian), shops (Eastern European food market, *Evran épicerie de l'Est*, and a Hungarian wine shop), and a polish restaurant (*A la table du bon Roi Stanislas*) were identified in Nancy and contacted. The variety of potential contacts identified in Nancy from prior Internet searches determined the choice of the fieldwork. I sent emails to many publicly-available email addresses. Not all the contacts reached out to by emails had an interview: it was sometimes necessary to reiterate the emails on numerous occasions.

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[52] The key words used were in French, in English, and in the language of the country of origin. For example: (Nancy) + (Pologne); (Polonais); (Polish); (Poland); (Polski w); (Polska).

[53] 1 900 Hungarians refugees from the 1956 Hungarian Revolution were welcomed in Moselle and Meurthe-et-Moselle between 1956 and 1957 (in Nancy, Lunéville, Metz…). One of our respondents, Kristof, a Hungarian refugee from the 1956 Revolution, testified: "At that time, whole convoys of Hungarians arrived in Nancy and Metz. I was lucky because a French delegation came to pick up the refugees in the camp where I was in Yugoslavia, and they called my name. It was only when I arrived in France that I learned that a friend of mine was already there and engaged to a French woman, who worked in the administration of this delegation. They had added my name to the list". The interview was carried out in French the 16/03/2019.

Figure 3.2: Synthesis of the way the respondents have been recruited in France
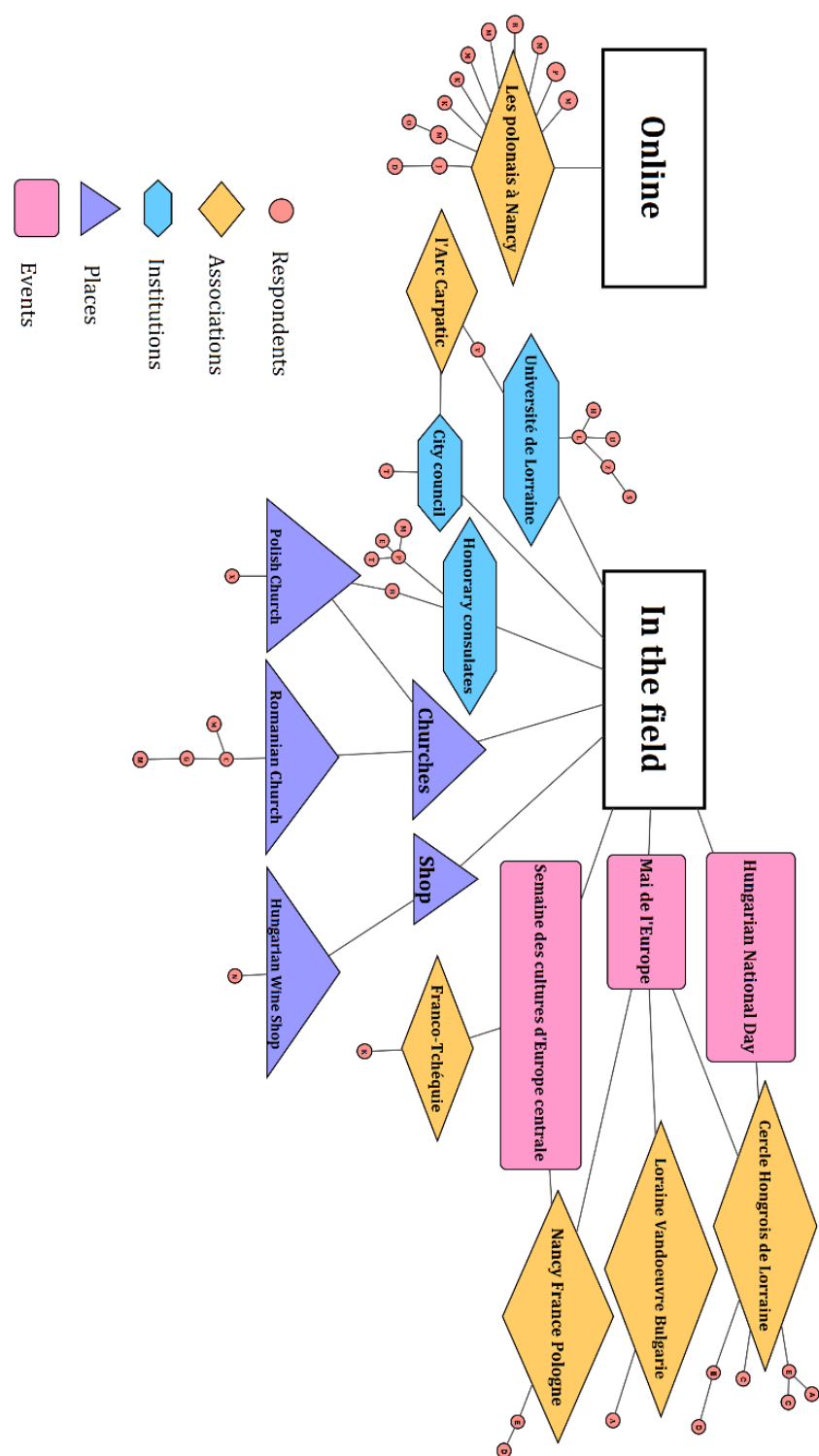
Source: Mila Sanchez, 2021.

This figure (see figure 3.2) synthesises the way in which respondents were recruited in France. It presents only the successful contact channels that have led to an effective interview.[54] The Facebook group for the association *Les Polonais à Nancy* has been the most efficient contact channel: it enabled me to recruit the largest number of participants (12 participants). The associations are numerous (6) and were involved in the organization of social and cultural events related to the NMS. Thanks to their members and their contacts, they have been an important resource for meeting migrants from the NMS currently living in Nancy. However, they are composed largely of second-generation migrants who want to connect with their family background, their parents' origins, and roots. Two first-generation respondents said that the fact that cultural associations in Nancy were mostly composed of second-generation migrants was the main reason why they were not part of them. Bartłomiej said: "Because many members don't speak Polish, the meetings took place in French, whereas I wanted to speak Polish. If I wanted to meet Poles it was precisely to speak Polish, to speak my language, and not just to just be there, speaking French."[55] Monika differentiates the "French people of Polish origin", whom she considers to be "foreigners" and "us, who are Polish nationals, born and raised in Poland, with two Polish parents". This differentiation helps explain why she does not want to become a member of Nancy-France-Poland Association. She said: "There are many French people of Polish origin who speak more or less Polish, but not like us, who have the Polish nationality. When I was in Fleville,[56] I heard Poles speaking Polish, but for me it wasn't Polish. It was Polish, yes, but with an accent. It was as if they were foreigners speaking Polish. It wasn't like me, Magda or Kasia. We have accents when we speak French, but when we speak Polish, we don't have any accent. Because we are Polish nationals, born and raised in Poland, with two Polish parents. For me, these persons are French people of Polish origin. They consider themselves to be Polish. But I felt that it was not the same… They don't have the same expressions as me... no... after all, that it's good, if they consider themselves Polish, it's very good. Well, I can't say anything, I'm happy. But still, they don't speak like Poles. I don't want to judge

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[54] Other places (Eastern European food shop for example), associations, administrative structures, and events have been contacted, visited, or attended, but did not lead to any interviews.

[55] The interview with Bartłomiej was conducted in French on the 12/10/2019. The quote in the text is a personal translation of the following French quote: "Parce que beaucoup de membres ne parlaient pas polonais, les rencontres avaient lieux en français alors que moi j'avais envie de parler le polonais. Si je voulais rencontrer des Polonais, c'était justement pour parler polonais, pour parler ma langue, et pas justement rester à parler le français."

[56] Fléville-devant-Nancy is a commune, which is part of the Metropole du Grand Nancy, located about ten kilometres south of the urban centre of Nancy. A concert of Polish Christmas carols was organised there in December 2019.

but I can just correct the accent when I hear it. Like you, French people, you hear when we, foreigners, speak French. You can say 'ah yeah, she's a foreigner.'"[57] This perceived gap in language skills means that she does not identify with the members of the association and very rarely participates in the events they organise. This gap can explain why the share of first-generation migrants is lower in NMS cultural associations in Nancy and why I did not recruit as many participants as expected from the associations, which are nevertheless very numerous in Nancy.

Thanks to the help of gatekeeper contacts (Tracy, 2019: 111), we applied the snowballing method (see Blanchet and Gotman (2007: 55) about the "proche-en-proche" method) in order to meet migrants that were not involved in the associative and cultural circles of Nancy. Being introduced by a third person was often decisive: introductory emails have often led to an interview.

In UK, the fieldwork was compromised because of the successive lockdowns and social distancing rules. The places identified (Polish, Romanian, Bulgarian and Eastern European food shops, The Polish school) could not be visited to recruit participants. The migrants were recruited *via* two main ways: Facebook groups (see 2.2.) and University contacts. Then, the snowballing sampling method was applied.

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[57] The interview with Monika was conducted in French on the 12/12/2019. The quote in the text is a personal translation of the following French quote: "Il y a beaucoup de Français d'origine polonaise qui parlent plus ou moins polonais, on peut dire, mais pas comme nous, les Polonais de souche. Parce que quand j'étais à Fleville, j'entendais des Polonais parler polonais, mais pour moi ce n'était pas du polonais. C'était du polonais, oui, mais avec un accent. C'était comme si c'étaient des étrangers qui parlaient polonais. Ce n'était pas comme moi, Magda ou Kasia. Nous avons des accents quand nous parlons français, mais quand nous parlons polonais, nous n'avons pas d'accent. Parce que nous sommes des Polonais de naissance. Pour moi, ce sont des Français d'origine polonaise. Ils se considèrent comme des Polonais. Mais j'ai senti que ce n'était pas pareil... Ils n'ont pas les mêmes expressions que moi... non... après, c'est bien, s'ils se considèrent polonais, c'est très bien. Bon, je ne peux rien dire, je suis contente. Mais quand même, ils ne parlent pas comme des Polonais ! Je ne connais pas l'histoire des gens donc je ne veux pas juger mais je peux juste corriger l'accent quand je l'entends. C'est comme vous, les Français, quand vous entendez quand nous, les étrangers, parlons français. Vous pouvez dire 'ah oui, c'est une étrangère'."

3.1. Recruiting NMS migrants in the field

3.1.1. NMS migrants, an invisible and "hard-to-involve" population

According to the definition proposed by Marpsat and Razafindratsima (2010), NMS migrants are a "hard-to reach" population. It is a population with relatively low numbers of members (they represent only 0.4% of the population in France according to the 2016 INSEE census and less than 1% of the host population in most places in the UK according to Stenning *et al*., 2006). They were hard to identify, and difficult to approach due to the poor number and choice of places in which to meet them[58] and the high degree of trust necessary to carry out interviews about sensitive and personal topics, such as their migration trajectories.

Natacha Lillo (2014) argues that intra-European immigration is invisible in scientific research and proposes several hypotheses for explaining this invisibility:

> *« Serait-ce parce que cette immigration « blanche » serait « invisible » [Cordeiro, 1999] ? Serait-ce dû au fait que, depuis l'entrée en vigueur des accords de Maastricht en 1992, les ressortissants de l'UE (Union européenne) n'ont plus besoin de carte de séjour, peuvent accéder à des emplois de la Fonction publique – hors ministères de la Défense et de l'Intérieur – et ont acquis le droit de vote lors des élections européennes (1994) et municipales (2001) ? Cette législation aurait-elle peu à peu entériné l'idée que les ressortissants européens seraient des immigrés « moins étrangers » que les « autres » ? »* [59] *(Lillo, 2014: 85).*

The alleged physical characteristics of the EU migrants ("white"), their rights (the same as the nationals of the host countries), and their legal migration status (beneficiaries of freedom of movement), could be reasons why intra-European migrants are less studied. Van Riemsdijk (2010) and Cordeiro (1999) raised the issue of physical invisibility, which

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[58] Very few restaurants and shops dedicated to NMS, no dedicated administrative structure, few NMS cultural associations and events.

[59] Personal translation into English: "Could it be because this 'white' immigration is 'invisible' [Cordeiro, 1999]? Could it be because, since the Maastricht agreements came into force in 1992, EU (European Union) nationals no longer need a residence permit, can access civil service jobs - except for the Ministries of Defence and the Interior - and have acquired the right to vote in European (1994) and municipal (2001) elections? Has this legislation gradually endorsed the idea that European nationals are 'less foreign' than 'other' immigrants?" (Lillo, 2014: 85).

Stenning *et al*. (2006: 11) similarly highlighted: "A8 migrants are not a very visible migrant community". Rzepnikowska (2018) associates the invisibility of Poles with their whiteness but highlights that this privileged is temporary because it disappears as soon as a migrant starts speaking. De Genova *et al*. (2016: 27), have discussed the general "invisibilization" of EU-migrants in a global media context where irregular migration and the so-called migration crisis often feature in the headlines. Though NMS migrants stand out from other EU migrants because of their extensive, often negative media coverage portraying prostitution,[60] and burglary networks,[61] and has made them increasingly visible since the post-2004 enlargement, and Brexit (Moore and Ramsay, 2017), they remain a hard-to-reach population because they are hard to identify.

NMS migrants are also a "hard-to-involve" population (Baltar and Brunet, 2012: 58), marked by memories of the socialist period. Even though in Nancy there were many contact points with NMS migrants (see figure 3.2), recruiting NMS respondents was a difficult task. The immersive phase of the French fieldwork was aimed at developing trust with NMS migrants: creating familiarity and closeness with the respondents was necessary because NMS migrants in general, and pre-1989 migrants in particular, do not easily provide intimate information. Several respondents were suspicious and initially reluctant to take part in the study, be recorded, and share personal information,[62] migration stories, and mobility practices. The fieldwork was impacted by memory or images of Russian interrogations, and also of denunciations and surveillance, which characterized the socialist period. This suspicion and reluctance made it difficult to carry out semi-structured interviews in France in, particularly because the NMS migration is older than in Wales and because I interviewed more migrants that moved there before 1989, including refugees who have been stripped of their nationalities.

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[60] https://www.republicain-lorrain.fr/faits-divers-justice/2021/05/28/un-reseau-de-proxenetisme-roumain-demantele or https://www.ici-c-nancy.fr/france-international/item/13749-jirs-de-nancy-demantelement-d-une-filiere-de-prostitution-bulgare.html or https://www.20minutes.fr/justice/2647895-20191109-nancy-jusqu-dix-ans-prison-ferme-lors-proces-reseau-proxenetes-hongrois
[61] https://www.estrepublicain.fr/faits-divers-justice/2021/03/16/quatorze-ressortissants-roumains-juges-a-nancy-pour-47-vols or https://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/nancy-prison-ferme-pour-les-roumains-du-gang-des-tracteurs-13-02-2014-3587943.php
[62] Such as income, the number and names of children, and the spouse's job.

3.1.2. Poor choices of places in which to approach them

The number of places from which to recruit NMS migrants in the field was limited. Intra-EU migration is legal and does not require any systematic administrative steps: visiting administrative places such as the prefecture, advice agencies, or welcome, accommodation, or orientation services, which are normally useful to recruit migrants (Mazzocchetti, 2011), did not enable us to meet respondents from the NMS since they have little recourse to these services.[63]

Unlike some migrant communities, NMS migrants are not very visible in the public space: there are no dedicated Hungarian, Czech or Slovak neighbourhoods like there are, for example, Indian, Japanese, or Chinese neighbourhoods, in which shops and restaurants are concentrated.[64] The places in which one may approach them are thus dispersed and limited, or even non-existent. There can be official political venues such as embassies and consulates, shops (food, library, hairdresser), churches, cultural or community centres.

To meet certain respondents and gain a representative sample, I had to negotiate my access into key places during the fieldwork (Lapassade, 2006). It was a struggle to recruit Romanian migrants, even if according to INSEE population census (2016) they are the second largest migrant population from the NMS after the Polish in Nancy. The Romanian Orthodox parish of Nancy seemed to be a strategic place to meet and recruit members of the Romanian community. It is frequented every Sunday by more than fifty Romanians (and also by other Orthodox populations such as Albanian, Georgian, Greek, Moldovan, Russian, Serbian and Ukrainian), some of whom come from several kilometres away, and from Metz in particular. However, the very function of this place makes it difficult to meet respondents: I therefore felt out of place by being neither Romanian nor Orthodox. Becoming friends with the priest's wife, a French geography teacher who shares my scientific interests, legitimised my regular presence at the Mass and allowed me to create friendships within the community, and thus developed the sense of trust necessary to conduct interviews.

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[63] It should be noted that the fieldwork took place during the transitional period of the Brexit, during which NMS migrants had the same rights as British people. Since January 2021, EU nationals must carry out administrative procedures to live in the UK, including applying to the EU Settlement Scheme. Since the end of the transitional period, NMS migrants might need to reach more frequently support from advice agencies and administrative offices such as the Citizen Advice Bureau.

[64] Chinatowns for example.

The Polish specificity in the UK: more visible and "ethicising spaces in the urban landscape" (Kempny, 2011).

The Polish population stands out because of their higher presence in the public space, especially in the UK, though shops and restaurants: there are several Polish food shops in Swansea and Cardiff, and Polish products can be found in big Supermarkets, and even at small, local ones, such as local Tesco and Sainsbury's (Rabikowska and Burrell, 2016; Nowicka, 2012). The presence of Polish shops (see images 3.4 and 3.5) and products (see images 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3) can be seen as a sign of demand from the shop's customers, and thus hints at the presence of many Polish people living nearby. We can expect these shops to be frequented by the Polish population.

Images 3.1, 3.2, 3.3: Polish food stall at the Local Sainsbury in Uplands, Swansea

Source: Mila Sanchez, Uplands, Swansea, 15/03/2021.

Uplands is a residential and students' area (mostly inhabited by families and students). Sainsbury's is the second largest chain of supermarkets in the United Kingdom. This particular shop in Uplands opened in 2011, a small local Sainsbury's where it is unexpected to find so much Polish products, such as cheese, ham, salami, sausages, chocolate and proteins bars, mayonnaise, gherkins and Pierogi (Polish dumplings). Although no one speaks Polish and there are no signs promoting "Polish products" in this shop, the presence of such products (on whose packaging the language used is Polish) - brands such as Basiuni, Mlekovita, Olza, or Grzeski – is notable.

Image 3.4: Swansea food centre. Turkish, Polish, Bulgarian, Romanian, and African food in High Street, Swansea

Source: Mila Sanchez, High Street, city centre, Swansea 29/05/2021.

Image 3.5: Lolek. Polskie Delikatesi. Polish food shop in Castle Street, Swansea

Source: Mila Sanchez, Castle Street, city centre, Swansea 29/05/2021.

In a normal context, these places would have been useful for recruiting migrants and carrying out observation participant. However, while part of the fieldwork in Nancy could be carried out onsite between March 2019 and March 2020, the entire Welsh fieldwork took place during the pandemic. In the context of the Covid-19 crisis, the social restrictions imposed (limited number of customers in the shops, prohibition to meet people outside one's household) made it impossible to regularly visit these places to meet respondents. As it was forbidden to meet people outside the household most of the time during the field phase, it was necessary to rethink the way in which to meet and interview participants. Uncertainty related to Covid-19 events (*i.e.*, if and when it would be possible to carry out fieldwork in person) led to several postponements of research fields (mostly cancelled at the last minute). I remained hopeful of being able to continue normal fieldwork until the end of 2020. But almost one year after the first lockdown, in March 2021, the travel and fieldwork restrictions still had not been lifted and so I gave up the idea of carrying out in-person fieldwork.

The presence of Polish markers in public spaces in Nancy is also more significant than those of other NMS migrants but, it is of a different nature: while Polish markers in Swansea are places where one would expect to encounter the Polish population, this is not the case for places in Nancy (except for the Polish church) which are not predominantly frequented by Poles. Most of the Polish urban markers in Nancy are related to the city and date back to the 18th century. Stanislas Leszczynski, Louis XV's father-in-law and twice king of Poland (1704-1709 and 1733-1736), was appointed Duke of Lorraine in 1737. He has left a lasting impression on Nancy's architecture because many of the most emblematic places in Nancy were erected by him: the Place Stanislas listed by UNESCO; the church of Notre-Dame de Bonsecours;[65] the Royal Library; the Hôtel des Missions Royales; the Place d'Alliance; the Place de la Carrière; and the Saint-Stanislas and Sainte-Catherine gates. Because of this historical link between Nancy and Poland, Nancy is traditionally said to be "the most Polish of the French city" (Cordelier and Loppy, 2015).[66] And yet, according to the honorary consul of Poland during his interview, the Polish influence on Nancy's architecture remains unknown to most people.[67]

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[65] Every Sunday, a Polish mass is held at Notre-Dame de Bonsecours. According to a respondent whose words could be verified in the field, about a hundred people attend this mass on Sundays. However, it is not only Poles: French and Portuguese people, among others, also attend the mass.
[66] Several respondents described Nancy as "la plus polonaise des villes françaises".
[67] Interviewed on the 15/03/2019.

3.1.3. Events

Participating in various events organized by the associations in Nancy was an opportunity for me to establish contact, let the migrants from the NMS get to know me, recognize me, and allow them to come directly to me to ask questions about my research, which has been the case more than once.[68] Indeed, my presence at cultural and commemorative events did not go unnoticed. Most of the members of the community had known each other for years, so it was obvious that a new face would raise questions. My relatively young age and the fact that I did not speak the language of their country of origin meant that I could not be entirely anonymous and blend in.[69] For this reason, I decided to introduce myself to the interviewees from the outset. The fact that my first name has Slavic origins attracted some curiosity and sympathy. The method used was that of participant observation defined by Bogdan and Taylor (1975) as an intense period of social interaction between the researcher and the respondents in their own environment. The researcher immerses him/herself in the respondents' lives and shares their experiences. By making my research activities public, my position became that of the "participant observer", characterized by the fact that whose activities are made public from the outset and are more or less publicly encouraged by those studied[70] (Junker, 1960). Contrary to the other categories of participant observation distinguished by Junker (the "complete participant", the "complete observer" and the "observer participant") the research position was fully displayed and assumed, while still being immersed in the population by sharing and engaging in their activities.

I attended two kinds of events: cultural and commemorative.

The commemorative events were:
- The Hungarian National Day on the 15th of March (Nemzeti ünnep), commemorating the Hungarian Revolution of 1848.[71]
- The Hungarian National Day on 23rd of October (Forradalom ünnepe), commemorating the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and the day of the proclamation

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[68] Some participants were aware of my research though word of mouth.
[69] Most of the members of the associations organizing the events were older than 50 years old.
[70] The president of the Hungarian association introduced me and my research at the two lunches I attended with the members in March and in October 2019.
[71] Aiming at the independence of the Hungarian Kingdom from the Austrian Empire.

of the Third Hungarian Republic, which has been the political regime in Hungary since 1989.[72]

These two commemorative annual events are organized by the Cercle Franco-Hongrois de Lorraine and the Hungarian honorary consulate of Nancy.[73] Both events were celebrated with lunch in a restaurant serving traditional Hungarian food, the singing of the national anthem, and a Hungarian mass. While the first celebration took place in a restaurant in Nancy, the second (the 23 October celebration) took place in Giromagny,[74] whereby a stele was erected in memory of Imre Nagy, prime minister and martyr of the 1956 revolution (see image 3.6). This celebration took place in the presence of the Hungarian Ambassador to France and Monaco, the Mayor of Giromagny, members of the Cercle Franco-Hongrois de Lorraine, and members of the Initiatives France Centrale et Orientale (IFECO), formerly Initiatives France Hongrie (INFH). Attending these Hungarian national celebrations was an opportunity to see the links that had been forged within the diaspora, between several cultural associations of the Hungarian community in eastern France. The presence of political representatives (Hungarian ambassador and consul) is a notable element and particular to the meetings of the Cercle Franco-Hongrois de Lorraine, which recalls the patriotic purpose of this association.

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[72] The 1956 revolution fought to expel Soviet troops from Hungary and establish free elections.

[73] The Cercle Franco-Hongrois de Lorraine (The Franco-Hungarian Circle of Lorraine) is an association founded in 1965 by former Hungarian refugees from the 1956 Revolution. One of the founders and oldest member is today the honorary president of this association. This circle, which at the beginning allowed Hungarian refugees to meet and talk to each other in the language of their country, now has a more cultural and patriotic purpose in so far as it is also aimed at the French to present the folklore and values of the Hungarians.

[74] Giromagny is 146 km away from Nancy.

Image 3.6: Commemoration of the Hungarian National Day of the 23 October at Giromagny

Source: Mila Sanchez, 13/10/2019

Event in presence of the Hungarian ambassador, the Hungarian honorary consulate of Nancy and the honorary president of the Cercle Franco-Hongrois de Lorraine. On the Hungarian flag, on one side (not visible) there is written "Budapest 1956 oktober 23". On the other side, "Isten àldd meg a magyart" (God bless the Hungarians) which is the first line of the Hungarian Anthem. In the middle the Hungarian coat of arms. "Nancy 1962" is written in the bottom right. 1962 is the date the flag was made by Hungarian refugees of the 1956 Revolution.

The cultural events were:

- Mai de l'Europe (May of Europe). Every year in May, the city of Nancy seeks to celebrate Europe through a series of events (conferences, concerts, exchanges, exhibitions…) aimed at "developing links with twinned cities and reaffirming the European ideal of peace and diversity".[75]

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[75] City of Nancy Website: https://www.nancy.fr/citoyenne/relations-internationales/en-mai-faites-leurope-515.html.

- Semaine des cultures d'Europe centrale – tchèque et polonaise. For over twenty years, this cultural week, which is organised annually by the students of Polish and Czech along with their teachers at the University of Lorraine, has explored Czech and Polish civilisations through various events (exhibitions, concert, conferences, films, debates…).

These cultural and commemorative events are an opportunity for the members of the community to get together and have a friendly exchange. During these events, I was able to observe the behaviour and interactions between the NMS migrants and carry out informal interviews with the participants. These events were an opportunity to meet and interact with many participants in one place and in a restricted time. While the second type of event (cultural events) was made for and open to the public, I had to negotiate my participation in the Hungarian commemorative events reserved exclusively for members of the association. By "negotiate", I refer to the definition proposed by George Lapassade (2006), meaning I had to obtain formal permission to participate as well as gain people's trust to attend such a patriotic and emotional event. By paying the membership fees of the association, I was allowed to have access to information such as the individual members and was able to immerse myself in the daily life and organization of the association.

3.2. Recruiting NMS migrants online

3.2.1. Reaching participants through social networking sites: a state of art

Using social networking sites (SNS) to contact NMS migrants both in Lorraine and Wales made it possible both to diversify the sample and conduct interviews during the Covid-19 health crisis, which had prevented me from carrying out fieldwork.[76] Facebook proved to be a valuable contact channel for reaching NMS migrants, especially during the pandemic period when it was impossible to attend community events, conduct face-to-face interviews, or visit key places.

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[76] In Lorraine, by using the Facebook group, *Les Polonais à Nancy*, it was possible to reach younger participants than the ones who usually attend the events organized by the associations.

Social networking sites, understood as online applications that enable users to share contents, communicate and interact remotely with others, have become increasingly widespread over the last 20 years (Potzschke and Braun, 2017).[77] These platforms are particularly useful for allowing migrants to create transnational networks by staying connected with people from their country of origin (Cassar *et al*., 2016; Benitez, 2012; Dekker and Engbersen, 2014). These platforms facilitate the movement and installation in a country by allowing migrants to share solidarity, exchange information about their new environment, and organize diaspora activities (Oiarzabal, 2012). Community Facebook groups are informal and emergent structures for supporting migrants (Stenning *et al*., 2006); they function as mutual aids and networking platforms and serve as a communication tool between members of a community. They are used for many different purposes and at different points on the migration trajectory: before moving, while living in the host country, and even after. Before moving, the prospective migrants might seek relevant information about the country of destination, including how to live somewhere and, the administrative steps they need to do so.[78] They often seek advice on finding a job or accommodation. Newcomers also will use these Facebook groups to support, connect, and build friendships with other members of the community; they might recommend places to live or visit (such as doctors, hairdressers, or specific shops), organise drinks and social gatherings among community members on National holidays or for sports events, share essential information about voting, offering, or finding a job.[79] And even if migrants then return home or move to another place, they will still remain part of these community Facebook groups. They can maintain a connection with the places in which they have lived for sentimental reasons or in case they decide to go back.[80]

In his study, Pedro Oiarzabal (2012) showed that Facebook groups are more than just a practical tool for building relationships and sharing relevant information. According to him,

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[77] The users of Facebook since its creation in 2004 reach now 2.80 billion of active members each month (Facebook, 2020).

[78] Messages from the prospective migrants often concern accommodation, taxes, social security, education, childcare, and opening a bank account.

[79] Ioan declared helping Romanians finding jobs *via* Romanians Facebook group: "If somebody need to work or anything, it is easy, they just post on Facebook. We do everything to help each other, or I like to think that, so if we know that a company employed and if I see on Facebook that somebody from Romania is looking for a job, I will be more than happy to offer them a position or to recommend them." The interview was conducted in English on the 10/10/2020.

[80] A Polish respondent who returned to live in Poland explained her presence in the Facebook group "Polonia W Swansea" as follows (06/11/2020): "I decided to stay there to keep in touch with them. Just in case. So, it's a way of keeping in touch, I suppose."

they are used "for the collective expression, identification and belonging of diaspora groups and their members." He highlights how online groups are a way of facilitating "the creation of common spaces for individuals as well as for formal diaspora groups which share similar goals, interests and commonalities (e.g., ethnicity, heritage, language and culture) within and outside their offline communities and across their immediate geographies." This perspective helps us understand how NMS migrants can use this virtual space to both circumvent the lack of dedicated physical spaces and structures and to connect and express themselves.

Some studies have argued that using an Internet sample is biased since the demographic characteristics of Internet populations are not representative of the total population (Coomber, 1997; Stanton, 1998). Other studies, by contrast, argue that the Internet offers new opportunities for reaching a targeted population (Couper, 2000; Fricker and Schonlau, 2002).

Several studies, most of them in business or economic fields (Baltar and Brunet, 2012), or in medical and health research (Arcia, 2014; Chu and Snider, 2013; Fenner *et al*., 2012; Kapp *et al*., 2013; Ramo and Prochaska, 2012) have recruited respondents *via* SNS, often in exchange for payment (Head *et al*., 2016). These studies show that using Facebook samples can allow one to reach broader population samples while still remaining representative. Potzschke and Braun (2017) have shown how this approach can compensate for weaknesses in some traditional ways of sampling migrants for research.[81] Since NMS migrants are a population that is especially difficult to meet in fieldwork because of their particular characteristics and challenges due to the pandemic, a SNS sampling has been implemented.[82]

3.2.2. Reaching participants *via* community Facebook groups of NMS migrants living in Wales and Lorraine: the protocol

Facebook groups for Polish, Romanian, and Bulgarian communities (Marcheva, 2010; Nedelcu, 2010; Bucholtz, 2018), living in Lorraine and in Wales, were a particularly useful resource because they are very active and allowed me to more easily contact respondents whom are difficult to meet in the field (Baltar, 2010; Crush *et al*., 2012: 349) at lower costs

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[81] Such as the Onomastic *via* telephone for example.
[82] See 2.1.

in time and economic resources (Potzschke and Braun, 2017; Benfield and Szlemko, 2006). The participants from several location could be reached at the same time without having to travel to meet them. During the pandemic, using SNS to recruit participants was a safe and efficient alternative to avoid physical fieldwork, which was not recommended or forbidden for most of the PhD fieldwork period.

The SNS sampling method for recruiting participants can be carried in two ways: either by creating one's own subject-related group and inviting the targeted population to join that group (Brickman Bhutta, 2012; Valdez *et al*., 2014) or by joining pre-established groups to directly contact the members of those groups.

I used this last technique (becoming a member of community Facebook groups) with a profile especially made for research purposes, as a way of studying how migrants were interacting on these platforms. I posted regular adverts referring to a blog that I created for this purpose with an extended presentation of my research project and ethical requirements (see image 3.7). This blog was also an opportunity to present the institutions that were involved in the research along with my CV in order to reassure the participants about the seriousness and legitimacy of the investigation (Potzschke and Braun, 2017).

Image 3.7: Composition of the typical advert posted on diaspora Facebook groups to recruit participants.

Source: Mila Sanchez, 2020.

This advert was posted in all the Facebook groups of NMS migrants that I identified (see table 3.1). The advert was composed in English because I made the choice to exclude non-English speaking migrants since I did not speak their native language and did not want to have recourse to any interpreter for carrying out the interviews: posting an English-advert was thus a way to reach only participants able to speak and communicate in English.

Table 3.1: List of the community Facebook groups in Lorraine and Wales, where the advert was posted.

NMS migrants Facebook groups in Lorraine	NMS migrants Facebook groups in Wales
- Les Polonais à Nancy (478 members)[83] - Vandoeuvre Lorraine Bulgarie (114) - Association des Croates du Nord-Est (526) - ROMANI IN LORRAINE (METZ, NANCY, YUTZ, THIONVILLE) (897)	- STRAJK W SWANSEA (83 members) - Latvieši Swansea (18 members) - Swansea lietuviai (919 members) - Polonia w Swansea (2.3 k members) - Polacy w Cardiff, Newport, Swansea i okolicach[84] (6.2 k members) - Polacy w Swansea UK ogłoszenia[85] (3.6 k members) - Polacy W Swansea-virus (366 members) - Polacy W Llanelli (1.8 k members) - Romania in Wales (2.1 k members) - Romani in Swansea (3.6 k members) - POLACY W WALII (Polania w walii) (1.3 k members) - Romanii din Cardiff (6.7 k members) - Romani in Cardiff (5.1 k members) - Romani in Wales (2.1 k members) - Romani in Cardiff (1.9 k members) - Češi a Slováci in Wales (548 members) - Czechs and Slovaks in Swansea - Cesi a Slovaci ve Swansea (112 members) - Swansea-i magyarok csoportja (520 members) - Polacy w Aberystwyth (893 members)

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[83] Number of members on the 29/07/2021.
[84] The translation of the polish word "okolikach" is "nearby".
[85] The translation of the polish work "ogłoszenia" is "announcements".

Created by community members, these Facebook groups supplement the lack of accessible information and support for NMS migrants who have migrated or who plan to migrate. The members of these groups are not only NMS migrants living in the cities mentioned in the groups' titles, but also NMS migrants living nearby, visiting the city, those who once lived there, have returned to the country of origin, or who plan to migrate.

Even though using SNS was the most efficient way to recruit NMS migrants during the pandemic period, we can say that it was quite difficult to mobilize the participants considering the high number of groups identified, the high number of members in each group, and the number of respondents. Several reasons can explain this:

- *The number of adverts posted each day contributed to the invisibility of my advert*. It was necessary to post this announcement regularly so that it would appear at the top of members' newsfeeds, because, due to the high numbers of members in those groups, several dozen posts were made every day, which may have contributed to the low visibility of my advert. I learnt that there were strategic days and times to post the message in order to reach a wider audience. Based on community manager strategies, the better day and time to post on Facebook was Wednesday between 11am and 2pm.[86]

- *People did not take the time to read my advert*. I have edited my advert several times to make it as short and readable as possible. Linking to my blog was also a way of interacting dynamically with the members.

- *Being introduced by a third person was important, even on SNS.* I tried to combine the SNS sampling method with a snowballing method by systematically asking the participants to give me some contacts. However, though the snowballing method was quite efficient when meeting respondents face-to-face, less than five respondents I interviewed were contacts given by a previous respondent met on SNS. This does not mean that being recommended on SNS does not help in recruiting participants: on the contrary, I could see how important it was to be recommended by a third person, even on SNS, when two interviewees shared and commented on my advert to encourage the other members of the group to participate in my research. Being recommended by other members made me seem more trustable, even if the members knew each other only "virtually". NMS migrants were more likely to participate if

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[86] https://blog.hootsuite.com/fr/meilleur-moment-publier-medias-sociaux/

someone they knew was already participating. However, it was more difficult to be recommended by people met *via* SNS, which is quite understandable: people are more likely to recommend someone they have met in person rather than someone they have met only for an hour on a screen.

The language used in the Facebook groups varies between France and the UK. In France, the names of the Facebook groups are in French and English, whereas in the UK the majority of the language used is the language of origin. This can be explained by the fact that in France, most of the groups have been created by second-generation migrants, who were born and raised in France and so may not all speak the language of their parents.

Community Facebook groups are not specific to NMS migrants: similar Facebook groups exist for other diasporas in other places and cities.[87] The existence and very high usage of these Facebook groups show that the information provided, and the network constituted by the members are very much demanded by migrants.

4. A mixed method

How can NMS migrants' spatial representations of "Europe" be grasped? What tools, methods, and constraints can be identified to study social representations of a fuzzy object situated on a macro-geographical scale? The methodology put in place must allow for its reproduction in different contexts (France and UK) and allow for a possible comparison of results. A mixed method was implemented: semi-structured interviews and mental maps.

4.1. The conduct of the semi-structured interviews

The interviews were semi-structured: organised and based on an interview grid, but at the same time able to flexibly adapt to the respondent's migration journey and the topics he or she wished to discuss. They enabled me to obtain detailed information about the respondents' migration trajectories, their mobility in Europe, their social and family networks, and their links with their country of origin (see the semi-structured interview grid in appendices).

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[87] For example, in London, Manchester, Bristol, Leeds.

Semi-structured interviews have some limitations. The main difficulty of semi-structured interviews is balancing the interview script with relevant, clear, and impromptu questions. Blanchet and Gotman (2007) recall the fluctuation of interview data resulting from the meeting of two people: the external setting, time of day, personal and emotional situation of the respondent and the researcher, and the investigator's interventions are some of the parameters that affect data collection. The interviewee may not reveal certain details of his or her life or may distort, consciously or unconsciously, the discourse. Bourdieu (1986: 69) denounced the "biographical illusion,"[88] based on the "postulate of the sense of the existence."[89] He criticizes its artificial nature and recalls that temporal causality is constructed and unavoidably selective. However, constructions of individuals remain valid objects for the social scientist to analyse the place of an individual within a social context.

The 103 interviews were recorded (either with a digital recorder or automatically *via* Zoom) in order to retain the whole conversation (whereas notetaking is necessarily selective) and to make the conversation more fluid (so that it is not slowed down or interrupted by note-taking). The interviews were systematically transcribed onto a computer using the verbatim method. This choice is explained by the desire to transcribe the interviews as faithfully as possible, in order to preserve the natural speech and words used by the respondents, which are significant for qualitative and discursive analysis (McLellan *et al.*, 2003). The transcription stage, although long and tedious (165 hours and 54 minutes of recording had to be transcribed), is an essential and unavoidable stage insofar as the researcher is already in an interpretative position because there will be some inevitable, unintentional subjective selection of the words heard (Gardin, 2007).

Some informal conversations from the fieldwork in Nancy (during participation in cultural or commemorative events) were added to these formal interviews. These informal conversations, collected in the fieldwork notebook, were difficult to quantify. However, they are rich in information and must be taken into account in the analysis and results.

Conducting interviews in two countries and with migrants from thirteen countries necessarily raises language problems. The interviews were conducted in two languages: French and English. All interviews in France were conducted in French, except for two

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[88] Personal translation from the following French quote: "L'illusion biographique".
[89] Personal translation from the following French quote: "Le postulat du sens de l'existence".

interviews, which were conducted in English at the request of the respondents who felt that their French language skills were insufficient. Like my respondents, I was a non-native English speaker: my imperfect English and accent made the NMS migrants feel equal communicative partners. They were less likely to feel judged for any linguistic mistakes or for their accent and, as a result, could express themselves more freely (Flipo, 2014). Though the linguistic imprecision of both the researcher and the respondents implies an imperfect collection and bias of the data, it counterbalances the dissymmetric relationship between the respondent and the interviewer (Mayer, 1995).

The fact of being a "fellow migrant" myself (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019: 4) when I was carrying out the UK fieldwork proved to have many advantages: this position elicited sympathy from the respondents, in the same way that the NMS migrants in France were sympathetic thanks to my knowledge and interest in their country of origin and life story.[90] Because I shared and was able to relate to some of their experiences, a link of closeness and familiarity was established. As a foreigner in the UK, my views on immigration were never presupposed unlike in France whereby two misunderstandings occurred: two Romanian migrants assumed that I thought they were Roma and defended themselves as not fitting the profile I was looking for. This assumption reveals the weight of the social media and political amalgam of Roma and Romanians in France and the stigmatisation of Roma both in France and Romania. (Nacu, 2009). It also reflects the fact that in France showing an interest in migration from Romania is automatically linked to the "Roma issue," which is considered from a negative point of view by the respondents.

Most of the interviews transcribed and recorded were conducted by scheduled appointment. On seven occasions the interviews took place within an hour of contact being made, which highlights the need for a researcher to be flexible and adaptable during the fieldwork period. On a few occasions, respondents decided not to attend the interview at the last minute.[91] The frequency of non-attendance was higher during the "online fieldwork" when the interviews were to be conducted by Zoom.[92] It was necessary to persist and frequently send reminder messages to the respondents, which can put the researcher in an uncomfortable position.

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[90] I moved and lived for more than one year in Swansea, Wales.
[91] This happened four times during the physical fieldwork: one of the interviews was rescheduled because the respondent had forgotten the appointment, the other three did not take place because the respondents did not respond to my messages afterwards.
[92] Almost one in six people did not turn up for Zoom meetings at the last moment.

During the period in which interviews could be carried out in person (which was the case for 43 of the 103 interviews), the meeting places were varied: cafés; restaurants; the consulate; an exhibition room; a respondent's house; an office; a university; a public garden; the seaside. When interviews were conducted by Zoom, the exchange was always done from home. I gave the NMS migrants the opportunity to participate at fluid times, including the evenings and weekends, so that the interview was not an additional burden in the pandemic period, which already required adaptability. I did not want the interview to interfere with their home duties and work, the schedules of which were sometimes altered during periods of lockdowns (especially for families and people with young children). For this purpose, I always let the respondents decide the most suitable location and time to ensure flexibility. The participants were subsequently sent the information sheet and consent form, and for those who requested it (only three respondents asked for it), a copy of the interview script.[93] On several occasions, I told the participants that they could end the interview at any time and skip any questions that they did not want to answer. At the end of the interview, I systematically asked the respondents if they wanted to add anything or discuss a topic that they felt had not been addressed.

The interviews lasted between 36 minutes and 5 hours depending on the respondent's available time period. They lasted on average 1 hour and 36 minutes. It is interesting to note the difference in average between the interviews conducted in France (1 hour and 58 minutes) and those conducted in Wales (1 hour and 23 minutes). Given that the interviews conducted in Wales were predominantly remote, this length difference confirms that face-to-face interviews enable one to have a longer exchange with the respondents.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in two stages: the collection of the respondents' migratory and integration experiences, and the creation of a mental map based on a precise protocol.

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[93] Some respondents asked to see the script in order to prepare beforehand and make sure that they understood the questions due to their language skills.

4.2. Interpretative mental maps

4.2.1. The variety of definitions and the usages of mental maps in social science

Because of the terminological and methodological vagueness surrounding the notion of a mental map, it is necessary to clarify the choices I have made. The use of mental maps is relatively old and increasingly widespread (Toureille, 2017). Numerous disciplines such as cognitive and neurological sciences, psychology, and anthropology have used this tool under various names, referring to different forms and contents.[94] The methodological arrangements grouped under the heading of "mental maps" are ambivalent: they can be hand-drawn on a sheet of white paper; composed on a map background using computer software; they can be made from words and concepts; or from material and physical installations. The same term may cover different methodological arrangements; by contrast, different terms may be given to similar arrangements.

The concept of a "cognitive map" was introduced in Edward Tolman's work in the 1940s (1948) to characterise the mechanism of spatial representation in both humans and animals. Studying the behaviour of rats in a maze, Tolman demonstrated the existence of mental images, which influence the way they move in space. By applying his theory to humans, Tolman underlines the weight of spatial representations and images in spatial mobility. Representations and mobility are intrinsically linked because mental images both condition and guide the behaviour and movements of individuals in their exterior environment.

In the 1960s, the use of mental map grew in the United States thanks to the book of Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the city* (1960), which is recognised as a seminal work in this field. Focusing on perceptions of Boston, Jersey and Los Angeles, Lynch explored the way in which their inhabitants mapped out the intra-urban space on a blank sheet of paper.

Both the "cognitive behaviorism" movement and the collaboration of geographers and psychologists in the 70's have consolidated the use of the mental map as a survey technique

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[94] Mind map, cognitive map, heuristic diagram, network graph, subjective map, sensitive map, conceptual map, mental map, socio-cognitive map, interpretative mental map.

in social sciences (Downs and Stea, 1973; Moore and Golledge, 1976; Gould and White, 1974).

Mental maps are defined by Etienne Toureille (2017: 126) as follows:

> *« Ainsi, on désignera comme cartes mentales des représentations subjectives, à travers un langage graphique (le dessin) d'une réalité spatiale par un individu ou un groupe d'individus. Les cartes mentales sont donc un dispositif méthodologique passant par la production d'un objet (une représentation graphique), considéré comme medium d'accès aux imaginaires. Les cartes mentales sont ainsi le fruit de la sélection des perceptions (sphère cognitive) stockées ; traitées et intégrées en fonction d'une expérience perceptive passée et « comprend l'espace tel qu'il est vu par des sujets, mais aussi imaginé et construit avec l'adjonction des connaissances intériorisées » ; informées par le vécu et l'ancrage social de l'individu (Cauvin, 1999). »[95] (Toureille, 2017: 126).*

This very complete and broad definition allows us to understand mental maps as both subjective and collective graphic productions, as they can be shared by a group of individuals and are the product of a particular social context, which is embedded in time and geographical space. The advantage of this method of investigation is that it allows for an individual's subjective expression and accounts for the multiplicity of personal representations. The difficulty lies in moving beyond particularities to grasp the collective dimension of these representations and also interpret the discontinuities, gaps, or omissions that appear on the maps (Downs and Stea, 1973). To circumvent these difficulties and limit the biases of analysis, I implemented the "interpretative map" method (De Ruffray, 2013; Didelon, 2010), which has been articulated by several surveys (Bonnet, 2004; Gueben-Venière, 2011; Matei *et al.*, 2001). Unlike freehand mental maps made on a blank sheet of paper, also known as "sketch maps," interpretative mental maps are developed on a background map. The aim is less to capture the way in which an individual perceives a space than the way he or she interprets or circumscribes a phenomenon within a given space (Mark *et al.*, 1999).

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[95] Personal translation into English: "Thus, mental maps are subjective representations, through a graphic language (drawing) of a spatial reality by an individual or a group of individuals. Mental maps are therefore methodological devices involving the production of an object (a graphic representation), considered as a medium for accessing the imagination. Mental maps are thus the result of the selection of stored perceptions (cognitive sphere); processed and integrated according to past perceptual experience and "include space as seen by subjects, but also imagined and constructed with the addition of internalised knowledge"; informed by the individual's experience and social anchorage (Cauvin, 1999)." (Toureille, 2017: 126).

The use of a background map has many advantages: drawing from a blank map background centred on Europe and not from a blank page makes it possible to overcome the unequal "(abilities) to draw and map" (Staszak, 2003: 132) or a respondent's potential "fear" of freehand drawing (Moser and Weiss, 2003). In other words, the respondents draw more spontaneously on a blank background map and are less afraid of being judged for their drawings. In addition to being a heuristic tool for collecting spatial representations (Didelon, 2010), interpretative mental maps are supports for discussion, and a complementary tool to the interview both during the interview and analysis. The respondent can rely at any time on the background map, which has been placed on the table for the duration of the interview. It is a tool that makes it possible to specify and spatialise what the respondents say, reopen the conversation, and address specific issues linked to the member states. Its secondary role as a "support" for the discussion explains why the national level was chosen on the interpretative mental map: it made it possible to address the issue of EU enlargement in a more precise manner and obtain more precise representations of each member state represented on the map.

Finally, interpretative mental maps facilitate the compilation of mental maps collected with the help of a GIS to obtain an "average" map (Gueben-Venière, 2011) of the representations shared collectively by migrants. It makes it easier to access collective representations as the "obvious overlaps between the mental maps" of respondents manifest the representations shared by a social group (Gould and White, 1974).

Figure 3.3: Background map used for the interpretative mental map

Toureille (2017) identifies three main limitations of interpretative mental maps: the over-interpretation of drawings; the simplification of the respondent's speech in order to express themselves in accordance with the language established by the interviewer; and the delineation of contiguous spatial entities.

To avoid these limitations, several choices can be made. Firstly, it is possible to choose a background map according to the respondents' degree of familiarity with it. The choice of a background map is not neutral: the projection, the level of generalisation, and the framing, in particular, indirectly influence spatial representations and, therefore, the drawings made by the respondents. As shown by Zanin (2013: 30) or Beauguitte *et al.* (2012), I believe that institutions contribute to the construction and dissemination of spatial representations. Insofar as the institutional presence of the EU is strong in the press, official discourses, and public debates in member countries, I can assume that this influences the way in which

migrants perceive and represent the European space. The chosen background map (see figure 3.3), which is centred on the countries of Central Europe and including all of Turkey, corresponds to the type of background map distributed by the European Commission (Zanin, 2013). We therefore chose this background map on the assumption that the respondents were familiar with it through their education or the media.

Secondly, by linking the analysis of the mental maps with the discourses from the semi-structured interviews, we avoid simplifying the interpretation. The respondents' discourse during the production of the map helps this interpretation by making it possible to explain the plots and identify omissions. The contradictions can be identified, and it becomes possible to nuance and complicate the discourses and the plots on the maps. The interviewer's questions and feedback throughout the production of the map allow the participants to clarify and detail their mental maps in order to make them more intelligible and closer to their representations.

4.2.2. Mental maps protocol

The following figure shows the protocol of the mental maps. The respondents had to draw on the map after replying to a general question (1): "According to you, do the countries (all or some of them) shown on the map form a coherent whole?" Depending on the answer given to the initial question, another set of questions (either (2) or (3)) were asked to the participants, who were invited to respond by drawing on the map.

Figure 3.4: Mental map protocol

In your opinion, do the countries (all or some of them) shown on this map form a whole of countries?

Yes

No

Can you name and identify this group of countries on the map?
Why do you think these countries form a whole?
Within this group, do you see sub-groups of countries?
If so, can you name them, identify them on the map
and specify the criteria used to identify them?

Do you see several groups of countries?
If so, can you name them, identify them on the map
and specify the criteria used to identify them?

Source: Mila Sanchez, 2021.

Using mental maps is useful for studying the production of space not only from a physical perspective through practices of mobility but also from a mental perspective. The mental map is used to capture the shape and boundaries of the European macro-region for NMS migrants. The protocol set up aims to help us understand whether migrants perceive Europe as a fragmented/divided space or, on the contrary, as a coherent whole, which would be, according to the new regionalism, the expression and/or potential support of a collective identity.

The cross-analysis of the mental maps and the respondents' speeches during the production of the map makes it possible to identify concordances and inconsistencies between these two method techniques: what is said is not systematically drawn on the map and the latter, which is sometimes in contradiction with the speech, makes it possible to circumvent the difficulties of language. This dual methodology both allows us to refine the analysis of representations by highlighting their complexity and ambiguity and also renews the use of the mental map by showing its complementarity with the respondents' discourses.

4.3. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the methods

4.3.1. The uncertain and erratic nature of a qualitative investigation during the Covid-19 pandemic

The uncertain duration of health restrictions, and the impossibility of foreseeing and organising fieldwork due to the unpredictable, sudden evolution of a health crisis, placed this fieldwork in period of both hope and disappointment. It was not until the end of 2020, about eight months after the start of the pandemic, when the second wave led to new lockdowns in the EU and in the world, that I decided to finish the fieldwork remotely, using videoconferencing applications (Zoom, WhatsApp, and Messenger). Since only three interviews were done *via* Messenger and one by WhatsApp, Zoom will the main reference platform when I refer to "videoconferencing application".

Conducting remote interviews before the second half of 2020 was difficult for several reasons:

- At the beginning of the pandemic, people were not familiar with Zoom or any videoconferencing applications; I only discovered the existence of Zoom during the first lockdown. Several months of lockdowns and the general injunction to work from home, when possible, led to the development of the almost daily use of videoconferencing applications. Therefore, setting up remote interviews was easier several months after the beginning of the crisis when the use of videoconferencing applications was more widespread.
- There was still a hope of meeting in person in the near future. Most of the NMS migrants I contacted in the first half of 2020 agreed to be interviewed at the end of the lockdown or when the restrictions were lifted, which happened only occasionally and very late; restrictions continued right into the period of writing the PhD. Planned interviews were postponed again and again.

4.3.2. Videoconferencing as an interview setting

Doing interviews *via* videoconferencing applications was new to me, as I had never used this interview setting. It is therefore necessary to reflect on the benefits and limitations of

this interview setting, as well as the differences with face-to-face interviews and the potential bias it implies in both the selection of the respondents and the data collected.

My first concern with remote interviews was the potential Internet glitches and sound problems that could interrupt the interviews. Technical glitches caused regular issues and interruptions of the interviews (delays of respondents due to difficulties in connecting to the application, problems with insufficient computer batteries, and problems with the Wi-Fi connection in general). However, I realised that these Internet bugs were not so dramatic after all and that interruptions also occurred during face-to-face interviews. Of course, the bugs that may occur during a face-to-face interview are of a different nature since they are not technical, but they can also be numerous: the dynamics of face-to-face and remote interviews not so different. During the face-to-face interviews I conducted, the interviews were often interrupted, for example, by the arrival of the waiter when the interview took place in a café, external noises, and distractions linked to the outside environment, a pet coming to be petted or fed, an unexpected meeting with an acquaintance, a telephone call, the arrival of a customer in the shop or of a colleague when I was conducting the interview at the respondent's workplace. All interruptions that break the dynamics of the interview are therefore not inherent to the interview setting as such and exist whether the interview is done remotely or face-to-face.

If the interview situation was not so much modified by being conducted online rather than face-to-face, the nature of what was said, and the relationship of trust created with the respondents were modified in several ways:

- Videoconferencing applications create a formal framework and thus make it less easy to create a relationship of trust with the respondent. As mentioned above, the use of videoconferencing platforms in everyday life was increased because of the health crisis and the requirement to work and study from home. Zoom, in particular, is mainly used in a formal setting (company/business/work meetings and courses), while WhatsApp and Messenger remain applications used generally for more informal interactions with family and friends. As a result, what is said by the respondent is certainly more limited, less direct, precise, and open. When I was conducting the interviews *via* videoconference, I did not "meet" the respondents as much as I developed the interview grid: all the precious moments of "face-to-face meeting" were missing. These moments are useful for establishing a relationship of

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trust and making the respondent comfortable and at ease, for observing his/her behaviour in order to better understand and analyse his/her discourse, and yet none of these moments exist when one conducts an interview by Zoom. In reality, a Zoom interview does not leave much room for surprise and does not provide much opportunity for one to deviate from the interview grid, and thus learn and discuss topics that were not foreseen but could prove to be very interesting. All in all, there is little room for informal moments, such as those when you sit down in a café or finish your drink while talking about somewhere else, which are sometimes rich in data and meaning during face-to-face interviews.

- Zoom interviews are shorter than face-to-face interviews. If only three face-to-face interviews lasted less or about one hour, most of the remote interviews lasted just under or just over an hour.[96] This is due to the fatigue and discomfort linked to an exchange though a screen, but also because of the formalisation of the interview *via* Zoom (which can be carried out during the lunch break or even between two other Zoom interviews during the day). Starting and ending an interview on Zoom is very quick (quicker than a face-to-face interview which involves a few minutes of settling in and socialising).

From a pragmatic point of view, using Zoom was practical because it allowed access to an automatic transcription of the interviews, which was a great time-saver: thanks to the Zoom automatic transcription, the interviews could be transcribed twice as quickly.[97] However, the automatic transcription still needed some reworking because of errors, notably those linked to the fact that the respondents and the interviewer did not have an impeccable English accent. For this practical reason, I preferred to interview *via* Zoom rather than other videoconferencing applications. However, Zoom interviews could create a bias in the profile of the people interviewed because it is more likely to be used by students or respondents who have a job that can be done remotely (since this is often the context in which Zoom was first used by the respondents), and therefore largely in the service sector. When proposing a Zoom interview, one risked excluding migrants or intimidating migrants who have never used this platform before. To avoid this issue, an exchange *via* Messenger or WhatsApp was

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[96] Between 46 minutes and 1h30.
[97] While one hour of recording normally corresponds to about four hours of work, thanks to the Zoom's automatic transcription, two hours of work are sufficient.

also systematically proposed. In the end, this was not a problem for most respondents since only four remote interviews were not carried out *via* Zoom.

Though the health crisis led me to modify methodology techniques in order to accommodate the unpredictability of the fieldwork, it did not fundamentally change the nature of the data collected.

4.4. Analysis and tools used

For analysing the material collected (the discourses and the mental maps of NMS migrants), I used NVivo and QGIS.

In order to process the data coming from the respondents' discourses, I used the tools of empirical-deductive analysis: I focused on the fieldwork data in the first instance before confronting them with the hypotheses and theoretical literature. All the transcribed interviews have been uploaded into the software NVivo. NVivo is a qualitative analysis software for organising, visualising, and analysing unstructured and qualitative data. This software is particularly useful when you have a lot of qualitative data to analyse as it helps to classify the data by themes emerging from the respondents' discourse. This software helps to code and visualise the content of the interviews *via* word clouds, for example. The codes which have been established thanks to NVivo are both codes from the interviewer's grid, and codes beyond that framework, drawn directly from the data. They were manually and iteratively back and forth between the interviews and theoretical framework. These codes included themes such as integration, cultural capital, mobility, representations, social networks, feelings, and projects.

QGIS was used to compile the mental maps and produce synthesis maps of the NMS migrants' representations. The maps were compared and classified according to their commonalities, based on their similar plots and approaches. Identical plots were counted and overlaid to bring out average trends and collective representations. The counting of similarities made from mental maps is subject to the researcher's interpretation: indeed, the plots are individual and subjective, and the researcher must make certain choices based on the respondent's speech.

5. Socio-demographic characteristic

5.1. Sample description: a heterogenous population

The respondents of my research are mainly NMS migrants (96), and gatekeepers (7).

One of the first issues was to define NMS migrants in order to recruit participants. There is no fixed and legal definition of what an international migrant is. This notion covers a multiplicity of migratory trajectories and individual practices and situations. While the notions of movement and borders are essential for defining an international migrant, they are insufficient: several categories of mobile populations cross borders, but do not meet the definition of an international migrant. The experience of a tourist, businessman or a cross-border worker is very different: international mobility seems to be multidimensional and multifaceted. The duration of the displacement must be taken into account to define international migration, but the difficulty lies in defining the time limit beyond which a mobile person is no longer a tourist but an international migrant. The United Nations, the recommendations of which were adopted by the European institutions, fixed this limit to "more than one year". However, this definition does not include seasonal workers, dual residents, or "circulating migrants".

The respondents were selected based on a broad definition: participants were first-generation NMS migrants, who have lived or plan to live in a country other than their country of usual residence for a period of at least one year.[98] They were living in the four fieldwork cities at the time of investigation. The key individuals have been selected because of their knowledge of NMS migrations and their strong personal and professional links with the NMS migrants' communities. These key individuals are two second-generation migrants, a geography teacher and a wife of an NMS migrant, and four NMS migrants that returned to their country of origin, or left Wales. The interviews carried out with these key individuals are taken into account in the analysis as they have provided interesting information on the structuration of NMS migrants communities in Nancy, the way second-generation NMS migrants have been raised and taught about their parents' migration experience, and how the migration

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[98] Interviewing NMS migrants who had left their country of origin less than a year before, at the time of the investigation, but who were planning a long-term change of residence (at least one year), was interesting to see if very recent migration and integration experiences had an impact on representations and discourses.

experience to Wales is perceived retrospectively. The NMS migrants belong to three different groups of immigration: the post-World War Two immigration, the post-1989 or pre-enlargement immigration, and the post-enlargement immigration. They come from seven countries (Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Lithuania, Republic Czech and Slovakia). A total of 35 men and 68 women, aged between 18 and 94 years old, were interviewed (see table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Sample description

		France	UK	Total
Number of interviews		39	64	103
Number of mental maps		28	55	83
NMS migrants Nationalities	Polish	15	24	39
	Romanian	4	20	24
	Bulgarian	2	9	11
	Hungarian	9	0	9
	Czech	5	1	6
	Slovak	1	0	1
	Lithuanian	0	6	6
Key individuals	2nd generation	2	0	0
	Migrant' spouse	1	0	0
	Migrant returned to country of origin	0	2	0
	Migrant living in England and working in Wales	0	1	0
	Posted NMS migrant worker wishing to return to live in Wales	0	1	0
Age	Range	18-94	18-59	18-94
	Average	45	32	35
Gender	Women	28	40	68
	Men	11	24	35
Hours of recording		76h42	89h12	165h54

A multilingual population

By focusing on the languages spoken by NMS migrants, one risks falling into the normative trap criticised above (see chapter 2, 1.2). It is not a question of finding a correlation between language level and integration, but rather of analysing the relationship of the respondents with the culture of countries they do not come from and how their language skills influence their representations of space. Indeed, surveys have revealed the existence of significant differences in the way in which "Europe" is represented according to the individual profile of the respondents, including the number of languages spoken (Didelon *et al*., 2011-b; Brennetot *et al*., 2013). Etienne Toureille, following on from the work of the Eurobroadmap survey, argues that mastering a large number of languages offers the individuals the potential to open up to extra-national informational universes and thus contribute to the linking of geographical imaginaries (2017). While the record stands at six languages spoken, over three-quarters of the total number of respondents spoke at least three languages and a third of respondents spoke at least four languages. The sample is therefore composed of a highly multilingual population (see graph 3.4). The most frequently spoken languages are French, English, the language of the country of origin, Russian, German, Spanish, and Italian. Two Polish people living in Swansea were fluent in Welsh. The very high percentage of NMS migrants who speak four or even five languages shows that NMS migrants represent a particularly polyglot social category. Less common languages are also spoken by several respondents such as Serbian or Ukrainian, therefore recalling the fluidity of borders and the changing geopolitical context of the respondents' countries of origin.

Graph 3.4: Number of spoken languages of all the respondents
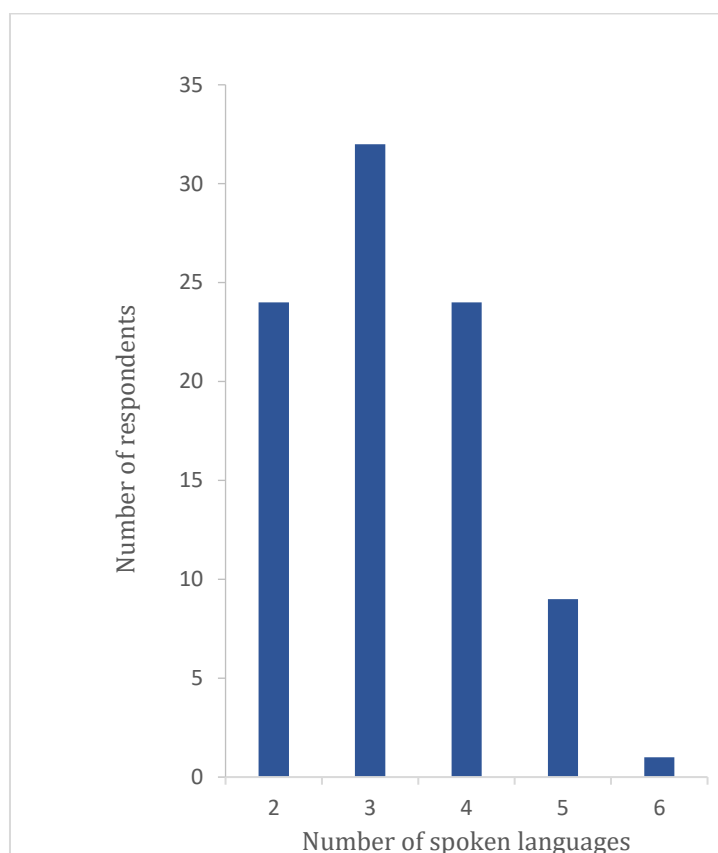
Source: Mila Sanchez, 2020.

There is a difference in the number of languages spoken by NMS migrants living in the UK and NMS migrants living in France, the latter of which tend on average to speak more languages: more than half of the respondents in France speak at least four languages fluently,[99] whereas more than half the respondents in the UK speak a maximum of three languages (see graph 3.5). This difference is explained by the weight of English in foreign language learning, illustrated by the fact that most migrants living in France speak as the minimum English, French, and their native language, whereas about one third of the NMS migrants living in the UK speak only English and their native language. Beyond the difference in the number of languages spoken, there is also a difference in the type of language spoken between migrants living in France and the UK: the NMS migrants living in France are more likely to speak Russian, than those living in the UK, who are more likely to speak Italian or Spanish. This can be explained by the age of the respondents (they are

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[99] Mother tongue, French, English and Russian are the four languages most frequently spoken by the respondents. This can be explained by the respondent's migratory trajectory, the contemporary injunction to master English and the communist past of the respondents' country of origin.

younger in the UK, and so were not subject to compulsory Russian language training imposed by the communist regime), and their migration trajectory (the respondents' migration to the UK is more recent, takes place within the framework of the EU's freedom of movement, and is characterised by increased international mobility within Europe regarding travel, study, and residence). Some respondents lived in several countries during the course of their childhood due to their parents' profession, such as Csilla and Ilona, two Hungarian migrants, whose fathers were respectively state officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and university professors; or Diana, a Romanian migrant, whose father set up a construction company in Italy. Most of them travel regularly (at least twice a year) to Europe or even to other foreign countries for their holidays or work. All these characteristics may have an impact on the respondents' language skills and their representations of the European area that they practice and, therefore, on the results obtained.

Graph 3.5: Number of spoken languages of the respondents in France and in the UK

Source: Mila Sanchez, 2023.

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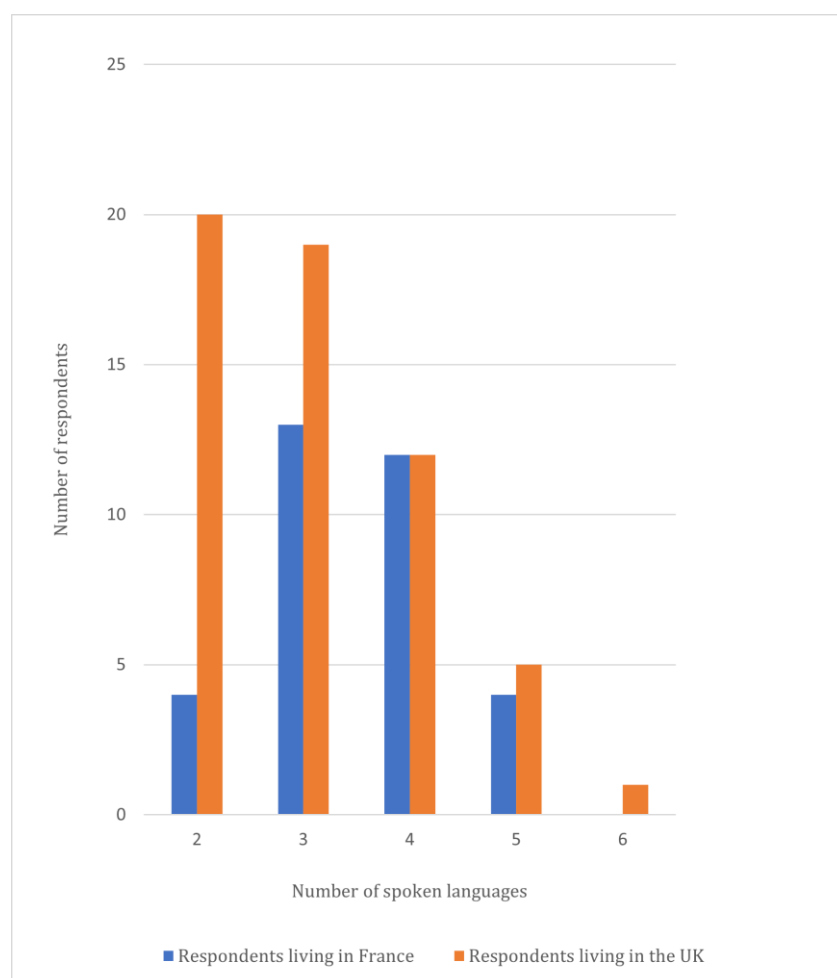
A highly qualified population

Table 3.3: Level of education of the respondents

Level of education	France	UK
Less than a Bachelor	4	8
Bachelor's degree	4	12
Master's degree	15	24
PhD	8	8

The majority of the respondents are highly skilled migrants (see table 3.3). More than half of the respondents (55) have at least a master's degree and 16 respondents have a PhD. Only 12 respondents had less than a bachelor's degree. These NMS migrants contrast with the stereotype of the "Polish plumber", the "Latvian bricklayer" or the "Estonian gardener" portrayed in the media, and at the heart of institutional polemical debates on EU enlargement.[100] They are representative of a "new wave of departure" from the NMS of people who are qualified and possess significant economic, cultural, and social capital (Ambrosetti, 2019; Flipo, 2019; De Tinguy and Wihtol de Wenden, 2010). Dagmara, a chemistry doctor and Polish migrant, wants to deconstruct stereotypes about Poles and emphasises her professional skills and qualifications when she says: "I would like to be able to change the image of Poland and Poles because there are a lot of clichés about Poles who drink and do shit. I work well, I do my best and I do my best to show: "You see, this is the work of a Polish woman." And say: 'We work like that.'"[101]

An urban population

Taking an interest in the respondents' geographical origins makes it possible to identify potential trends in migratory trajectories and reveal possible relations and flows between several European spaces, which could outline centres of the impetus for macro-regional integration. Looking at the geographical origin of the respondents, these can be qualified as

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[100] Jean-Pierre Thibaudat, Le plombier polonais, fossoyeur du oui. Naissance et propagation d'un mythe de campagne qui a vampirisé le référendum, *Libération*, 11 juin 2005, https://www.liberation.fr/evenement/2005/06/11/le-plombier-polonais-fossoyeur-du-oui_523039
[101] The interview with Dagmara was carried out in French on the 12/10/2019 in Nancy.

an urban population. In France, only 5 NMS migrants come from cities of less than 100 000 inhabitants (according to the TRADEVE database) and 3 from cities of less than 300 000 inhabitants. More than half the respondents (22) in France come from the capital and the largest cities (over 600 000 inhabitants) of their country of origin: 7 from Budapest; 5 from Warsaw; 3 from Poznan; 2 from Praha; 2 from Bucharest; 1 from Sofia; 1 from Krakow; 1 from Gdynia. In the UK, at least half of the respondents come from the capital and the largest cities such as Warsaw (5), Wroclaw (1), Poznan (3), Sofia (3), Krakow (1), Katowice (1), Lodz (2), Gdynia (1), Kaunas (2) and secondary cities such as Klaipeda (2), Craiova (2), Bacau (3), Brasov (1), Lublin (1), Burgas (1), Olsztyn (2), and Plzen (1). The sample is therefore composed of migrants who come mainly from cities bigger than the fieldwork ones. One of the respondents said that this migratory trajectory is part of the logic of social success: "it is even more prestigious to go and live abroad in a small or medium-sized city than in the biggest city of the country of origin."[102]

5.2. Explanations of the differences in representations

The sample shows an imbalance between the French and British fieldwork in number, gender, and age. The limited timescale partly explains the lower number of interviews in France. Although more interviews were conducted in Wales (64) than in France (39), they were shorter on average: as a result, the number of recording hours is not so different (76h42 of recording in France and 89h12 of recording in Wales). Two other factors can be mentioned: the migration from the NMS to Wales is much greater than in Lorraine and its increase is more recent. The use of Facebook groups to recruit participants in Wales could explain the difference in the average age of respondents, yet looking at national statistics, such as the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS), National Insurance Number (NINo) registrations to overseas nationals, and the 2011 Census, this explanation can be ruled out because the socio-demographic of the sample correspond to the national average: NMS migrants in Wales are more numerous, younger, and migrated more recently. Stenning *et al.* (2006) suggests that NMS migrants are "particularly likely to be young and well-qualified people." Jones *et al.* (2014) states that three-quarters of A8 migrants in Wales are under 35 years old, which correspond to the average age of the sample in Wales. Crawley (2013: 4)

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[102] The interview with Patrycja was conducted in English on the 13/11/2020.

showed that "A8 migrants have been primarily young with high levels of education and skills, relative to the native population."

The sample presents an imbalance between the number of women and the number of men. This over-representation of women can be found in other qualitative studies carried out amongst NMS migrants in Wales (Jones *et al.*, 2014) or France (Flipo, 2014). While some studies have demonstrated the feminisation of migration from Poland in particular (Dac, 2015), it is difficult to know whether this over-representation is representative of the population or whether it is a bias in the investigation method or a gender-based inclination to take part in university research.[103] These demographic characteristics are broadly reflective of the statistical profile of NMS migrants. For example, according to the 2011 WRS data, across Wales female A8 migrants' registrations outnumber male ones (Jones *et al.*, 2014).

Conclusion of chapter 3

This chapter has discussed the methodology carried out by drawing on a theoretical background. It has demonstrated the various ways in which respondents have been contacted and approached in the identified fieldworks, showing the multiplicity of means by which one can engage with an invisible, hard-to-reach population.

Carrying out semi-structured interviews and mental maps with the NMS migrants provides us with an insight into individual narratives and spatial representations, which are useful for addressing regional integration from a bottom-up perspective.

The next chapters will present the empirical findings that have emerged from the fieldworks.

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[103] To recruit the respondents, I contacted several cultural associations with a majority of women members. However, the over-representation of women might reflect a specificity of the fieldwork, and in particular a specificity of Nancy. Several interviewees underlined the over-representation of women from the NMS in Nancy and explained it by the fact that the love situation is the main reason why migrants come to live in Nancy when they come from a new member state. In the sample, bi-national couples, that are in the majority, are systematically composed of women from the NMS and French men.

Chapter 4: NMS migration to France and to the UK

This chapter sets the migration context in which the research takes place and outlines the resulting social and spatial dynamics. Firstly, it provides an overview of the migration trends and dynamics from NMS to France and the UK. This brief historical review shows that Europe as a migratory space is characterised by an intensification and regionalisation of flows at a macro-regional level. Secondly, this chapter explores the reasons why migration flows are increasing, based on an analysis of the drivers for migration at the individual level[104]. This sub-section highlights the emotional, unconscious, and complex factors and allows for a departure from *homo economicus* theories on migrations. Finally, the last sub-section of this chapter looks more specifically at the temporalities and spaces produced by migration and highlights the existence of a multi-dimensional macro-regional space invested by the representations and mobility practices of the individuals.

1. Migratory characteristics and dynamics

1.1. Europe as a migratory space: historical perspectives

Traditionally Europe is presented as a space shaped by migration flows. It is a long-standing migration area, a space of invasions, colonisations, and empires, and a multicultural space inhabited and crossed by a multitude of peoples (Moch, 2003; Hobsbawm, 1987). Several researchers have shown that Europe is the result of a melting pot of populations that have moved over the centuries at local, regional, and international levels (Checkel and Katzenstein, 2009; Favell, 2010). Continuous migration flows, through a patchwork of circular, seasonal, and occupational mobility, have contributed to the political construction of Europe and *vice-versa* (Hobsbawm, 1983; Anderson, 1983).

If Europe was initially considered to be a land of emigration, marked from the end of the nineteenth century by unprecedented movements of migrants, especially towards the Americas (Hatton and Williamson, 1998), after World War II it shifted from a region of net emigration to one of net immigration. Today it is one of the world's leading migration destinations (Wihtol de Wenden, 2008; Koikkalainen, 2021). The contemporary evolution of

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[104] Why do people migrate?

the Western labour market in the context of economic globalisation has favoured the exploitation of a cheap labour force represented by foreign workers in precarious situations. The recent so-called[105] "migrant crisis" of 2015, which made visible irregular migration, has been accompanied by a strengthening of the EU external borders control. However, this crisis must be put into perspective based on the census data, which shows that the share of foreign-born populations in the EU is lower than in most high-income countries:[106] in 2020 the 53 million foreign-born in the EU represent only 12.2 % of the 447.3 million inhabitants and 37.7% of these 53 million are from EU countries (Commission Européenne, 2020).[107] Even if the European space appears relatively dominated by short distances, intra-European migration is relatively invisible in a media context saturated by the "migrant crisis", which regularly makes the headlines.

1.2. NMS migrations from the pre-accession period to 2021: an overview

1.2.1. East-West migrations

Migration from Eastern to Western European countries,[108] and particularly France or the UK, is not a recent phenomenon. In the nineteenth century, France and the UK were the destination countries of small-scale political migrations from the East. Following the First World War, the flows were concentrated towards certain countries for reconstruction purposes in the face of labour shortages:[109] by this logic, France was one of the main

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[105] On this subject, see Bahoken *et al*., 2020.

[106] Such as Singapore, Australia, or New Zealand for example (Commission Européenne, 2020)

[107] https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe_en

[108] Given the difficulty of accessing detailed statistical data by country and the tedious work that would be required to study each of the 13 new member states individually, the analysis will be limited here to generalities. Therefore, while the trends described apply to the largest NMS countries such as Poland and Romania (whose migratory flows have been most documented), they might not be precise and relevant enough to describe the trends of countries such as Cyprus, Malta or Croatia, for example. Indeed, the purpose of this analysis is not to produce statistical data on intra-European migration flows to a high level of detail and accuracy (which would be impossible in so far as EU nationals are not required to register with their consulates), but to understand their motivations and consequences from an individual and spatial point of view. In addition, the analysis will mainly be focused on France and the UK as destination countries since they are the main countries of my study. I will not refrain from mentioning migration flows to other Western European countries if relevant.

[109] Most often in the form of bilateral agreements between countries.

destination countries for migrants from Eastern and Central Europe, especially from Poland.[110]

While the inter-war period contributed to the increase and consolidation of the Eastern migrants' settlement in France and the UK,[111] it was only during the Second World War and its aftermath that the largest migration flows took place. That massive wave of Poles arrived in France and the UK during wartime and post-war can be explained both by the involvement of Polish soldiers in the Allied troops[112] and the settlement policies[113] that were implemented after World War II. The Cold War period was also characterized by migration flows of political refugees fleeing the communist regime established across the Eastern Bloc countries.[114]

More recently, the collapse of communism and the post-accession period marked a revival in East-West migration flows. After the fall of communism, emigration from the "New Europe" (Górny and Ruspini, 2004) or the "Other Europe" (Rupnik, 1993)[115] increased within Europe and towards the former "West" from the mid-1990s and the early 2000s (Flipo, 2014). The opening of borders belonging to the Eastern European countries in the 1990s and the successive enlargements of the EU both have contributed to the development of forms of mobility that were previously forbidden to Eastern and Central European nationals. This led to a "new wave of departure" from the NMS of people that are qualified and possess significant economic, cultural, and social capital (Ambrosetti, 2019; Flipo, 2019; De Tinguy and Wihtol de Wenden, 2010).

1.2.2. The EU and free movement

While Europe as an area of mobility existed before the establishment of the free movement of persons in the EU, the institutional construction of the European migratory space framed and encouraged intra-European migration through several steps: the Treaty of Rome in 1957,

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[110] In the years 1919-1931, 522.500 Poles migrated to France while, in comparison, only 758 Poles migrated to the UK (Trevena, 2009).
[111] "It is estimated that over 400,000 east European workers settled in the UK between 1947- 51. The majority of these new settlers were Polish but there were also a range of other nationalities, including Latvians, Czechs and Ukrainians." (Stenning *et al*., 2006).
[112] The Polish Armed Forces, under the British Command, was composed of 249.000 Poles.
[113] Such as the Polish Resettlement Act of 1947 or the Schemes for the European Voluntary Workers.
[114] In parallel of labour migrants working in agriculture, building, mining, and transportation.
[115] These two expressions refer to the post-communist countries.

followed by the freedom of movement for workers in 1968, and the adoption of the Single European Act and the Schengen agreements in 1985 (extending the freedom of movement, hitherto reserved exclusively for workers, to all persons). These served to define Europe as a space without borders.[116] This new form of intra-EU migration, based on the free movement of people, implies that EU citizens can go freely in the European space: they do not need visas, they do not have to worry about their citizenship, and often they do not even need to have an official residence to live and work wherever they want in the member States.

In the 1990s, an entire body of scientific literature dedicated to potential mass migration from Eastern countries emerged but the emigration resulting from the collapse of the Soviet bloc was not as massive as expected (Chesnais, 1991; Brym, 1992; Layard *et al*., 1992). In the 2000s, the East-West migration became a sensitive political issue, expressed during the pre-accession negotiations. The symbolic image of the "Polish plumber", the "Latvian bricklayer," or the "Estonian gardener" portrayed in the media were at the heart of institutional, polemical debates on EU enlargement and expressed the fear that low-cost workers from the NMS would "steal" the jobs of the "old" member state nationals (Thibaudat, 2005). This fear was accompanied by negative representations of NMS migrants and anti-immigration discourses (Van Riemsdijk, 2010). The principle of free movement established by the Schengen agreements was questioned: most of the old members states decided to put restrictions on the free movement of workers from the NMS for a period of between two and seven years, renewable for periods of up to three years. In 2004, the UK,[117] Ireland and Sweden were the only three countries to immediately open their labour markets to workers from the A8 countries.[118] France decided to lift the restrictions in the summer of 2008, followed by Belgium, the Netherlands, and Denmark. Only Germany and Austria kept the restrictions in place until the maximum possible duration in 2011. When Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU three years later in 2007, the same restrictions on movement were applied[119] by all the member states. The transitional period[120] of Romania and Bulgaria was

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[116] The Maastricht Treaty in 1992, defining a European citizenship, and the Treaty of Amsterdam, in 1997, incorporating the "Schengen acquis" (the Schengen achievements) into the EU Treaty, were also two decisive stages.

[117] The absence of transitional period in the UK can be explain by the fact the country was undergoing considerable labor shortages in the early 2000s: as a result, the A8 nationals were able to work in the UK without no restrictions other than to register with the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) within 30 days they started their job.

[118] The A8 countries refer to eight of the ten countries that joined the European Union during the 2004 enlargement (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia).

[119] All Member States have maintained restrictions until the 31 December 2013.

lifted on 1 January 2014. The debate on NMS migrants in Western Europe shows the duality and ambiguity of Eastern European mobility: institutions encourage it for pragmatic reasons, but its social and political consequences are feared.

Today, it is estimated that 3% of residents in the EU are international migrants coming from another EU country and that between 1 and 1.5 million EU nationals move to another EU country every year (Recchi, 2021). If these proportions take into account all countries of origin and destination, the proportion of migrants from the NMS can be estimated based on previous studies: in 2006, it is estimated that three quarters of newcomers to the EU (1.2 million out of 1.6 million) came from the NMS (Recchi and Triandafyllidou, 2009). An estimated 3.6 million EU-born migrants lived in the UK in 2019,[121] making up 5.5% of the UK population,[122] which underlines the UK's polarising yet attractive role as a destination country within the European macro-region.

1.2.3. An increase and regionalisation of the flows

Two major trends characterise the intra-European migration flows. The first trend is the intensification of mobility within the European area. Although the waves of enlargement have not led to the mass immigration that was feared, nevertheless they have had an influence on the increase in the East-West migration flows. Over the period 2000-2010, immigration increased by 50% on average in Western Europe: 3.5 million NMS migrants settled in the "old" EU countries and the OECD data shows that there were 5.8 million movements of workers from East to West over the same period (Flipo, 2014). The accession of new member states to the EU in 2004 resulted in the unprecedented numbers Central and Eastern Europeans migrating to the UK. According to the World Bank (2006), 1.3% of the Polish population, 3.6% of Lithuanians, and 2.5% of the Latvian population left their countries of origin in the first twenty months after accession and migrated in particular to the UK, Ireland, and Germany (Van Riemsdijk, 2010).

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[120] "Période transitoire" in French.
[121] The EU-born thus made up 38% of the migrant population in UK in 2019, while they represented 29% of the migrant population in 2000 in UK: this increase also reflects the influence that the early opening of the access to the UK labour market had on NMS migration flows.
[122] https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/eu-migration-to-and-from-the-uk/

The second trend is the regionalisation of the flows. By "regionalization of the flows", I refer to the particularly rapid increase in migration between countries in the same part of the world compared to the rest of the world (Mareï and Richard, 2018). Some studies, based on the national censuses, show that intra-European migration happens mainly between neighbouring countries and mainly is organised in the direction of a limited number of countries which are major regional countries such as England, Germany, and France (Flipo, 2014). The regionalisation of flows can be manifested by the greater presence of migrants from the NMS than from other countries in the world. According to Eurostat (2020), 15.4 million citizens in the free movement area were living somewhere else in the area in 2020. In the UK, Poles were the largest foreign national group in 2007 (Pollard *et al*., 2008).[123] The 2001 census enumerated 58.000 people born in Poland, while in 2008 the number of Polish-born was estimated at 520.000 (Upward, 2008), exceeding the number of people born in India, Pakistan, or Bangladesh.[124] The free movement and openness of borders within the EU contrasts with the consolidation of the EU external border policy and the control of mobility from third countries and contribute to the developing migration in a macro-regional space.

1.3. Multi-dimensional trajectories

1.3.1. Post-World War II, post-1989/pre-enlargement, and post-enlargement narratives

I interviewed principally three different groups of NMS migrants: post-war, post-1989/pre-enlargement, and post-enlargement migrants. The respondents have different narratives depending on their migration experiences. The difference between these narratives, depending on the wave of migration, bears witness to the determining role of the migratory path in the discourses of the respondents. Presenting and understanding the socio-political context in which migration took place (*i.e.*, the context of the respondent's utterance) is necessary to placing the individual's experience within broader narratives.

The post-war migrants that I interviewed were descendants of former soldiers who fought during World War II and political refugees that fled the communist regime and escaped

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[123] While it was the thirteenth largest group of foreign national residents in 2004.
[124] Commonwealth countries and countries with a long history of emigration to the UK.

imprisonment, torture, and even death. Kristof [125] is a highly representative figure of this migration wave. Kristof had been sentenced to life imprisonment in Hungary for organising scout catholic camps in the 1950's.[126] His father and brother were executed but he was released from prison during the Hungarian revolution and managed to escape to France. Burrel (2006) identified six elements composing the post-war migration narratives: a long story about the migratory route (1), views of the nation as the most treasured possession (2), deep knowledge of the history of the country of origin (3), active participation in church and religious ceremonies (4), recognition of the importance of the native language (5), and a sense of community (6). If the model proposed by Burrel was originally based on Polish migrants' narratives, this model encompasses Kristof's narrative. Although he is Hungarian, the analysis of Kristof's interview revealed these six elements composing typical narratives of post-war migration.

- (1) Kristof provided a long story about getting to France: He recounted in detail his walking exile to a refugee camp in Yugoslavia and the convoy that transported him to France after 5 months of living in the camp. He has a vivid memory of the bag and the items he was carrying during his exile.

- (2) Kristof describes himself as very patriotic and he has a flag and a map of greater Hungary. He recalls with nostalgia the memories of his youth and proceeds to a mythologisation of Hungary and his own personal history as a political refugee, not allowed to return to Hungary, even to attend his mother's funeral. It is, moreover, the inability to return that undoubtedly contributes to the crystallisation of the myth of the country of origin among migrants of this generation, as Burrel suggests. At the commemorative events, Kristof is the one who proposes to sing the Hungarian national anthem.

- (3) Kristof has a great knowledge of the Hungarian history and is very interested about the Eastern European countries' history in general. He was reading the *History of Eastern Europe countries*, by Henry Bogdan (1989), at the time of the interview.

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[125] The interview with Kristof was conducted in French on the 16/03/2019. Kristof was 94 years old at the time of the interview.
[126] Kristof said that he spent 5 months in prison, during which he experienced the worst and hardest moments of his life, where he was alone in a cell, going round and round. Sometimes he had to wait for hours to go to the toilet. Sometimes he was punished and had to stand facing the wall for hours.

- (4) Kristof is very religious and goes to church every week. He organized the Hungarian priest from Metz to come to Nancy once a month:[127] in 1962, he met an ordained priest in Metz. This man was a Hungarian from Transylvania who had fled what is now Romania because he was persecuted as a Hungarian. He had arrived in Metz in 1948.

- (5) Concerning language, Kristof insists that all speeches given at commemorative events should be given first in Hungarian, then in French, even though today the mother tongue of the vast majority of the members of the *Cercle hongrois de Lorraine* is not Hungarian (the majority of the members are either descendants of Hungarians or spouses).

- (6) Kristof founded the *Cercle hongrois de Lorraine* and said: "the aim of this circle is cultural and above all patriotic: it is the second homeland. Originally, this group allowed Hungarian refugees to meet and speak Hungarian together. Then, it also opened up to the French, of course, to present them the folklore and the values of the Hungarians". Through the activity of the association (commemorative events, exhibitions, traditional food, film, conferences), Kristof shows a strong sense of community and attachment to Hungarian culture, especially through the perpetuation of the mother tongue.

All these elements show that Kristof's narratives about Hungary and his migratory journey form part of general narrative of exile and migration. His migratory experience is part of a collective history, the ins and outs of which must be considered in order to understand the situation of enunciation from which Kristof speaks, and how his spatial representations and identity are constructed.

The narratives of post-1989 and pre-enlargement migrants must be put into perspective by considering the pre-1989 Central and Eastern European countries' closed borders, the post-communist transformation, and the EU enlargement. The progressive opening of the borders of Eastern European countries put an end to years of restricted travel toward the West. The narratives of the post-1989 and pre-Enlargement migrants are based on a mythologisation of the West (Galasińska, 2010, 2009; Galasiński and Galasińska, 2008) and the construction of space as fixed and closed. Galena is a representative figure of this migration wave. She said:

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[127] Before this arrangement (set up seven years ago), he was going every weekend to Metz to attend a mass in Hungarian.

"The aim of the government at the time was to cut the links with the West as much as possible. And for this reason, there were no French newspapers, there were no books except perhaps in a few rare cases, Victor Hugo or Zola, in the original language but that's all. To make a comparison and to know how people were living there, behind the iron curtain, it was not possible for us to know or to compare. So, we were not able to compare the two worlds, and then it was difficult to make a conclusion in our consciousness, everything remains blurred and certainly this was also intended to."[128] Western Europe was considered by Galena as a "paradise" and this image was maintained by her "prohibition". Her narratives present Europe present as an ideal unified space and guarantor of progress and democracy.

Post-enlargement migration is often characterized by freedom of movement and open borders. Several studies described NMS migrants as transnational actors, living at the same time here and there (Moskal, 2011), and considering their migration as a temporary or open-ended period in their lives (Drinkwater and Garapich, 2015; Friberg, 2012; Piętka-Nykaza and McGhee, 2017). These studies showed that the main characteristics of post-enlargement migration is its temporary nature: Favell (2008) describes the NMS migrants as "regional free movers" whom are more likely to engage in temporary circular and transnational mobility than in long-term, permanent migration (Friberg, 2012). Dagmara and Marta are representative of this wave of migration characterised by their hyper mobility within the EU: Dagmara returns to Poland every three months and Marta, who lived in the UK and Norway before coming to Nancy, said that her friends from Poznan "all ended up somewhere in Europe at the end, most of them in the UK".[129] Studies, based on Zygmunt Bauman's theory of "liquid modernity" (1999) and "liquid life" (2005), have described this new type of migration from the NMS as "liquid" (Engbersen *et al.*, 2010: 116) to highlight the unpredictability, circularity, transitory, and open-ended nature of migration decisions as opposed to migration understood as a linear concept with a beginning (initial migration) and an end (definite settlement). The rhizome, characterised by the absence of a unilinear chronology, a beginning, and an end, makes it possible to understand this new form of migration on a macro-regional scale. Looking at intra-European migration in this way leads to a rejection of the idea of "migratory stages" and contradicts the concept of integration as a threshold to be reached by migrants.

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[128] The interview with Galena was conducted in French on the 17/05/2019.
[129] The interview with Marta was conducted in English on the 20/02/2021.

However, a whole body of research relativises the definition of post-enlargement migrants as "new", "temporary" and "hyper mobile". These recent studies nuance such assumptions by demonstrating the diversity of Eastern European migrants' processes of settlement, belonging and integration and by insisting on permanent or longer-term settlement, more grounded lives, and less ongoing mobility (Bygnes and Erdal, 2017; Friberg, 2012; Grabowska-Lusinska and Okólski, 2009). First of all, the designation of these migrations as "new" may be subject to debate since this wave of migration, initiated in the early 2000s, is almost 20 years old. In addition, these studies critique the notion of liquid migration by contrasting the importance of stability in migrants' narratives especially among older populations and those who have migrated for several years (Botterill, 2014). These studies reject the intentional unpredictability, open options and temporary living and emphasise the role of labour market insecurity. "Normal" and "grounded lives" are opposed in these studies to "circular and temporary mobility" (Botterill, 2014; McGhee *et al*., 2012). The diversity of the narratives ranging from temporary migration to more long-lasting migration, to permanent settlement permit to nuance the discussion around the idea of hyper mobile migrants and questions the idea of choice and intentionality of these flows (Friberg, 2012). In chapter 5, these narratives will be put into perspective with the respondents' mental maps, the synthesis of which makes it possible to highlight the link between mental representations and narratives on migration.

1.3.2. NMS migrants' narratives about other NMS migrants

A third of the respondents referred to narratives of the "good" migrants (Findlay *et al*., 2013). During the interviews, they characterised themselves as belonging to a different kind of migrant. By mobilising anti-immigration narratives and negative images of migrants, they portrayed themselves as being "good" migrants as opposed to "other" NMS migrants. The definition of what constitutes a good migrant is here contextual: it corresponds to an individual's normative judgment on behaviours, and what is considered socially acceptable or even desirable. They devalued "other" migrants on the basis of poor language skills, social relations that were limited to nationals of the country of origin, and deviant behaviour. By contrast, they portrayed themselves as "successful and integrated migrants", without ever defining what they mean by this. They referred to a preconceived and fuzzy idea of what integration means: a "good migrant" is one who is integrated and a "bad" one is one who is not integrated. They mobilised the dominant and institutional discourses on this subject.

Firstly, some of the migrants differentiated themselves from NMS migrants of a different origin or ethnicity. Nine Romanians mentioned the tensions that they have with Hungarians and vice-versa.[130] Dragos, a dentist from Romania living in Wales, said: "We don't like Hungarian, they don't like us, it is a mutual conflict between us. They don't like us either. They think we are gypsies and bad people, and we think that they are criminals."[131] The use of the term "criminal" calls to mind the stereotype of the dangerous migrant, portrayed in the media and political discourse; eastern European migrants are associated with burglary and prostitution networks (Rasinger, 2010). The adjective "bad," used by various Hungarians to describe Romanians, contributes to the construction of a dichotomous figure of the migrant, one that oscillates between "good" and "bad." We can see that the strategy of being considered a "good" migrant ultimately means having to adhere to the dominant discourses on the "bad" migrant. Six Romanian respondents systematically distinguished themselves from Roma people in a vindictive way. Sometimes they suspected me of having confused them with Roma people when I asked them about integration issues. Felix, a Romanian migrant living in Swansea, regrets that British people "often think that Romanians are the gypsies who steal."[132] Though he is not condemning the cliché of the "Roma who steals," he is criticising the fact that he, as a Romanian, might be associated with it. In this way, the anti-immigration discourses are re-appropriated by even the respondents themselves as means by which to distance themselves from negative stereotypes.

Secondly, thirteen migrants blamed other migrants of the same nationality for having contributed to the "bad" image of migrants. Felix mentioned several occasions when he witnessed "bad Romanian behaviours." Once, he witnessed a fight between two Romanians in Wind Street[133] and pretended he was not Romanian: "I don't want to be associated to bad Romanian behaviours. When someone asked me what they were saying, I said "I don't know" to not be associated to this kind of behaviours." For Felix and others who value their status as a "good migrant," it is particularly important that they distance themselves from behaviour that is considered reprehensible. He was also particularly critical and virulent when explaining how he stopped being the administrator of a Romanian Facebook group

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[130] Aron, a Hungarian wine seller, says that every time Romanians comes into his shop he shows them the map of greater Hungary displayed at the back of his shop. The interview with Aron was conducted in French on the 03/10/2019.
[131] The interview with Dragos was conducted in English on the 17/10/2020.
[132] The interview with Felix was conducted in English on the 18/11/2020.
[133] Street in Swansea known for having a lot of bars.

because he "did not wanted to see people trying to cheat the system and to scam their own people." By denouncing this behaviour, Felix clearly values his own good behaviour in contrast. However, in doing so, he is made complicit in propagating the discourses that stigmatise immigrants.

Behind these discourses on good and bad migrants, there is a class conflict: the migrants most targeted by critics seem to be those belonging to the most precarious social and economic classes (or perceived as such). Nicolas, who is doing a PhD in law, expressed that did not want to be confused with migrants who "work 60 hours a week in factories, who don't really mix together and tend to stick to their own background – Polish people have polish friends, Baltics have Baltics. They do not even speak English."[134] Migrants are aware of the content of the dominant anti-immigration discourse, but rather than denying it, they use it to stigmatise "other" NMS migrants. In a way, they have integrated the political and institutional discourse on integration, which is based on the valorisation of skills (especially language skills) and have used it as a tool to "exclude" other migrants from the norm. Without giving any clear definition of a "good" migrant and integration, several respondents categorised immigrants into a hierarchy based on normative cultural, economic, and social characteristics.

This normative debate can be put into perspective by contextualising it. At the time my research was carried out, there was growing hostility to intra-European immigration in the UK, taking root in particular during the long, drawn-out process of Brexit, which ran from 2016 to 2020, and during the so-called "migrant crisis" in general. This context enables us to see why migrants themselves might mobilise these narratives and spread normative discourses on "ideal migrants" in order that they may be perceived as desirable and good migrants themselves (Scott, 2013; Montison, 2012). These discourses on the dichotomous image of migrants lead one to understand that a migrant's identity is constructed not only in terms of his/her relationship with the "locals" of the host society but also in comparison to "other migrants" from the same nationality or not (Cranston, 2017). This approach along with the discourses of some migrants confirms that the integration paradigm requires changing because it shows that the national and institutional models of integration can be counterproductive, inoperative, and can often produce the opposite effect of what they

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[134] The interview with Nicolas was conducted in English on the 16/11/2020.

should, in theory, allow *i.e.*, by bringing people together instead of dividing and excluding them.

1.3.3. Pluri-directional migrations and circulations in Europe

From the 1990s onwards, migration studies became an aspect of the wider field of study of mobilities which enables not only to focus on settled migrants but also to consider short-term mobilities and circulations in general.[135] The "mobility turn"[136] and studies on transnationalism lead one to no longer think of the nation-state as the "major container-space" for transnational mobilities (Faist *et al.*, 2013): space is no longer simply compartmentalised between the country of origin and the country of destination, but merges into a circulatory space and situations of interstices and in-betweens are taken into account. This paradigm is particularly relevant to understanding NMS' mobilities: the majority of the respondents, especially those from the last migration wave (post-enlargement), lived in several countries (Dagmara lived in Poland, the UK and France; Bartłomiej lived in Poland, Austria, and France; Diana lived in Romania, Italy and the UK along with Dennis and Nicolas); others travel abroad on a regular basis (most of the respondents travel regularly – at least twice a year – to Europe or even to other foreign countries for holidays or work); and others circulate continuously between the country of origin and host country (Dagmara goes back to Poland every three months, and Lenka returns to the Czech Republic, where her husband and children are living, every weekend). Some respondents lived in several different countries during their childhood as a result of their parents' profession, such as Csilla and Ilona, two Hungarian migrants, whose fathers were respectively a state official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a university professor; or Diana, a Romanian migrant, whose father set up a construction company in Italy. Most of the respondents' mobilities occur on a macro-regional scale, including the host country, the country of origin, and neighbouring EU countries. All these elements can have an impact on the respondents' relation to the transnational space.

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[135] In its broadest sense, mobility refers to the movement of people, ideas, and things from one place to another.

[136] The mobility paradigm refers to the increased movements of people and the new forms and patterns these movements are taking. Mobility becomes a lifestyle that is not only reduced to actual movement in space, but also includes everything that precedes, accompanies and extends it (Kaufman, 2002; Urry, 2005).

The notion of transnationalism in the field of migration studies makes it possible to break with the "stato-centric" vision of migrations by focusing on the links between the countries of origin and the host countries (Levitt and Jaworski, 2007; Mareï and Richard, 2018). At the same time, transnationalism is a process by which cross-border relations and spaces for social interaction are intensified. Transnational spaces emerged from the connections between countries of origin and destination and lead to a questioning of identity and belonging, as shown by studies focusing on Europeanization from below (Recchi and Triandafyllidou, 2010). This notion is based on the idea that migrants inhabit and practice various international spaces (for work or holidays for example) and contribute to the emergence of a macro-regional space. This notion makes it possible to undermine the sense of identity and integration conventionally defined within a national space, as migrants' identities must be understood as moulded in an international setting constituted by the multiple interconnections created by the migrants themselves (Moskal, 2010). This approach enables a shifting of paradigms: the mobility turn enables us to explore migration as a continuous process and not as a result of someone moving from one place to another. Moreover, transnationalism makes it possible for us to question multiple belongings based on the links that a migrant maintains with several spaces (Vertovec, 2001).

2. Drivers for migration

"Why people migrate" and "where they choose to go" are two traditional concerns of the migration literature that focuses on the mechanisms of the migratory process, including the reasons, the causes, and more generally the driving factors behind migration (Carling and Collins, 2017). By analysing the semi-structured interviews and mental maps of the NMS migrants, one is able to undermine the theory of *homo economicus* and reveal that the reasons to migrate are more complex than purely economic motivations (Massey *et al.*, 2003). They reveal sensitive migration mechanisms beyond rationality and the traditionally-emphasised economic logics such as desire, emotions, and cultural and social drivers.

2.1. The Desire

The migrant subject is a complex being, moved by both conscious and unconscious forces. Migration is not only produced by rational choices, economic, and political factors, but also by cognitive capacities, such as feelings and thoughts (Boccagni and Baldassar, 2015;

Svašek, 2010). The premise of this approach is that these cognitive capacities are constitutive of the migratory project (De Gourcy, 2013), a notion that emerged in the 1970s in French literature and helps to understand migration not only as determined by constraints, external factors, and *stimuli*, but also as shaped by the migrant's feelings, thoughts, and aspirations to migrate. The question of migration aspirations implies that migration is seen as preferable to non-migration. The notion of "desire", often used as a synonym for "migration aspirations" in literature, is mobilised to understand migrants' mobilities. This word is distinguished from the words "wishes", "wants" and "preferences", which are favoured in the French scientific literature, because it has been particularly theorised and mobilised in philosophy and in psychoanalysis.

The focus on migrants' cognitive capacities is an approach developed by the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* in a special issue (6) published in 2017 and titled *Aspiration, desire and drivers of migration*. The authors recall that the word "desire" has been traditionally used in migration studies since the 19th century (Ravenstein, 1889), though it is rarely discussed from a theoretical point of view. From an etymological point of view, the Latin origin of the word desire, "desiderare", refers to the absence of the stars, of one's destiny, and implies an expectation, a project, or even a quest that must be satisfied. According to this first meaning, found in Plato's *Banquet*, desire is something characterized by a feeling of lack and the search for an ideal. Desire, according to this first definition, is linked to action as it involves finding the object capable to satisfying it. The NMS migrants often stated that they were lacking something during the interviews in order to justify and to explain their mobility. The lack can be material (such as the lack of money) or immaterial (such as love, skills, happiness, or experiences). However, this conception of a conscious desire, animated by the absence of an identified and desired object, was criticised by Deleuze and Guattari (1983). They considered that action is also motivated by unconscious forces that go beyond the individual and that are socially constructed by discourses and representations, emerging from a specific social context. The social and cultural context of a place of origin can thus have an influence on the migratory project and attract a migrant to a specific place.

While the notion of desire was not used explicitly by the respondents, it helps one to understand and analyse the NMS migrants' reasons for migration. The interviews carried out with the migrants make it possible for us to explore the notion of desire, its extent and the

different meanings it covers. From a methodological point of view, the migration aspirations were addressed through the following questions: Did you plan to stay permanently when you moved here? Did you know when you were young that you would live abroad – was it something that you aimed for? Are you planning to move to another city (abroad or in the same country) anytime soon, or do you plan to stay here permanently? If you had the opportunity to live anywhere you want, where would it be? Two temporalities are considered: the intentionality and the aspirations to migrate before moving abroad (in the past) and after moving (in the present) to see if and how migration aspirations evolve over time.

2.1.1. The desire as a lack: in search of ideals

"Desire" has been defined as a lack by Ravenstein (1889). In the migration context, he explains migration as the desire for a better life. Often in the interviews, the lack of material goods (such as the lack of money, a house, or a car) is mentioned by the NMS migrants to explain why they moved abroad. Mihai,[137] a Romanian migrant, wants to "open a business in Romania", and so moving to Swansea to work in a warehouse was simply a way to get "some money, to learn things here, and then to come back."[138] While the desire for money corresponds to a lack of material resources and reflects a very practical aspect of migration, Mihai also wishes to accumulate knowledge (learning English) and thus manifests the lack of an intangible element (lack of language skills).

Beyond even the primary factor of Mihai requiring skills and money, there are also more complex and introspective motivations behind Mihai's project. The notion of becoming enables us to understand how Mihai considers migration as an "initiatory journey" and an opportunity for "self-development" that confers a greater degree of personal autonomy than he could ever have had in Romania. He said: "I can grow better alone than when I am with a group of people. I was introvert in my group of friends in Romania, but you have to grow as a person and not follow a group. I learn more here alone, than I learnt when I was in

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[137] The interview with Mihai was conducted in English on the 02/12/2020.
[138] Mihai plans to go back to Romania after three years or "as soon as (he has) enough money to buy a car and invest in a business". This ambitious project reflects the desire to make up for the lack of professional prospects in Romania, and the lack of access to certain expensive goods. The difficulty of achieving this goal was never mentioned by the respondent: on the contrary, the deadline that Mihai has set himself and repeated several times tends to place this plan in the realm of the achievable and not the fantastical.

Romania in a group of friends." The use of the word "grow" refers to an ongoing process that has a direct effect on the individuals involved: there is no prospect of an "end" to this process. It is therefore an open-ended learning process. Mihai considers in a positive light the separation with his previous social bonds because he sees it as an opportunity to transform and evolve as a person: according to him, this transformation of the self would have been less possible in his native country. His view of migration as a way of being able to separate oneself from previous social bonds can also be explained by the claimed "expiry date" of his displacement. Since Mihai does not intend to stay in the UK for more than three years, he has not sought to make "new" friends. On the contrary, he admitted: "I am just at work six days per week and 10 hours per day. I try to work as much as I can, to make sacrifices, and then to go back." The use of the term "sacrifices" raises the ambiguity and paradox of his speech: while he appreciates and perceives the beneficial effects of being alone ("literally without any friend"), he also implies that the migratory process involves an effort, which may be voluntary, but is no less painful. Nevertheless, the notion of sacrifice implies a compensatory dimension: it is the prospect of a success, ambitious project, and the imagined future gains that gives Mihai a sense of purpose.

Other immaterial lacks such as "family", "experiences," and even "feelings" are also expressed by the respondents. For Galena, freedom of thought and expression was not something she knew in Bulgaria, and when she discovered this during a work travel in France in the 80's, she was motivated to migrate. It is ultimately the search for an ideal life and for universal values, along with a lack of individual prospects in one's country of origin, which spurs the desire. These ideals, however, are sometimes unattainable and suggest a perpetual quest that is never fully satisfied. For example, Cosmin, Mihai's twin brother, said that he came to Swansea in 2018 to "find hope," a feeling that he did not have in Romania.[139] He plans to go back to Romania in two years' time to "find hope," for which he is still searching. Here, the lack of hope and the search for it appear to determine Cosmin's mobility: it is mobility that counts more than the destination because Cosmin wants to return to his home country for the same reason that he left. Cosmin's migratory aspirations suggest that what is important is not "where people migrate" but "why people migrate." The place itself does not matter as such for him and appears to be merely a step in a larger spiritual

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[139] The interview with Cosmin was conducted in English on the 09/12/2020.

journey. How does one fill the lack of an indefinable feeling? Cosmin was unable to define what he meant by "hope": his reasons for migrating are therefore vague, elusive, and fuzzy.

The prospect of returning to one's country of origin, which was mentioned by several migrants, contrasts with the neoclassical migration theory that associates return migration with a failure to integrate in the destination country. And yet, return migration is seen by Mihai and Cosmin as a logical stage after they have earned sufficient money, skills, and experiences to invest in their origin countries (De Haas *et al.*, 2015). The migration project of these twins does not unfold in a linear form because it takes into consideration the return to the country of origin. Migration is not envisaged by Mihai and Cosmin as the movement from point A to point B, but as the circulation between several spaces: it is a reversible process and continuous movement with no "end" in sight.[140] From this perspective, macro-regional integration can be seen as dynamic and continuous, punctuated by the unpredictable and open-ended movement of migrants.

2.1.2. The desire as a force for action: in search of skills

Desire is defined by Deleuze and Guattari (1983) as a force or driver for action. The determination of migrants to reach the object of their desire may encourage them to migrate. Language is a specific case of cultural driving forces: respondents often state that they want to migrate in order to acquire better language skills. And yet, before migrating, several respondents had already acquired the necessary linguistic, academic, and professional skills to facilitate their migration *via* apps[141] or private lessons.[142] Migration can then be explained by the desire to acquire a language, though it is also paradoxically influenced by language skills already acquired by a respondent. The influence of language skills on the intentions to migrate has been highlighted by several studies (Drinkwater, 2003). Some respondents stated that they are more likely to move to a country where they speak the language for reasons of convenience. Xenia, a Polish migrant living in France, plans to move to Canada or Switzerland because she speaks the language and, according to her, the professional conditions for doctors are better than those in France. Magdalena has "never considered

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[140] The twins are open to the possibility of returning to the UK a second time if, after their return to Romania, they need money again.

[141] "I had an app on my phone to learn French". The interview with Magda was conducted in English on the 02/10/2019.

[142] "I took private English lessons". The interview with Hannah was conducted in English on the 14/11/2020.

another country or other parts of the world": she always knew that if she ever lived abroad, it would be in the United Kingdom because "English is the language that (she speaks) best after (her) native language."[143] She also explained that before moving to the UK, she "graduated in a private English language school" and she "was working for English speaking company with people coming from Australia, New Zealand and UK and speaking English only." For these reasons, she feels confident enough with the language to help her kids: "My kids feel better because they just can come and ask: 'Mommy, what is this, what is that?' and I can explain them. If it was another language, I wouldn't be able to, but in English I can help them for school." For Magdalena, migrating abroad comes with the prospect of being able to aid her daughters in learning new skills. This notion of learning is fundamental for her; she explains that she came to the UK "above all so that (her) daughters could have a better education than in Bulgaria." Studies have shown that the factor of having children and the consideration of their education plays a central role in the many families' decision to migrate (Moskal, 2010).

The skills which motivate migrants to migrate are above all language and academic skills, since they are considered as tools valued in the labour market. In essence, we find here a conception of integration based on normative integration in the labour market to which several respondents seem to adhere.

2.1.3. The desire as a collective and social process: in search of success

Several respondents associated the notion of success with migrating. This idea is summed up by Patrycja, a Polish migrant living in Wales, when she said: "reaching success is not working in the capital of your country of origin but living abroad: finally, going abroad in a small town is better than going in a big city in Poland."[144] In this sentence, Patrycja states that going abroad is more attractive (whatever the size of the destination) and more socially valuable than going to a big city in one's country of origin: she suggests that social mobility requires international spatial mobility and presents spatial mobility as a marker of success (Faist, 2013). The experience of "living abroad" is valued by many respondents and is

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[143] The Interview with Magdalena was conducted in English on the 25/11/2020.
[144] The interview with Patrycja was conducted in English on the 13/11/2020.

constructed according to the gaze of others: it is only because international spatial mobility is perceived as "desirable" by some that it becomes synonymous with success.

This desire has a collective and social dimension in so far as it is influenced by the desire of other people. The influence of the social and cultural context on someone's migration aspirations leads us to analyse how the idea of migration circulates through expectations, discourses, and representations into social relations (family, works, friends) and produces the desire to migrate. The respondents often insist on the pressure from their family to work hard and to have good grades at school in order to get a job abroad. Kira, a Polish migrant living in Wales, heard repeatedly in her childhood: "you will study and live abroad."[145] "We grow up with the idea to move abroad," declared Magda, a Polish migrant living in Nancy.[146] She also mentioned that having a "foreign and long-distance boyfriend" was "popular" among her friends in Poland when she was in high school: "I had a boyfriend from France, one of my friends had a boyfriend from Sweden, another one from UK, and another one from Norway." The expectation of what is a "successful relationship" is characterized, determined, and influenced by others.

The construction of desire is therefore collective, depends on the desire of another, and is in line with images and representations produced in the country of origin by books, movies, and music, which contributes to the construction of imaginative geographies (Gregory, 1995) and desire. Kasia, a Polish migrant living in Nancy, mentioned the influence of books she has read on her motivations to migrate: "We have so many books in Poland about 'How to be like French girls.'"[147] It is a whole social and cultural imaginary which is mobilised by the respondents, and which stimulates a desire to migrate by mimicry. "Be like French girls" seems to be an unattainable goal based on normative conceptions and stereotypes, such as the image of the "chic, elegant, romantic, intellectual French woman smoking cigarettes." Once again, migration is seen as a way of "becoming" a French woman and thus appears to be an unrealistic process because of its normative and essentializing character: this both raises the question of identity and suggests that migration is a never-ending process.

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[145] The interview with Kira was conducted in English on the 08/12/2020.
[146] The interview with Magda was conducted in English on the 02/10/2019.
[147] The interview with Kasia was conducted in French on the 11/10/2019.

By considering an interview with a second-generation Polish migrant, one can see how some NMS migrants, and especially Polish migrants, draw crucial links between a high level of education, success, and integration issues.[148] Xenia, a second-generation Polish migrant and doctor living in Nancy, insisted on the fact that "social climbing is very important for Poles, and that this mentality must be understood when it comes to Polish migration." She declared that her father kept telling her that she had to "succeed at school, because education was the most transferable thing: as a migrant, you have to get a job and you can get a job only if you have studied." She strongly associates the idea of academic/professional success with integration. If educational success is contextual and normative, Xenia said that her parents always put "social climbing before anything else." Like Dagmara (see chapter 3, 5.1), she kept repeating: "Poles are hard workers."[149] For them, working well and having a "good job" is a way to integrate as a migrant and is even key to their survival. Xenia said: "It is important to get an exemplary education in order to be able to find a job abroad in case we need to migrate again, such as what happened in the past. It's a way of integrating but also a necessity in order to secure one's back." Xenia's aspirations (to succeed in her career) must be understood in the light of the upbringing she had as a child, and the values her parents passed onto her. Having an exemplary career has an almost survivalist aspect when it comes to Poland's history: it is in the context of the dissolution of Poland and forced migration that Xenia considers it necessary to succeed. She sees the role of diplomas and qualifications from a survivalist perspective within the framework of an unstable geopolitical system in the past. She concluded by underlining her pride in having had an "exceptional academic record for the daughter of immigrants, who could not speak French before the age of three". Xenia has perfectly embraced the importance of doing prestigious studies: after having done a literary preparatory class in one of the best Parisian high schools,[150] she entered medical studies and considers being a doctor in Switzerland or in Canada, "where the salary and the medical conditions are better than in France." Career success is not the inherent definition of success, it is an interpretation of what success is and refers to a social position: career valuation has to be understood and analysed in regard to the social context determining what is desirable. What is considered to be successful in one place, at one time, by one person is not universal, but part of a whole social system of values.

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[148] The interview with Xenia was carried out in French on the 16/03/2019 in Nancy.
[149] The interview with Dagmara was conducted in French on the 12/10/2019.
[150] She did a Hypokhâgne cursus at Louis-le-Grand, Paris V.

Exploring the multitude of drivers for migration leads one to reconceptualise NMS migrations as a multi-dimensional and ongoing process, which should not be understood simply in terms of spatial displacement between a country of origin and a country of arrival, but as part of a complex, general life course, which is influenced by individual motivations and collective desires. This process is not a univalent, knowable phenomenon but can be understood in relation to a migrant's individual process of becoming and self-realisation.

2.2. Social networks

Social networks and relationships play a significant role in migration decisions. While the previous sub-section has presented the individual reasons and ambitions that led the respondents to migrate, the following sub-section is devoted to highlighting the role of inter-personal relationships in the migratory journey.

2.2.1. Romantic love and migration

While the freedom of movement in Europe facilitates the possibility of meeting a partner from another member State (Niedomysl *et al*., 2010), it remains a minority phenomenon. European bi-national couples are less frequent than uni-national couples and non-European bi-national couples (Díez Medrano *et al*., 2014). Nevertheless, several studies have highlighted that romantic consideration form an intrinsic part of intra-European migration (Van Wissen and Heering, 2014; Díez Medrano *et al*., 2014; Haandrikman, 2014). Indeed, love is a key factor mentioned by many of the respondents as a reason for their migration. In Nancy, the majority of migrants interviewed were in a relationship with a French person. It is romance that most often explains the move to Nancy, as Hanka, a Czech migrant living in Nancy, expressed when she said: "You don't go to Nancy by chance but for love."[151] Nancy, therefore, does not appear to be an attractive city in and of itself: on the contrary, Hanka implies that migrating to Nancy would be a strange idea unless one is moving there because of a relationship. Several respondents living in Swansea have Welsh partners, such as Stanislava, from Bulgaria: she explained that when she and her partner were deciding whether to move to Bulgaria (where she comes from) or Wales (where her partner comes from), they chose Wales because "it would have been more difficult for (her) partner to find

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[151] The interview with Hanka was conducted in French on the 11/10/2019.

a job in Bulgaria (where he does not speak the language) than for (her) in Wales (being bilingual in English)".[152] Ioan[153] and Nicolas[154], two Romanian migrants, also decided to join their Welsh partners in Swansea over ten years ago and have remained there despite separating because now they have children and jobs there.

The role of couples and love in the construction of a transnational society has been highlighted by several studies that explore the links between bi-national relationships and identity formation: love appears to play a substantial role in the European integration process as bi-national couples are more likely to identify as European compared to uni-national couples (Van Mol *et al*., 2015; Gaspar, 2009). Yodanis *et al*. (2012) have studied the links between identities and romantic relationships of two individuals from different cultures and showed that when the boundaries between two social groups "are no longer perceived as significant", intercultural romantic relationships are more likely to occur. In this way, romantic relationships could be the manifestation of socio-cultural integration: several researchers have also sought to study the correlation between assimilation and romantic relationships (Alba and Nee, 2003; Hwang *et al*., 1997) and others have focused on how students' mobility, *via* ERASMUS, might influence the creation of social relationships and links within Europe (Sigalas, 2010; Van Mol, 2013; Wilson, 2011).

2.2.2. Migrations channels

Some migrants mentioned the role of job agencies, which are specialised in finding jobs abroad, in order to explain why they migrated to Wales specifically. It is thanks to job agencies that, two Polish migrants, Ula[155] and Maja,[156] found a seasonal job in agriculture and tourism for the summer and then decided to stay in Wales after that. Michal, a Polish migrant living in Wales, also went several times to work during the summer before deciding to settle, not thanks to job agencies, but to friends who were already working there seasonally and who managed to secure him a job opportunity.[157] Along with romantic relationships, friendship is another reason for someone to migrate: Mihai and Cosmin joined

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[152] The interview with Stanislava was conducted in English on the 03/10/2021.
[153] The interview with Ioan was conducted in English on the 11/10/2020.
[154] The interview with Nicolas was conducted in English on the 16/11/2020.
[155] The interview with Ula was conducted in English on the 03/12/2020.
[156] The interview with Maja was conducted in English on the 04/02/2020.
[157] The interview with Michal was conducted in English on the 12/02/2020.

a friend in Wales, who had moved there already thanks to his brother. Friendships and relations are the main reason NMS migrants decided to migrate to a specific place. Radoslaw, a Romanian migrant living in Cardiff, explained: "I have a friend from college, and I spoke to him last summer and he told me to come here for work."[158] Several studies highlighted the influence of social networks on the intention to migrate and showed that people with friends, family, or acquaintances abroad are more likely to migrate (Manchin and Orazbayev, 2018).

Another migration channel is the linkage between universities. Some respondents stated that Welsh university ambassadors prompted them to move to study in Wales; they decided to stay in Swansea or in Cardiff after their studies. Zuzana, a Polish migrant living in Wales, remembers: "A woman came to our school. She was a representative of the university, and she talked about this university and its advantages. At the beginning, I was wondering whether I should go abroad at some point or study at Warsaw. It was a pretty tough decision to make. I was a bit scared, but I wanted to try something new."[159] University links can explain the movement of students from Poland to Wales and their installation in UK afterwards. In France, the University of Nancy also welcomes chemistry PhD students from Poznan and Warsaw on a regular basis. Polish influencers on Youtube, mentioned by three respondents, promote the student life in Wales to Poles: Kira talked about how watching these videos was instrumental in her decision to migrate. She concludes by saying: "I think every Polish student in Wales has seen these videos."[160]

Social networks of different kinds (economic with job agencies, social with friends and family, and institutional with universities) contribute to increased migrations between different places and also connect host countries and countries of origin (Massey *et al*., 1993; Findlay, 1990). While the driving forces of migration are multidimensional, they are embedded in socio-economic contexts. They are explained by social relations, imaginations, and desires, which are built collectively, and which are part of the process of an individual's becoming.

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158 The interview with Radoslaw was conducted in English on the 27/01/2021.
159 The interview with Zuzana was conducted in English on the 12/11/2020.
160 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgKLottLuRc&list=UUWW-QBwvI3p6ctAggXUQljw&index=66 & https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_s3za3_Irtc

3. Spaces and temporalities of NMS migration

This sub-section will focus on specificities of the spaces and the temporalities produced by NMS migration, which intertwine permanence and temporariness, as well as a multitude of spaces, placing the residential area in a macro-regional and international framework.

3.1. A temporary long-term migration: when the temporary becomes permanent

3.1.1. Migrate randomly

Most of the respondents claimed to have migrated "randomly", meaning that they rejected the idea of a long thought-out and prepared migratory project and insisted on the sudden, rapid, and unexpected nature of their decision to migrate. France or Wales do not seem to be particularly popular and carefully "chosen" destinations for many migrants who refer to "chance" and "luck" as explanations for why they ended up living there. For instance, Miky explained: "I never thought I would end up here, it was just pure chance. I was like: 'let's try, let's see', you know, just by chance."[161] Michal used the word "accidental" to describe his move to Wales, thereby emphasising the unpredictability of the migration and its suddenness: "I worked a little bit in Krakow but accidentally I discovered Wales in 2005. It was just a summer and completely accidental."[162] In his case, Michal came to visit and work with a friend in Wales for the summer. The theory of *homo economicus* is again undermined by these assertions insofar as the decision to migrate does not appear to be rational but impulsive and unmanageable. The respondents appear almost passive in the face of events in so far as migration is presented as something that randomly happens to them, and in which they are not active players: they do not seem to have any control over events.

Sometimes the respondents claim to have had little preparation. This contributes to the perception of migration as an uncontrollable process. Magdalena, a Bulgarian migrant living in Wales, insisted that ending up in Wales was not a long-time plan ("I didn't choose Wales; Wales chose me. I received a job offer for what I wanted to work. And I just accepted it").[163]

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[161] The interview with Miky was conducted in English on the 29/01/2021.
[162] The interview with Michal was conducted in English on the 12/02/2020.
[163] The interview with Magdalena was conducted in English on the 25/11/2020.

The speed with which Magdalena migrated recalls the characteristic of the asignifying rupture of the rhizome to the extent that this movement is random and unpredictable. She declared: "It was an hour's decision and two day's action!" The ease with which migration is carried out is characteristic of post enlargement migration and is expressed through the syntactic construction of the respondents' sentences: "I applied, and I got the call, and I just came here." The use of the words "and" and "just" underlines the easiness of the move, and the absence of constraint. Ona, a Lithuanian migrant living in Swansea, emphasised the speed of her decision to migrate and presents it as if though were just a whim: "And then one day I just got the tickets for tomorrow, I packed my stuff and I just left."[164] The respondents are extremely flexible and are very open to the possibility of migrating abroad. Living in Wales or France does not seem to be an objective in itself for several migrants: it appears to be the consequence of a situation that is beyond the respondents. Free movement and the opening up of the labour market in the EU are essential conditions for this flexibility of movement, which is accompanied by migrants' openness to the idea of moving. Some scholars have called intra-EU migrants "free-movers" (Braun and Arsene, 2009) or "super-movers," since their mobility deviates from classic migration (in which economic rationality prevails) and has similarities with "internal" migration (Santacreu *et al*., 2009). The migration project is therefore characterised by unpredictability, uncertainty, and is an on-going dynamic process.

3.1.2. Ready to leave? A life on the move

The lack of planning a destination is often also accompanied by a lack of planning for the duration of the stay in the host country. The initial migration plans of most of the respondents were to stay short term, which is in line with the findings of other studies (Drinkwater *et al*., 2009; Ryan, 2018). However, gradually, the majority of the NMS migrants I interviewed extended their stay, turning their temporary plans into longer-term stays, sometimes unconsciously (Griffiths *et al*., 2013). This is the case of Ula, a respondent from Poland, who has lived in Wales for over ten years now: "I signed up for a one-year volunteering project. And I didn't expect to stay here. Basically, I wanted to keep on traveling to different countries and moving around afterwards. This was my initial dream.

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[164] The interview with Ona was conducted in English on the 25/02/2021.

But obviously I kind of got stuck here. I met my partner here and I got stuck in Wales."[165] It is very rare that respondents state that they consciously decided to stay. Lina, a Lithuanian migrant living in Wales, is surprised and amused when she says: "It has been fifteen years that I arrived in the UK for six months."[166] Lenka is an extreme, yet typical example of how moving abroad sometimes is not experienced as a decisive residential change.[167] While Lenka has been a professor of Czech at the University of Nancy for more than twenty-five years, she claims that she is "Prague's inhabitant"[168] and that she lives in a very small studio in Nancy because her situation is only temporary. "My husband and children live in Prague, my friends are there, my whole life is there, and I can't imagine a weekend or a holiday without being in Prague." Lenka's migratory situation raises questions about the temporality of permanence. How long can a "temporary situation" be considered permanent? Is twenty-five years not enough to consider this situation permanent? During the writing of my thesis, a year and a half after I interviewed her, Lenka retired and "moved back"[169] to Prague: the speed with which she left her flat in Nancy shows how ready she was to leave.

By contrast, Favell *et al*. (2011) showed that intra-EU mobility has led to some changing patterns of migration, which are less permanent and more circular. Temporariness is very present in the respondents' discourse to qualify their migration. I asked the question: "do you think you will stay here permanently?" Very few answered "yes," and the majority affirmed that they would be ready to move at the next opportunity. It reminds us that migration is never "finished" but is a continuous, emergent, and uncertain process (Shubin, 2011). Monika, a Polish migrant living in Nancy, explains this "ready to leave" attitude as part of the Polish mentality and as a result of the dissolution of Poland from 1795 to 1918. This historical awareness is, according to them, decisive in the fact that they do not project themselves long-term in one place and remain open to the possibility of moving at any time and show how their present and future decisions are influenced by the past.

In the context of the EU crisis and increasing nationalism, being ready to leave is also an attitude that is increasingly adopted, especially by respondents living in the UK. Dagmara

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[165] The interview with Ula was conducted in English on the 03/12/2020.
[166] The interview with Lina was conducted in English on the 26/02/2021.
[167] The interview with Lenka was conducted in French on the 20/05/2019.
[168] "Une Pragoise" in French.
[169] The use of inverted commas suggests that according to her, she had never left her hometown: it is therefore from my position, as a researcher, and from the observation that Lenka has lived mainly in France for more than 25 years, that I use this expression that would not be the one she would use.

explains that Brexit triggered in her a feeling of insecurity about living in the UK, which pushed her to leave and settle in France, because she no longer felt at home and welcome: "Brexit broke my heart actually. All over the news from all over England, there were attacks on the Poles after the referendum. Some Polish people were killed after the referendum, you know! So, actually, after Brexit I wasn't feeling safe anymore. I was afraid to go home at night. Before Brexit I was always super confident: I had no fear, not at all. But after, even my mother was telling me to come back. She was always calling me to tell me: 'take care of yourself because I'm scared'. So, I decided to move here (in Nancy) and also because I find a job opportunity in my research field. Now, I'm in a country that is friendly to Poland, and I'm also on the continent. In UK, you feel that you are on an island, you feel further away. Whereas here, you don't have to take a plane, you can just take the car to go to Poland. You're already on the land, you know, it's the same continent. So, I feel better here."[170] Dagmara's narrative is eloquent and testifies to the context of violence and brutality in which the departure can take place: it is not always an opportunity that pushes one to leave, but a feeling of insecurity, in this case directly triggered by the international situation, which made the move necessary. Dagmara highlights that weight that institutions and geographical location can have on one's sense of security and belonging. Again, migration appears to be a dynamic process that can result from external and therefore uncontrollable elements and situations.

3.2. When distance becomes time. Disappearance of national borders in Europe: a macro-regional space conceived in pure distance

National borders seem to have little meaning for the vast majority of respondents. Very aware of the fact that the EU is an area of free movement, many migrants emphasised the proximity between their place of residence and their place of origin. This supposed proximity contributes to the construction of a macro-regional space insofar as the space is perceived as a connected space. This proximity and connectivity can be represented directly on the mental maps: for example, Běla, a Czech migrant living in Nancy represented an arrow between Nancy and Prague (where she is originally from) to insist on the spatial proximity between these two cities (see figure 5.16, p. 192).[171] This arrow underlines the frequency of her circulation between two residential spaces and represents both the actual

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frequency ("two or three times a year") and ideal frequency ("we're going to live in Czech Republic when we retire. In fact, I won't leave the house I built here, but I think we'll live six months in France and six months in Czech Republic") but also manifests the fact that she does not see the European as a space fragmented by borders. She conceives it in terms of pure distance when she says: "Nancy and Prague are not far. It's only 740 km. It takes me less time to go to Prague from Nancy than to go to Marseille." Běla is not the only respondent to compare the distance between her hometown and Nancy and between Nancy and a town further away in France. Czeslaw, a Polish migrant living in Nancy, justifies the fact that he goes several times a month to Poland, to a town on the south-western border, by explaining that it's not so far from France: "it's as many kilometres as it takes to go to Toulouse from Nancy. You see, it's closer and quicker to go to Poland than to some regions of France from Nancy."[172] Aron also knows exactly the number of km that separates his hometown in Hungary from Nancy, where he has lived for over 20 years: "1175 km to Veszprem".[173] The disappearance of borders between countries is also concretely manifested by the use of the single currency which makes it much easier for Aron to travel: "Before the euro in 2003, to go to Hungary, you have to cross Austria, Germany, so at the time when different national currencies still existed, you had to have the Deutsch Mark in your pocket, the Austrian Schelling in your pocket, the Hungarian Forint in your pocket, and the French Franc in your pocket." The absence of borders, and the single currency, are both elements that contribute to the constitution of a macro-regional space for Aron, and which enable him to feel closer to another country than to a city in the same country.[174]

Apart from "pure distance," respondents also mentioned a temporal proximity resulting from the technological performance of transport (trains and planes). Lenka declared: "From Nancy it's so easy to go to Prague, it's nothing! I can get to the airport in Luxembourg in 45 minutes from the Nancy train station and then it's only an hour and a half by plane, knowing that it's a very small airport and you only need to arrive an hour early! It's very practical!" Respondents living in the UK never talk about distance in kilometres but often refer to the number of hours it takes to reach their hometown: "Swansea is at three hours from Poland" affirmed Ona, in explaining why she doesn't feel like she is living far from her home country. The physical (kilometre) and temporal proximity that is claimed and perceived by

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[172] The interview with Czeslaw was conducted in French on the 15/03/2019.
[173] The interview with Aron was conducted in French on the 03/10/2019.
[174] Aron compared the distance between Veszprem and Nancy and Nancy and Brest, saying that it's only two more hours to reach Veszprem from Nancy.

the respondents is proof that the space appropriated by migrants is a transnational and macro-regional space.

3.3. Landscape similarities: Nancy looking like Prague, Plovdiv, and Budapest?

This *a priori* "objective" proximity, which is expressed in physical and temporal distance, is also accompanied by a more "subjective" proximity, which consists in perceiving similarities between the host city and the city of origin. The NMS migrants living in the UK never mentioned any similarities between their country of origin and their host country: they often pointed out the difference between the UK and "mainland Europe", emphasising on the UK's insular location. On the contrary, most NMS migrants interviewed in Nancy emphasised how Nancy strongly resembles Prague, Plovdiv, and Budapest at the same time. Běla perceives the similarity between Nancy and Prague in terms of urban construction: "Place Stanislas is not a big change of scenery for me because in Prague there are a lot of very beautiful Places, so it really reminds me of Prague atmosphere." She also emphasises the similarity of practices and traditions and, in particular, the celebration of Saint Nicolas "which is not being celebrated in Clermont-Ferrand or in Dunkerque." According to her, the geographical situation of Nancy, in the east of France, has allowed a mixture of cultures and the influence of eastern countries on this French region, the climatic conditions of which also remind her of her place of origin: "there are harsh winters in Nancy, and I like it, because in Prague there are harsh winters too." Dimitrinka, from Bulgaria, states that landscapes remind her of her hometown: "I like it (Nancy) very much because it looks a bit like Plovdiv. Plovdiv is a city built on seven hills. And you can see the city from above. It is the same in Nancy, when you're on top of the hill, it's really beautiful, Nancy. I can tell the difference between Nancy and Plovdiv, but it's the same feeling I get."[175] The use of the word "feeling" shows that Dimitrinka admits that it is an individual and subjective point of view. Dimitrinka does not think that Nancy is identical to Plovdiv, but Nancy has an emotional resonance for her, and contains memories and meanings. Nancy is also presented as the most Polish of the French cities[176] by several respondents, though some Hungarians

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[175] The interview with Dimitrinka was conducted in French on the 14/08/2019.
[176] https://www.lepoint.fr/histoire/comment-nancy-est-devenue-polonaise-18-06-2015-1937805_1615.php

criticised this by pointing out the stronger similarities between Hungary and Nancy, reflected in the city's coat of arms.[177]

The connections that the respondents make between different geographic locations and personal feelings reflect transnational identities and a sense of home through the perceived familiarity (Rishbeth and Powell, 2013). Several studies highlighted that memories are prompted by new landscapes and that connections are being made between the places people used to live in, the places they are familiar to, and their new surroundings (Altman and Low, 1992; Tolia-Kelly, 2004). Finding familiarities between places contributes to the development of an attachment to a place[178] and of feelings of rootedness. Whether real or imagined, the similarities perceived between the spaces of origin and the spaces of destination allow the migrant to feel less alien, less "out of place," make the unknown space less hostile and strange. By perceiving similarities, the migrant has a sense of control over the space, which becomes more meaningful, logical, and understandable for him/her.

3.4. Being here and there: a macro-regional residential space

The EU is not only a space of settlement and migration but also a space of sustained mobility, understood as the development of international commuting, where people no longer leave a place permanently but travel very regularly for short periods between East and West because freedom of movement and the absence of visas allow them to circulate at a macro-regional space. We are witnessing the development of transnational societies, the residential space of which is spread across a transnational space. Several NMS migrants settle into a system of long-term macro-regional commuting, sharing their daily activities (family life, work, study, shopping) between several countries.

Serge Weber (2004) uses the word co-presence to designate a phenomenon in contrast to "double absence" theorized by Abdelmalek Sayad (1999). This refers to the existence of a double life maintained by permanent economic, family, and emotional ties. This concept seems relevant for considering how NMS migrants living "in between" two or more countries invest and construct an international residential space by working in a country and

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[177] https://www.nancy.fr/culturelle/patrimoine-1000-ans-d-histoire/ressources-2198.html
[178] By "place attachment", I refer to the emotional, symbolic and affective bonds people have with places (Altman & Low, 1992).

living in another, working in two different countries, working and living in one country and studying in another: there are as many ways of living a transnational existence as there are individuals interviewed. Co-presence is also expressed through the way in which some migrants become emotionally, politically, and socially involved and stand up for the socio-political causes of another country.

Many respondents have adopted a strategy of co-presence and have a life divided between different places or have a household split between two or more places. Several respondents actively maintain several links in several countries.

- The most common form of co-presence is the phenomenon of NMS migrants who work here and live there. These migrants have been described as "transnational elites circulating between nation-states" or "Eurostars" (Ryan and Mulholland, 2014: 586; Favell, 2011). Lenka, a university professor, who has been living "between France and the Czech Republic for 25 years" exists in a state of "permanent temporariness" (Friberg, 2012), commuting between France and the Czech Republic. She explains that in order "to live this life, you need to have a family and an understanding husband. My husband is very understanding because he has allowed me to have a professional career that I love, just as he is happy in his professional career. We have always given a lot to our work, so in fact our life hasn't changed much, because we already had very busy professional careers with a lot of travelling, so anyway, the intimate, family moments together were always during the holidays, even before I started working in Nancy." Living in one place and working in another does not always require physical travel: new technologies allow people to work remotely. After they left Hungary and moved to Nancy, Csilla's husband kept his job in Hungary. Although he only travels there once a month, Csilla says: "My husband lives half there, even if he is physically here, in fact, he lives his day a little bit there, because with his colleagues he speaks all day in Hungarian, all the business he concludes are in Hungary".[179]

- This "double life" can take different forms when it concerns one member of a family who leaves his/her families in their country of origin and migrates first to find a job

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[179] The interview with Csilla was conducted in French on the 12/12/2019.

and a place to live. Dovy's father, for example, moved to UK one year before his mother, his brother and himself in order to find a permanent job.[180] It is common that a family does not migrate together at the same time. Erika's family also migrated to the UK in two stages.[181] She said: "my dad moved before to find work and a place for us to stay. And then me, my mom and my brother moved a couple years later." This two-stage migration means that families are split between two countries, making transnational families, and this contributes to the development of a transnational attachment to places (Moskal, 2010; Friberg, 2012).

- Ula represents another way of living in a transnational space: Ula is a Polish migrant who has been working for over 10 years in the UK where she is a tenant. She owns a property in Spain where she goes as often as her work allows. She hopes to work remotely and retire there. Owning a property in a country other than one's country of residence, or country of origin, contributes to the construction of a multi-spatial and macro-regional attachment.

- Some respondents have a part-time job in two countries and are therefore "working here and there." For instance, Tomasz,[182] a Polish university lecturer, has lived in the UK for over 25 years but gives courses to the university in Wales and the university in Poland, where he is a "visiting professor."

- Lina engages with the macro-regional space in an original way: she works in the UK (she "arrived 15 years ago for six months") but also studies part-time in Lithuania (her country of origin), where she goes every three weeks to attend classes or take exams. She said: "So I am working all the day till Friday one o'clock in the afternoon because I prefer morning shift and I just start at three in the morning, then I get in the car, race to the Airport, get in the plane, land in Lithuania around midnight and then go to Uni on Saturday all day (for the lectures or the midterm exams) and then fly back on Sunday. And Monday I go back to work."[183]

- Some people are so concerned about what is happening in a neighbouring country that they decide to protest or fight to show their solidarity. This can be seen as a manifestation of a macro-regional space. In the winter of 2020, strikes over abortion spread across the Polish borders. Polish migrants living in Swansea mobilised support for the strikes taking place in Poland in December 2020. They organised themselves *via* social networks, creating a Facebook group (Strajk W Swansea)[184] and organizing several demonstrations, gatherings, and events in the city centre in support of the strikes taking place in Poland at the same time, against the abolition of abortion (see images 4.1 and 4.2).

Image 4.1: Strajk W Swansea Facebook group
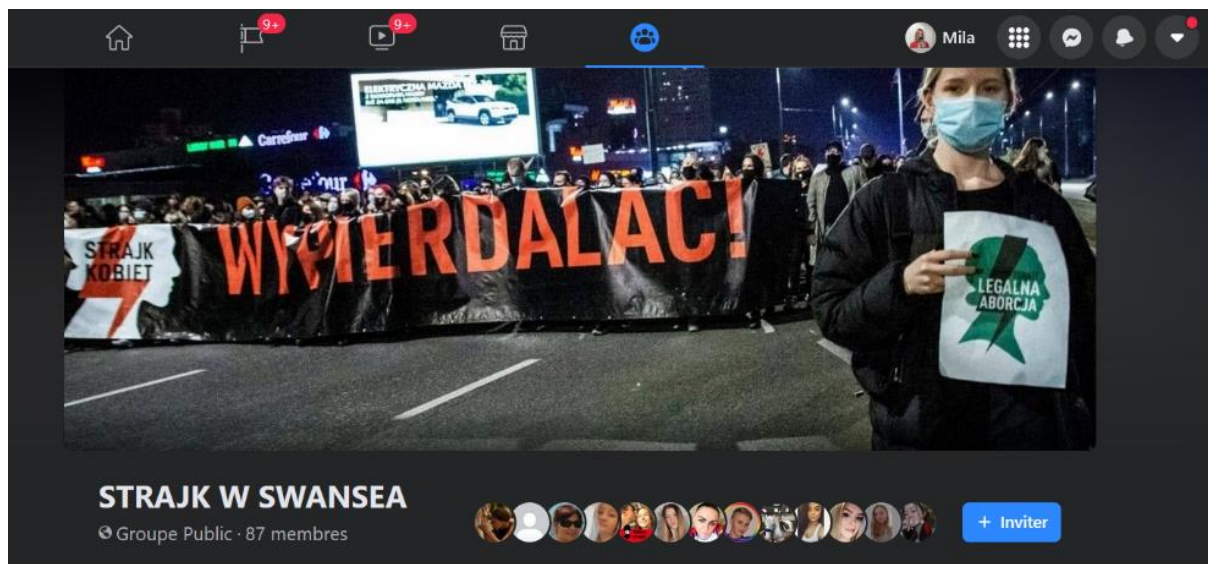
Source: Mila Sanchez, screenshot from "Strajk W Swansea Facebook group", 24/10/2020.

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[184] "Strike in Swansea" in Polish

Image 4.2: Preparation workshop for the demonstration in Swansea

Source: Mila Sanchez, screenshot from "Strajk W Swansea Facebook group", 24/10/2020.

The mobilisation in Swansea was visible in public spaces across the city with many residents posting slogans and signs supporting the strike in their windows (see images 4.3 and 4.4). These marked the urban landscape and echoed the Polish strike in Swansea.

Image 4.3: Signs in support of the Polish strike in Swansea

There are drawings of stars, lightning bolts (the two symbols of the strike), and a womb. We can read the sentence: "We wish we could abort Polish governement."

Image 4.4: "Strajk Kobiet" sign, on the front of a house, as a demonstration of support for the strike.[185]

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[185] "Strajk Kobiet" means "Women's strike" in Polish.

The intensity with which Polish migrants living in Swansea fought for the rights of Polish women and tried to raise awareness and encourage the wider community in Swansea to join them testifies to the undeniable role that NMS migrants play in regional integration. Indeed, the sense of multiple belonging and the strong ties that Polish migrants may have to their country of origin contribute to blurring of boundaries and distance: just because they live in the UK does not mean that they do not feel affected by what is happening in Poland, highlighted by their mobilisation. The engagement and attachment shown to a space abroad helps us understand both how NMS migrants perceive proximity between places, and also how a transnational, macro-regional space is constitutive of their identities and feelings of belonging.

Conclusion of chapter 4

Chapter 4 has sought to describe the NMS migration phenomenon and has presented an overview of its general trends and characteristics. In the first sub-section, this chapter showed that migration flows from the NMS have intensified and regionalized, and that for these reasons, they are becoming an issue for European integration, especially from a political and institutional point of view. The second sub-section of this chapter was devoted to analysing the reasons for migration. By considering the multiplicity and heterogeneity of driving forces behind migration, it became possible to nuance the *homo economicus* theory of immigration: migrants are not necessarily driven solely by economic motivations but can be driven by a range of unconscious forces, complex aspirations, and social connections such as love and friendship. Finally, by showing how NMS mobilities construct various spaces and involve different temporalities, the last sub-section has highlighted the decisive role of migrants in the regional integration process. Their transnational practices and feeling of belonging allow us to sketch out the existence of an emotionally-invested, macro-regional space that can be understood as a transnational residential space. The diversity of transnational settings, temporal adaptations of migrants, and uncertainty about their future all suggest that NMS migration patterns are unpredictable, flexible, and fluid. This is because they are shaped by multi-dimensional factors that change over time such as individual representations, experiences, mobility practices, and social relationships.

The following chapter (chapter 5) will focus on the analysis of the respondents' spatial representations in order to sketch out the outlines of the European macro-region as it emerges through discourses and representations. The context and dynamics that have been presented in this chapter (chapter 4) need to be taken into consideration in order to understand how the regional space is shaped by an assemblage of forces, mobility practices, narratives, and feelings. The fluidity and flexibility of NMS migration presented in this chapter will lead us to a better understanding of how representations are rooted in a specific context and in mobility practices, which give shape to a fuzzy region.

Chapter 5: Macro-regional representations

The fifth chapter focuses on NMS migrants' macro-regional representations based on the analysis of the mental maps and semi-structured interviews. The maps reveal the sorts of form and images associated with Europe, while the interviews offer information about the semantic contours of Europe, which emerge from the associated words and lexical fields.

Spatial representations are mental constructions of a given geographical space: they give form and content to a spatial entity postulated in reality (Debarbieux, 2004). They are idiosyncratic and refer to individual cognitive patterns, which are influenced by the individual's education, experience, knowledge, memory, and culture (Dortier, 2002). Yet they also exist across social groups and have a collective dimension (Montello, 2003; Moscovici, 2003; Poche, 1996; Paulet, 2002). Consequently, the migrants' mental maps and semi-structured interviews reveal, on the one hand, individualised European spaces, the forms, structures, and contents of which are determined by one's own experiences (such as date of migration, countries visited or inhabited). On the other hand, however, they also attest to shared representations, induced by common experiences and/or social characteristics (country of origin, age, or level of education).[186] To be interested in spatial representations requires taking an individual's subjectivity into account in the analysis of space. The study of representations of space is a widespread theme throughout the human sciences, especially in psychology, but it is also a fundamental theme in geography: some French geographers consider that the study of representations is "the very essence of geography" because it makes it possible to explain "human action" through space (Paulet, 2002).

The assumption underlying this chapter is that spatial representations determine behaviours and social practices – including migratory practices – and condition the individual's relationship with space (Jodelet, 2003). Dagmara, a Polish migrant, declared that her representations were decisive in her desire to migrate. Responding to the question "why did you move to France?" she answered: "I saw the French culture in the films. Paris is always big and beautiful. And in fact, Paris is a romantic city: it's truly the image, the stereotype of

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[186] The repetition through several mental maps of symbols, themes, and plots allows us to grasp the collective dimension of individual representations: these two types of representation are thus interconnected.

France. It's not a myth. Paris, above all, 'it is not overrated' as they say in English. It's the wine, it's the cheese: I thought it was interesting, and I wanted to see it."[187] These words show how images and stereotypes conveyed by films and media can influence representations of space and mobilities. As a result, spatial representations are particularly suitable tools for understanding the way in which the European macro-regional space is perceived and practiced by populations.

The focus on spatial representation ties in with the findings of "new regionalism," which considers individuals and their representations of space to be fundamental elements of the integration process (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000; Saurugger, 2020).[188] It also accords with the social-constructivist approach to geographical space, according to which every region is a social construction, produced by the social perceptions that are attached to it (Paasi, 2010).[189] The new regionalism theory upon which this thesis is based, argues that common and widely shared spatial representations among respondents reveal the existence of a regional integration process since they contribute to the making of a macro-regional space by giving it shape and content (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000). The assumption underlying this chapter is that a macro-regional space cannot be integrated unless it is identified, or physically and emotionally invested by the populations. Following on from studies that have shown the links that exist between place attachment and meaning of place, it can be said that the EU is a meaningless territory if the inhabitants of the member countries do not identify or appropriate the space (Hashemnezhad *et al.*, 2013).

What "Europe" do the NMS migrants perceive? Do NMS migrants have shared representations of Europe? Do these representations reveal and support feelings of belonging and appropriation of space? Studying the NMS migrants' mental representations of Europe enables us to identify the determinants of these representations inherent to migratory practices. Taking an interest in the spatial representations of NMS migrants makes it possible to question the EU territoriality and to highlight the existence of a European space underlying the one elaborated by the institutional actors of the European community, a discrete, socially constructed space that fully participates in European regional integration.

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[187] The interview with Dagmara was conducted in French on the 12/10/2019.
[188] See chapter 2.
[189] Region is here understood as a dynamic portion of space invested by social practices, representations, and intentions conditioning and conditioned by politics, culture, economics, governance, and power relations (Paasi, 2010). See chapter 2, 2.2. on this subject.

The weight of the EU in the representations revealed by the mental maps and the associated words, confirmed the weight of institutions in the construction and diffusion of representations of space (Beauguitte *et al*., 2012; Zanin, 2013).

This chapter will put the notions of the rhizome and assemblage into practice in order to show how they can lead to a rethinking of macro-regional integration. Firstly, the three main ways that the European space is represented in the NMS migrants' mental maps underline the weight of their mobility practices in their spatial representations and the way in which they relate to the macro-regional space, either by investing it emotionally and/or physically, idealising it, or regionalising it.[190] It will highlight the never-ending process of combination characterising the European regional integration. Secondly, the analysis of the associated words highlights the fact that NMS migrants encounter Europe also through institutional and ideological discourses. This chapter puts forward the image of a multiple, fluid, and shifting Europe constantly changing during the course of a fuzzy and multidimensional integration process.

1. Sketching the outlines of the European macro-region from the analysis of the mental maps

The first part of this chapter sketches a typology of the NMS migrants' representations of Europe based on the analysis of the mental maps. This typology constitutes an entry point and tool for understanding three types of relationships to Europe. The European macro-region appears as a multifarious space, differentiated according to the migratory paths and social profiles of the interviewees. The aggregation of the individual representations and the construction of the typology enable one to sketch out the dominant representations of Europe.

1.1. Mental maps and rhizome

As mentioned in the previous chapters, mental maps are a relevant methodology for addressing the notion of integration based on the rhizome theory. Mental maps, like rhizomes, are narratives that express an interpretation of reality. They can be read in a

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[190] Regionalisation is here understood as the delimitation of relevant areas of space (Brunet, et a., 1992; Mareï & Richard, 2018).

multitude of different ways since there is no direction or order to reading a map (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). All elements are given at the same time in a single plan without any hierarchy: a map is therefore not characterised by temporality, a beginning, and an end. The mental map, which is never fully satisfactory for the respondents, is not a result to be taken as such but is the manifestation of an ongoing process: the proliferation of elements represented, and the difficulty respondents had completing their maps implies a never-ending process. The process of producing the map, the questions respondents ask themselves, and the graphic and ideological choices they make are all elements to be considered in the analysis. These elements also call to mind the functioning of a rhizome, especially in regard to the concepts of heterogeneity (open-ended combination of elements and modalities of different nature), multiplicity (never-ending combination process), and cartography (interpretation and experimentation of reality). Because the way a person creates their map is as interesting as the map itself, the survey situations and the semi-structured interviews are analysed in parallel with the graphic productions. The image of the rhizome is reflected both in the entire methodological apparatus and the mental maps produced since the elements represented on the maps are heterogeneous and yet connected in that they contribute to the creation of a regional space. Moreover, the wide range of indicators and actors mentioned by the respondents when producing the maps, their differences in nature, and their non-exhaustiveness all run counter to the idea of unity, which the concept of rhizome also frustrates. Finally, the addition, overlapping, permeability, and permanent shifting of all the elements that were represented on the map or taken into account during its production requires that one consider mental maps as dynamic processes.

Claval has shown how the analysis of mental maps makes it possible to collect subjective delimitations and meanings of space (Claval, 2003). For this reason, the following analysis does not claim to present fixed representations of Europe but rather seeks to sketch out several ways of understanding the European space based on unique and individual representations and discourses. The same space is symbolised and represented by different maps that give shape to a fluid and a fuzzy region, constituting an assemblage: like a rhizome, the shape of the macro-region is not and cannot be known as it is a reversible and ongoing process. Bearing these considerations in mind, the following typology should be considered as a tool for understanding spatial representations, rather than the definitive result of a synthesis of those representations.

1.2. Construction of the typology

The corpus of mental maps is characterised, like a rhizome, by strong heterogeneity at several levels: the heterogeneity of the plots, and the heterogeneity of the mediums due to the different production situations (the interviews conducted remotely led to the use of digital tools by the respondents). For this reason, each mental map was analysed individually, using a qualitative method, and taking into account both the production context and the profile of the respondent. It is not so much the graphic production that is of interest but what it tells us about the respondents' perception of Europe: the mental maps should be seen as tools for accessing representations and relationships with space rather than the faithful and finite visual reproduction of those representations.

The cross-analysis of the mental maps and semi-structured interviews enables us to distinguish three main spatial representations of Europe and to sketch a non-exhaustive typology in three categories. The construction of a typology makes it possible to translate the singular representations of individuals into collective representations and is based on the hypothesis that common knowledge, experiences, and cognitive mechanisms, resulting from political, economic, and social contexts, lead to the expression of perceptions that are shared collectively by the respondents. The political, social, and economic backgrounds influencing the NMS migrants' perceptions include the former membership in the Eastern bloc and the recent accession to the EU of their countries of origin: these political contexts are accompanied by discourses and images of the European space that are conveyed by the media and education, and which are reflected in the semi-directive interviews and on the mental maps.

Three answers ("yes", "no," and "neither yes or no") to the initial question ("In your opinion, do the countries (all or part of them) represented on this map form a whole?") – see figure 3.4, p. 109 – were given by the respondents: the answer "neither yes or no" corresponds to the respondents who did not formulate a categorical or explicit answer. As a result of these replies, the analysis of the mental maps, and the interviews, three types of relationship to Europe become identifiable: "Europe as a lived space", "Idealisation of Europe," and "Regionalisation of Europe". Those who answered "yes" to the initial question perceive the macro-regional space either as a "lived space" or as an ideal space; those who answered "no" to the initial question idealised or regionalised Europe; while those who

could not answer the initial question categorically, regionalised Europe on their mental map. The use of identical graphic codes in the mental maps (punctual, linear, and surface figures) shows the existence of similar mental images shared by several respondents according to their relationship to Europe. Migrants who perceive Europe as a lived space only used point figures, while those who idealised or regionalised Europe mainly used surface and linear figures. Those who idealised Europe represented a single spatial entity, while those who regionalised Europe categorised several spatial entities. The typology is strengthened by the use of identical graphic codes, which confirms the relevance of conducting mental maps to reveal individual representations and underline their collective dimension.

The following figure (see figure 5.1) summarises the typology of the dominant representations of Europe by presenting what the respondents answered to the initial question, their relationship with Europe, and how this is visually manifested in their mental maps.

Figure 5.1: Summary of the typology of respondents' representations of Europe[191]
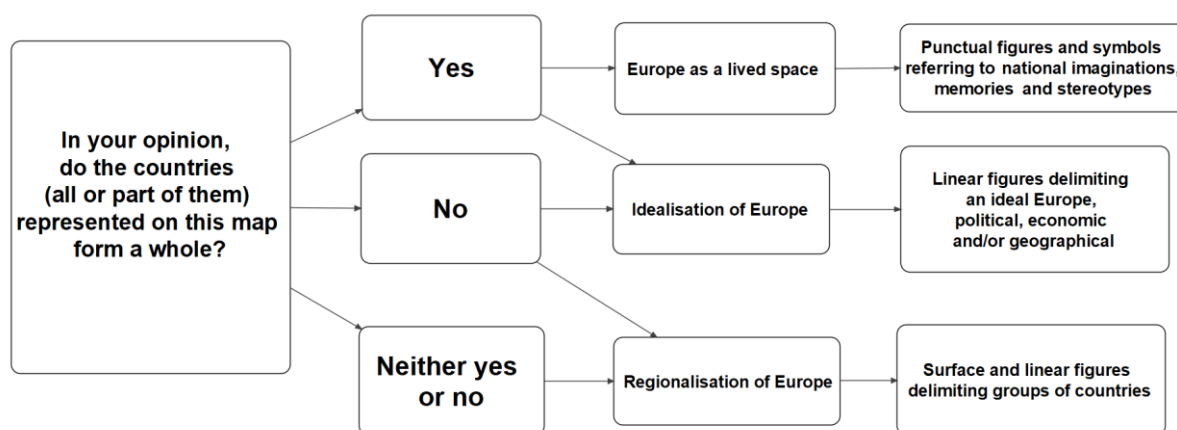
Source: Mila Sanchez, 2020.

About one-third of the respondents thought that the countries on the map formed a whole, a third did not agree, and a third replied "neither yes nor no." To support the view that the countries on the map did not form part of a whole, the respondents highlighted that there are some "antagonists" and "conflicts of interest" between the countries. Respondents who

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[191] The difference between "imagination" as a lived space and the "idealisation" of Europe is notably the scale of reference on which the respondents' imagination is based: national for those who perceive Europe as a lived space, and macro-regional for those who idealise it.

could not answer the question categorically frequently referred to the European Union to justify their plots: sometimes they referred to its unifying role and other times they denounced its fragmenting role. In any case, it is the rejection of a political whole that is reflected in the interviews. Damján, a Hungarian migrant and software engineer, declared: "It is not possible to politically unify all the countries. Even though the countries are becoming more and more similar because of the European Union, they are still very different."[192] In contrast, but for the same reasons, Aron, a Hungarian migrant and wine seller, stated: "The European Union is not a whole, but Europe is one, because it is cultural and not political".[193] From the outset, the question of "unity" was brought into question by the respondents who perceived the limits of this concept for describing the European macro-regional space. Respondents who replied "neither yes nor no" are therefore faced with the difficulty of answering this question because they have identified from the outset a multiplicity of ways of answering it, depending on the viewpoint considered.

As shown in the table below (table 5.1), more than half of the respondents regionalised Europe in their mental maps; about one quarter of the respondents idealised Europe; and just under a quarter of the NMS migrants represented Europe as a lived space. The fact that the proportion of respondents in each category is approximately the same in France and the UK and corresponds to the proportion of all respondents in each category confirms the representativeness of the sample and the reliability of the constructed typology.

Table 5.1: Number of mental maps in each category

	France	**UK**	**Total**
Lived space	5	12	17
Idealisation	9	13	22
Regionalisation	14	30	44
Total	28	55	83

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[192] The interview with Damján was conducted in French on the 03/10/2019.
[193] The interview with Aron was conducted on the 03/10/2019.

1.3. The weight of the practices of mobility and of the migratory trajectories in macro-regional's representations

The analysis of the semi-structured interviews made it possible to identify two main explanatory variables of the macro-regional representations: the respondents' practices of mobility and their migratory trajectories, including the date of the first migration and the countries in which the migrant has lived.[194]

Almost all the respondents, when producing the mental map, systematically justified their plots by referring to their direct or indirect knowledge of a country. One of the main criteria for including a country within a coherent group of countries was a previous experience of this country (holidays, work), having family or friends living there, or having previously lived there. As for excluding a country, the explanation most often given was that they had never been to a country, or that they did not know the country well enough to be able to say that it belonged in the said group. This expected observation underlines the fact that individual practices of mobility are parameters that influence migrants' plots on the map since they constantly refer to them in their discourses. If individual mobility practices are the main parameters taken into account by the respondents who perceive Europe as a lived space, it is only one parameter among many others for respondents who idealise or regionalise Europe. Three types of mobility were mainly mentioned by the respondents: international migration, touristic mobility, and projected (or future, planned, and imaginary) mobility. These three types of mobility were systematically mentioned during the interviews even when they were not represented on the mental maps.

The temporality of migration, including the date when the first migration occurred, is the main determining factor of the respondents' representations and explanatory variable of the typology. All the respondents that perceived Europe as a lived space left their country of origin between five and ten years before this research, with the exception of three Romanians (two of whom were brothers) who migrated less than three years ago. The majority of the NMS migrants in this first category therefore left their country of origin shortly after it joined the EU. Most of the respondents idealising Europe arrived in France or

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[194] The notion of "migratory trajectory" goes beyond the simple itinerary compound of points of departure and arrival and encompasses a will to migrate and to improve social and living conditions (Jolivet, 2015). As a result, the migratory trajectory is not only reduced to a spatial displacement but is accompanied by a whole migratory and social imaginary.

in the UK at least twenty years ago, *i.e.*, before their country of origin joined the EU and often before the fall of the communist regime. The migrants who arrived most recently in France and the UK are more numerous in the last category of the typology, gathering respondents that regionalise Europe: more than half of the respondents left their country of origin less than three years ago. The date on which the first migration occurred is therefore significant and has an influence on the way in which the respondents represent the macro-regional space. While the context of the EU enlargement and the freedom of movement is a determining factor in the representations of the migrants of the first and last categories, the representations of the NMS migrants that idealise Europe are influenced by the escape from the communist regime towards the West, and by the pre-fall of the communist regime, which was characterised by obstacles to movement and the closure of borders. As a result, while migrants in the first and the third categories are more likely to perceive Europe as an open and expanding space, those in the second category tend to perceive Europe as a closed space, limited by boundaries, and in opposition to the rest of the world.

1.4. Description of the typology

1.4.1. Europe as a "lived space"

The NMS migrants from the first category answered "yes" to the initial question ("In your opinion, do the countries (all or part of them) represented on this map form a whole?") and referred to the whole that they drew on the map as "Europe". Visually, they only used particularly significant punctual figures, reflecting a sensitive and affective relationship to space: hearts, expressing a strong emotional bond; ticks (as opposed to crosses), showing that the production of their mental maps was based on a process of inclusion rather than exclusion; and symbols referring to their individual history and memory. The choice of symbols appears to have been influenced by their personal experience (for instance, the television set drawn by Lorena, a Romanian migrant living in Nancy, on her mental map – see figure 5.2 – evokes the Bulgarian television channels she watched as a child) and also by national imagery (such as national flags and specialities).[195] Two main symbols are recurrent and can be found on several mental maps: red or green hearts[196] and houses.[197] On the other

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[195] The interview with Lorena was conducted in French on the 07/03/2020.
[196] See for example Lorena's (figure 5.2), Margarita's (see figure F.4 in appendices), Boryana's (see figure 5.5), Ovi's (see figure F.5 in appendices) or Bartłomiej's (see figure 5.3) maps.

hand, most symbols were used only once, such as banknotes,[198] flowers, a television, and a doll.[199]

Figure 5.2: Mental map of Lorena, from Romania
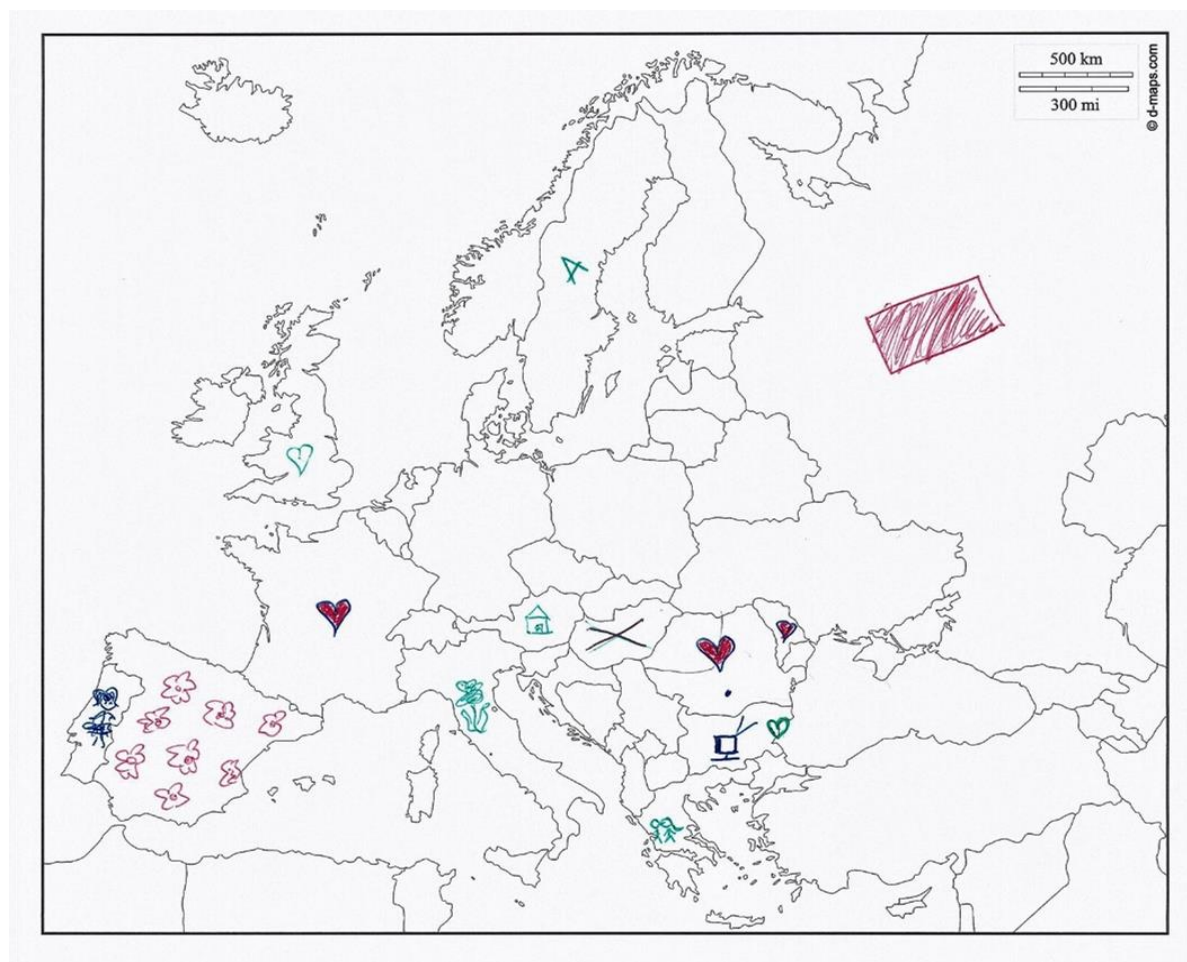
The process of constructing the map was identical among the respondents in this category. Dagmara sums it up as follows: "I think your question is to know what your heart is telling you directly." Intuition, spontaneity, and feelings appear here as the main drivers of the selection, as Boryana, a Bulgarian migrant, expressed: "I am going to identify UK and Bulgaria. They both feel part of me. I feel like I belong to Bulgaria, and I do belong to here as well, in a way."[200] The verb "to feel" is frequently used by migrants to explain their plots on the map and expresses a different kind of knowledge, which is not rational but

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[197] See for example Lorena's (figure 5.2) or Cosmin's (figure 5.4) maps.
[198] See Cosmin's mental map (figure 5.4)
[199] See Lorena's mental map (figure 5.2)
[200] The interview with Boryana was conducted in English on the 17/02/2021.

phenomenological in nature (Bender, 2001). For example, Bartłomiej, a German teacher from Poland, explicitly associated Europe with a feeling: the Europe he drew is the support of his multiple identities (see figure 5.3). He says: "For me, Europe is always when you feel European. When you feel that you are not just Polish, you are not just French: you are European. It's a feeling. It is a feeling where you are not 'one'. For example, I feel Polish, I feel French, I feel Austrian.[201] There is a part of me that is Polish, a part that is French, a part that is Austrian. Every time I go to these countries, I feel good. I just feel good."[202] This emotional relationship with space is then intellectualised by the respondents whom, in their discourses, try to explain why they "feel good" in Europe.

Speaking the language of the country is the explanation most frequently used by the respondents. Bartłomiej states: "I feel good, very 'at home' wherever there are languages I can speak. (…) Simply because I feel free when I travel there to be able to communicate with people." This quotation highlights the fundamental role of language in his affective relationship to space: knowing how to speak the language of a country seems to legitimise Bartłomiej's feeling of belongings to a country and can be considered as a tool for the appropriation of the space. The respondents of this category are introspective when they wonder where they belong and where they feel good. The words "feelings," "freedom," and "identity" are real interconnected leitmotifs from which the respondents have drawn their maps.

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[201] Bartłomiej lived in Austria for a year.
[202] The interview with Bartłomiej was conducted in French on the 12/10/2019.

Figure 5.3: Mental map of Bartłomiej, from Poland

The first category of the typology brings together migrants who have an affective and emotional relationship with the macro-regional space. The spaces drawn by them correspond to intimate and personal spaces that they refer to through emotional and individual narratives: the spaces in which they have lived, those that they have crossed, practised, and invested with emotions and memories are all identified on the mental maps. Having lived in a country or having family or friends living there, having visited it, and finding that the "everyday life" or "mentality" are "the same" were reasons expressed by the respondents to include a country in "Europe." For example, Lorena (see figure 5.2) declared she has a strong attachment to Sweden, where her best friend lives and identified this country with the letter "A" for "Amitié" (meaning "friendship" in French). Cosmin (see figure 5.4), identified the country that he comes from (Romania) by the symbol of a house, the country he is living

in (UK) by some banknotes depicting the reason he migrates (for work), and coloured the two countries in which his uncle and cousins live (Italy and Germany) with which he has a special relationship.[203]

The choice of colours used on the mental maps of some of the respondents of this category can be meaningful and refer to a specific imaginary, stereotypes and traditional representations. The hearts used by Lorena and Bartłomiej are drawn in red, the colour traditionally used to draw hearts, referring directly to the organ and can be interpreted as the colour of passion, love and feelings. The green used by Bartłomiej can also be associated with a meliorative feeling and referring to a positive idea. Cosmin also used the colour green, but in his case the green referred to the colour of the dollars he has drawn referring directly to the object. If he didn't draw any hearts, he also used the colour red to draw the house in his country of origin, which can be interpreted as a colour of passion, feelings, and love. Finally, the fact he used a warm colour (yellow) to represent Italy can refer to the sun and directly associate Italy with its weather. The colours used in Cosmin's map express the fact that Italy is a sunny place, contrary to Germany, associated with brown, less bright and more neutral.

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[203] The interview with Cosmin was conducted in English on the 09/12/2020.

Figure 5.4: Mental map of Cosmin, from Romania
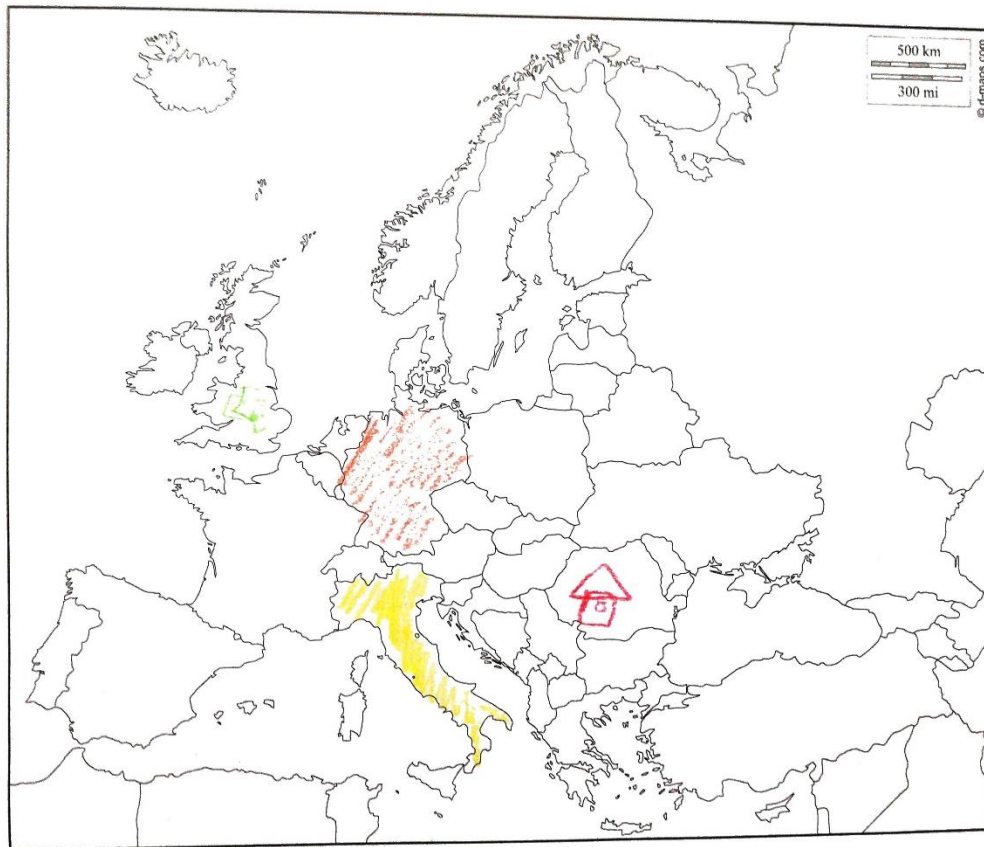
Rather than a universal Europe, the respondents drew "their own" Europe. Lorena expressed the subjectivity of her plots when she states: "This is all I love in Europe. I don't need anything else." The space that is identified by the respondents on their mental maps corresponds to their "lived space" (Frémont, 1976). The notion of lived space, which was introduced by Armand Frémont (1976), refers to the regional space as being seen, perceived, felt, practiced, loved, and rejected by the inhabitants.[204] It is particularly conducive to understanding how the NMS migrants in this first category perceive Europe as a space that

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[204] Henri Lefebvre also talks about the notion of lived space in *La production de l'espace* published in 1974. Guy Di Méo (2021) explains that the two researchers proposed this new paradigm in parallel and without any links between them. Although Frémont's book was published in 1976 (so after Lefebvre's book), some of his earlier writings (and before the publication of Lefebvre's work) deal with the notion of lived space (see *La région, espace vécu : Mélanges offerts à A.Meynier*, Rennes, P.U.B, 1972, p. 663-678). I chose to refer to Armand Frémont's work, rather than that of Lefebvre (even if there are many similarities between them), because he theorised this notion specifically at the scale of the region: his spatial approach is therefore more adapted and particularly relevant to my research.

brings together the everyday and familiar space with more distant, imagined, and idealised ones (1976). This notion enables us to understand that the regional space is not defined by administrative boundaries but by the uses, practices, and the emotional investment of the individuals. It is the result of the inhabitants' use of the space and the representation he or she makes of it. The assumption behind this notion is that a territory is also shaped by the people who live there, their representations, their habits, and their mobility practices.

Europe is perceived by the respondents in this category as a space without borders, an unlimited space of possible mobility.[205] As mentioned above, three types of mobility (international migration, touristic, and projected mobilities) were systematically addressed. Boryana's map (see figure 5.5) is particularly representative of this approach as the legend is broken down into three categories: "home", "countries I have visited," and "countries I would like to visit." Boryana said: "I am going to colour the countries I've travelled to because they bring different memories. They have left some memories, and some traces in the past. I haven't been in all the rest of the countries, so it's something I'd like to see one day."[206] This desire for mobility is very significant and reveals that the space drawn on the map is not a fixed space, but a dynamic space, which is bound to evolve and be modulated according to future or projected mobilities.

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[205] By "possible mobility", I refer to the desire or intention to travel, specifically expressed by the respondents.
[206] The interview with Boryana was conducted in English on the 17/02/2021.

Figure 5.5: Mental map of Boryana, from Bulgaria
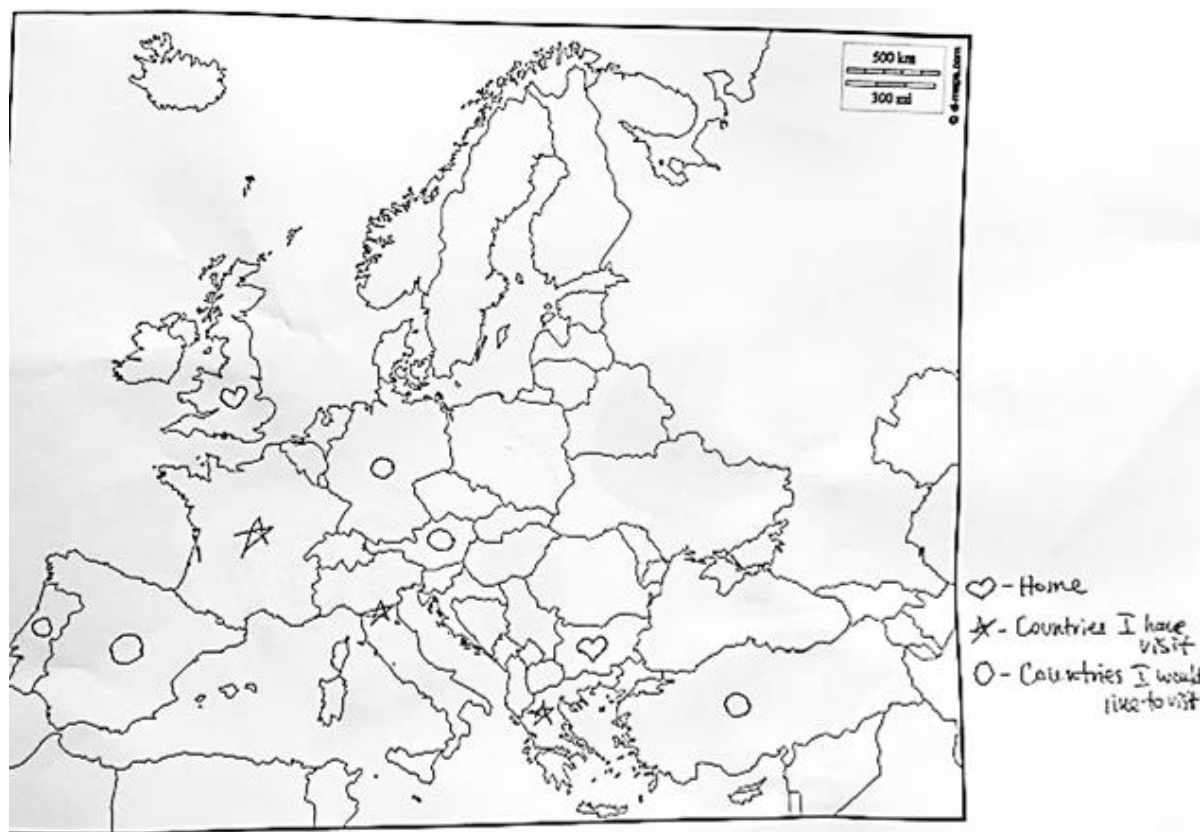
Wanda also constructed her map in the same way, identifying the countries she has visited and the ones she would "love to visit" (see figure 5.6).[207] However, she prioritised her attachment between her country of origin (Poland) and her host country (UK): she labelled the first one "country I love the most" and the second one the "country I love second the most". This prioritisation seems to respond more to a concern for categorising space according to the respondent's individual experience than to a real hierarchy between countries.

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[207] The interview with Wanda was conducted in English on the 01/12/2020.

Figure 5.6: Mental map of Wanda, from Poland
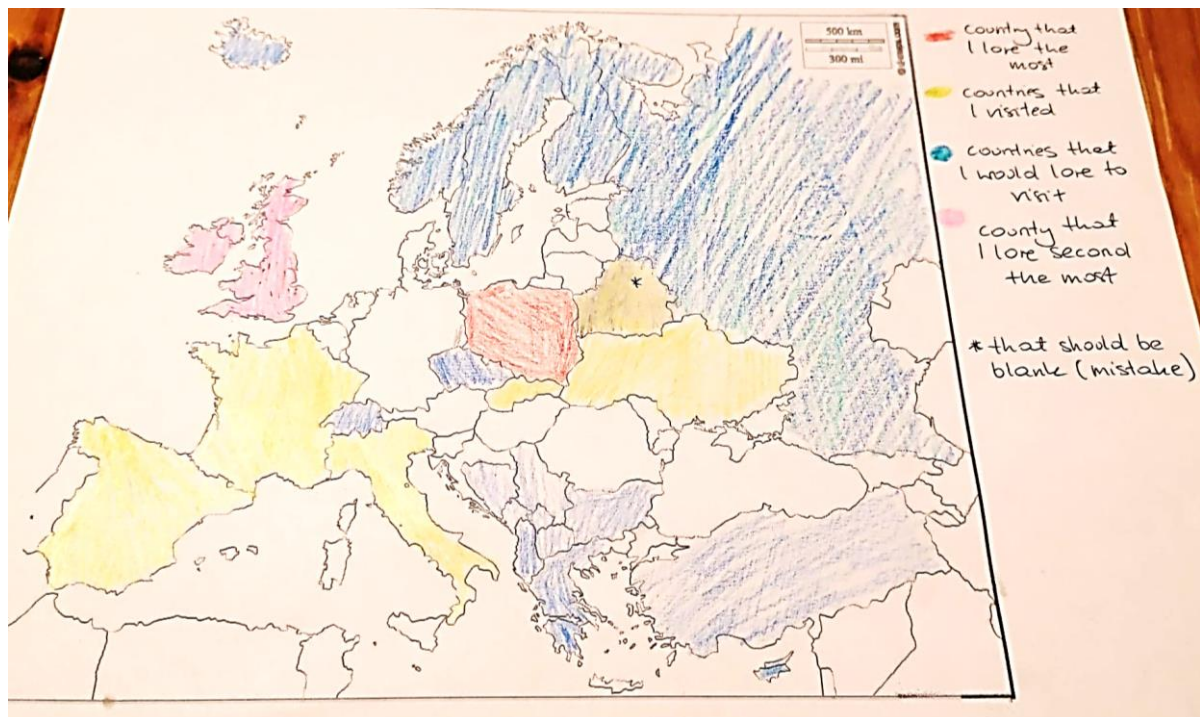
More than a simple census of the spaces travelled, the mental maps of this first category encompass a symbolic space. Mihai, a Romanian migrant working in a warehouse in the UK, declared: "I am going to draw something symbolic, something that make sense to me. It is the places I have lived. The lines connect them. I came to UK for hope, I think, and then I will go back to Romania for hope also, I think. I come here, and I will go back for the same reason: I am looking for hope of freedom."[208] It is not so much the physical space that counts, and which is represented by the respondents but the meaning it carries for them. The notion of hope, associated with that of freedom, reveals that migration is a quest for the impalpable and that it is the circulation that counts, much more than the places, in the realisation of this quest for freedom, since Mihai envisages returning to where he came from for the same reasons he left (see figure 5.7).

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[208] The interview with Mihai was conducted in English on the 02/12/2020.

Figure 5.7: Mental map of Mihai, from Romania
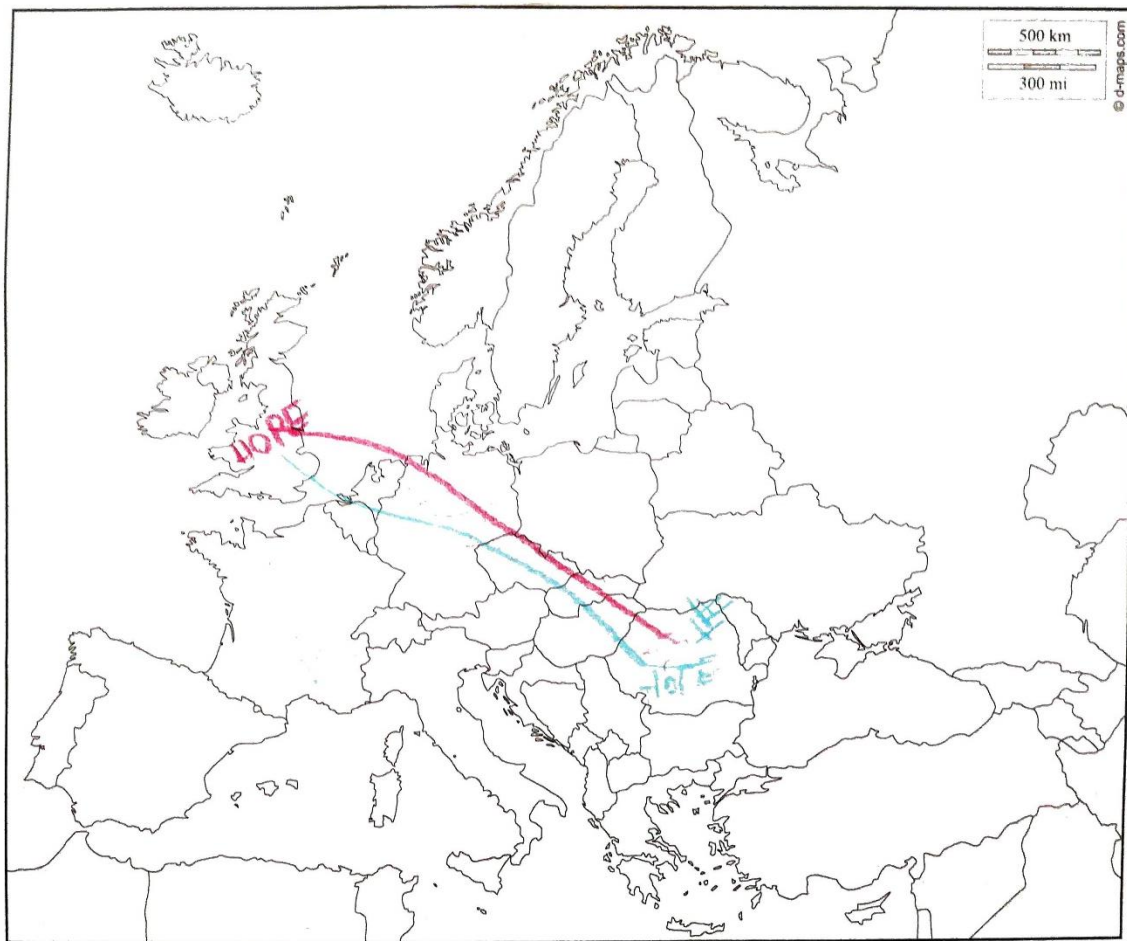
NMS migrants in this category generally started by identifying on their map a space named as "home," often characterised by double (origin and host countries) or even multiple locations (including all the countries in which the respondent has lived). On their maps, Boryana (see figure 5.5) and Dennis (see figure 5.8) have captioned their host and origin countries under the label "home."[209] The analysis of the mental maps makes it possible to challenge the notion of "home" and to understand it as multidimensional and transnational. Exceeding the material definition, home appears for the respondents as a mental construction, mobile (evolving in time and space as one is moving geographically throughout his/her life), sensed and experienced (Blunt, 2006).

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[209] The interview with Dennis was conducted in English on the 20/02/2021.

Figure 5.8: Mental map of Dennis, from Romania[210]

Bartłomiej (see figure 5.3) and Lorena (see figure 5.2) used symbols (hearts and houses) to identify their "home," which is not reduced to a binary space (encompassing the country of origin and the host country) but which includes all spaces with which they have an emotional connection and where they feel "at ease." In other words, "home" is for them everywhere that there is a place-attachment. On his mental map (see figure 5.3), Bartłomiej highlighted the five countries where he has lived and where he feels "at home", and the nine countries he has visited by means of red hearts, and green marks: "I will make little hearts on the countries where I feel at home. I lived in Poland for 19 years. So, of course, I have a crush on Poland because it's my native country. Austria, because I lived there for a year.

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[210] Dennis have lived more than ten years in Italy which he considers his home. UK is not part of his "home" as he intends to go back either to Romania or Italy. The coloured dots reflect the feelings and colours they associate with each country (grey weather in the UK, lavender in the south of France, sea and sun in Italy and sun and nature in Romania). The digital production of the map has an impact on its visual and aesthetic quality (as evidenced by the way "home" is written).

Germany, because I am traveling there often, and also because I teach German. Italy, because I speak Italian and I love this country. France, of course, because I live there and will stay there. And then, in green, I'm going to mark the countries where I've been, where I've travelled." Besides being a feeling, "home" also appears as a transnational network composed of social relationships that shape identities and belongings (Blunt, 2006).[211]

Lorena, a Romanian administrative and marketing manager, used red hearts, like Bartłomiej, to signify the countries that she considers to be her "home" because she has lived there, and owns properties there (she owns a house in France and a flat in Bucharest where she goes several times a year). She said: "I made a heart in Romania and in France. These are my two homes." She also drew a house in Austria where her brother lives, as it is "also a bit of home" for her. For Lorena, home is not just the place where she has lived and where she has houses, but also the space where close family members live. Unlike Bartłomiej, she has represented her projected mobilities on the mental map: she drew a green heart on the United Kingdom, which is the country where she would like to live. She also drew a green heart on Bulgaria, where she used to go on holiday every summer. As the same symbol (green heart) is used twice but does not refer to the same meaning, the semi-structured interview is necessary to interpret her mental map. Tourist mobility also contributes to the construction of Lorena's lived space. On her map, she has represented the countries that she has visited with symbols referring to her personal history, to pleasant or happy memories: the drawing of a couple kissing in Greece, for example, refers to the first holidays she spent with her husband. Lorena also used symbols associated with national clichés: Portugal, where she often went on holiday, is associated with its folklore by being represented with a blue doll on the map. Bartłomiej did not represent his "projected mobilities" on his map but listed them during the interview. These imagined and future mobilities are important: they contribute to understanding the way Bartłomiej sees Europe, *i.e.*, as a space of possible mobilities. He concludes by saying: "You have to understand that Poland is not the only place: you have to go further afield. Nancy is not the only place, Toul is not the only place. France is not the only place: you can go further afield."[212] The repetitive syntactic structure of his discourse, and the enumeration of cities and countries in which he has lived, contributes to the characterisation of the "lived space" as unbounded, open, and dynamic,

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[211] The interview with Bartłomiej was conducted in French on the 12/10/2019: "I feel good, very 'at home' wherever there are languages I can speak. (…) Simply because I feel free when I travel there to be able to communicate with people."

[212] The interview with Bartłomiej was conducted in French on the 12/10/2019.

like a rhizome: the lived space evolves continuously and is rearranged according to mobilities.

The context of the freedom of movement and the EU enlargement in which the respondents migrated as well as their migration trajectories are determining factors in their representations: they all left their country of origin after it joined the EU, and several respondents have lived in one or two EU countries other than France, UK or their country of origin for a period longer than a year. In the interviews, the NMS migrants of this category expressed a strong taste for travel and an attachment to the principle of freedom of movement. For example, Dagmara, who lived for three years in Germany and five years in the UK before moving to France, says: "It's super easy because there are no borders, there are no controls, and I like that: you just have to get off the plane."[213] Bartłomiej, like Dagmara, uses words and expressions referring to the freedom of movement, and reveals that he has trivialised the absence of borders: "What I love, precisely, is that you can travel so easily. All you need is your identity card. This year I realised how lucky we are when I went to Ukraine: because in Ukraine, you wait at the border." The Europe that the respondents of this category have drawn refers to a space of mobility crossed or projected, and which is characterised by the absence of borders and obstacles to movement in the image of their own migratory trajectory.

To sum up, the European spaces represented on the maps in the first category are spaces invested by the feelings, imagination, and mobility practices of the individuals, and reflect their relationship with the space. Europe appears as a lived space invested with individual meanings and made up of memories, social networks, and knowledge based on the senses referring to the experiences and projects of mobility of the interviewees. This dimension of "projection" is important because it reminds us that a "lived space" is not a fixed space: on the contrary, it is a space that evolves and is rearranged according to past and projected mobilities, and to practices and circulations of the individuals. Fluidity characterises the lived space, like the rhizome, as it is an unpredictable and continuously modulated space, a process that is constantly making and unmaking itself. The combination of heterogeneous elements with no hierarchy between them recalls the notion of assemblage. This space is a combination of heterogeneous elements without any hierarchy between them, in advance in

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[213] The interview with Dagmara was conducted in French on the 12/10/2019.

the manner of an assemblage: the result of this assemblage is unique, individual, and thus difficult to name, classify or explain because it resembles nothing already known (Kahn and Richard, 2020). Like an assemblage, it is the function of the lived space ("what it does" and not "what it is")[214] that matters: the senses, the feelings of belonging, home, and security that it provides all contribute to our understanding of it.

The representations of migrants in this category are influenced by their migration experience characterised by the context of post-enlargement free movement, which has enabled most of them to live in more than two countries and to travel regularly in the EU for holidays. The notion of lived space highlights the attachment and sense of belonging of NMS migrants who experience macro-regional space in an individualised, and phenomenological way. The macro-regional space appears here to be shaped by mobility and by mobile people investing it physically and emotionally: it is both an egocentric space, centred on the ego and on the body (through the senses), but also a social space shaped by other people such as family and friends (Frémont, 1976). The lived space therefore reveals an attachment to space that is more emotional and imaginary than rational.

1.4.2. Idealisation of Europe

The second category in the typology is composed of respondents who had an idealised conception of Europe. Like the migrants in the first category, the majority of them answered "yes" to the initial question (see figure 3.4, p. 109). Unlike those in the first category, however, they refer to general narratives about Europe: in their discourses and in their mental maps, they describe an ideal and essentialised Europe, a Europe "taken for granted" based on continental imaginaries (Grataloup, 2009).

This category is characterised by the greatest diversity of professional qualifications: most of the migrants with lower academic qualifications in the sample are part of this category and almost half of them have had a maximum of three years in higher education. Conversely, only three respondents in this category have a doctorate (whereas in the total sample, sixteen respondents have a doctorate). Half of the respondents left their country of origin before it joined the EU. Most of them left their country of origin before the fall of the communist

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[214] "We do not know what an assemblage is until we find out what it can do" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 257).

regime. Their migration experience is therefore very different from that of the respondents in the first category who arrived more recently. As they migrated before the establishment of free movement, they have experienced border controls. Aron, a Hungarian migrant, recalls: "I remember that we used to cross a lot of borders. And at the border, we could wait for an hour, two hours, three hours if we arrived at the wrong time."[215] Some of them even had their nationality revoked: this is the case of Běla,[216] a former professional basketball player from Czech Republic, who sought political asylum in France in 1982, and of Kristof, a Hungarian political refugee from the 1956 revolution.[217] The latter was sentenced to life imprisonment and was only able to return to Hungary thirty years later, as part of a scientific congress to which he was invited as an academic.

Before the fall of the communist regime, restrictions or even bans on movement were a way of punishing the migrants for choosing the West over the East, in other words for "betrayal."[218] Galena, a Bulgarian migrant and lecturer in art history, says: "The government was always afraid that many Bulgarians would do everything they could to escape from this country. Because at that time, the West, for Bulgarians and for Eastern European countries in general, was a paradise presented in our heads. They were countries with a great culture, freedom of thought and freedom of expression that did not exist in our totalitarian countries. So, coming to France was a little girl's dream and at the same time it was a bit forced, because of the political consequences."[219] In this context, the construction of Europe and the successive enlargements of the EU take on a particular meaning for the respondents: a project to be defended, necessary for "peace", "freedom," and "survival", to quote the ideological and pragmatic words associated by the respondents with the spaces they drew. Aron sums up this idea perfectly and insists on the necessity of Europe's existence to ensuring freedom and safety: "It was a great idea to create Europe, that's clear. It helps us to stay alive, that's clear. To travel freely. To be safe."[220] A process of idealisation of Europe is manifested through the respondents' discourses and plots on the maps. Europe appears as a community, a political or economic ideal, or as an object that exists de facto, culturally, or geographically. This is expressed by Vasile, whose plots on the map exceed the background

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[215] The interview with Aron was conducted in French on the 03/10/2019.
[216] The interview with Běla was conducted in French on the 13/08/2019.
[217] The interview with Kristof was conducted in French on the 16/03/2019.
[218] This expression ("trahison" in French), used to describe the "escape" ("la fuite" in French) from the East to the West, was used by several respondents in France.
[219] The interview with Galena was conducted in French on the 17/05/2019.
[220] The interview with Aron was conducted in French on the 03/10/2019.

map given (see figure 5.9): "It is the geographical truth: it is Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals."[221] Other respondents referred to this physical border between Europe and Russia, including Edina[222] and Stanislava[223] (see figure 5.10): "I am just going to circle Europe. Well, the European continent. So pretty much the whole map. For Russia, I include only the European bit. That mountain ranges, the Urals." The Urals was never located in the same place on the map, which shows the approximate geographical knowledge of the respondents.

Figure 5.9: Mental map of Vasile, from Romania

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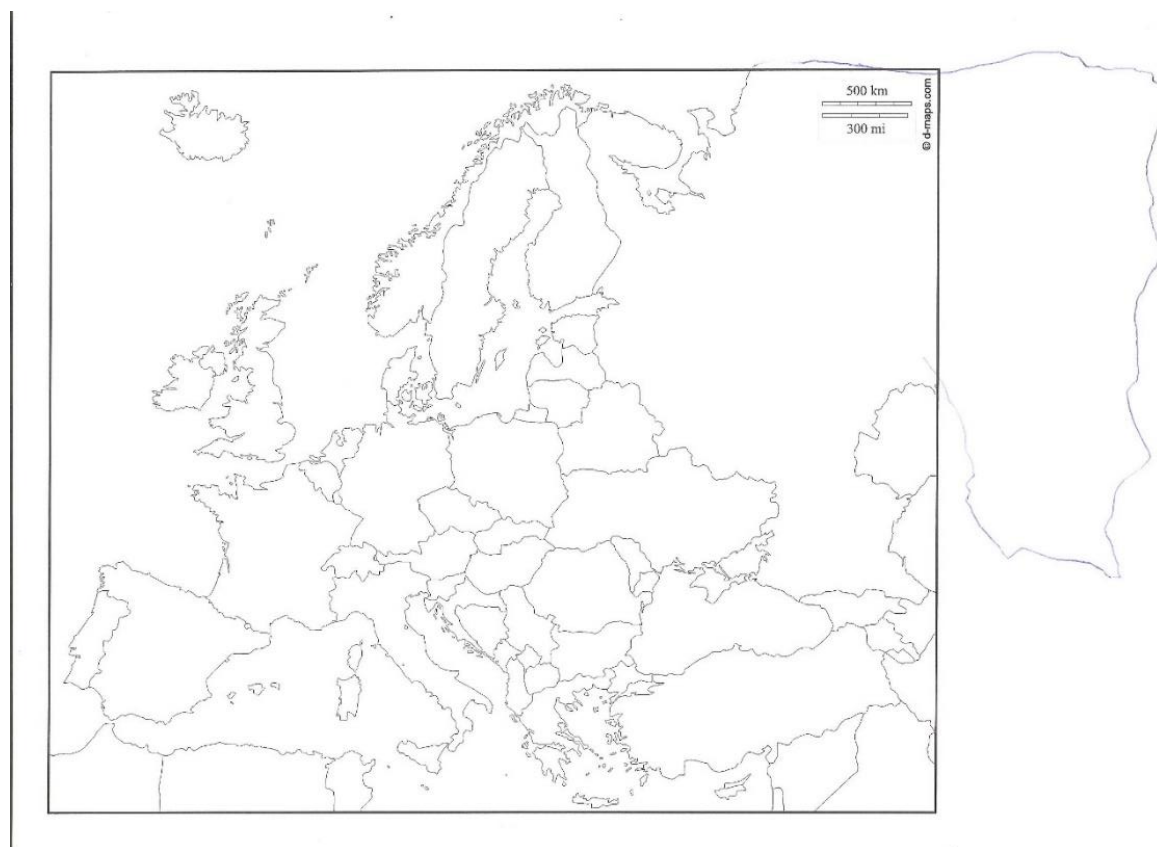
[221] The interview with Vasile was conducted in French on the 03/03/2020.
[222] See the mental map of Edina in appendices, figure F.2. Her mental map shows a very classical representation of continental Europe. Like Vasile and Stanislava, she represents a Europe limited to the east by the Urals. On her mental map, Turkey as well as the strait of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean Sea represent the southern and south-eastern borders of Europe. The interview with Edina was conducted in French on the 04/03/2021.
[223] The interview with Stanislava was conducted in English on the 03/10/2021.

Figure 5.10: Mental map of Stanislava, from Bulgaria
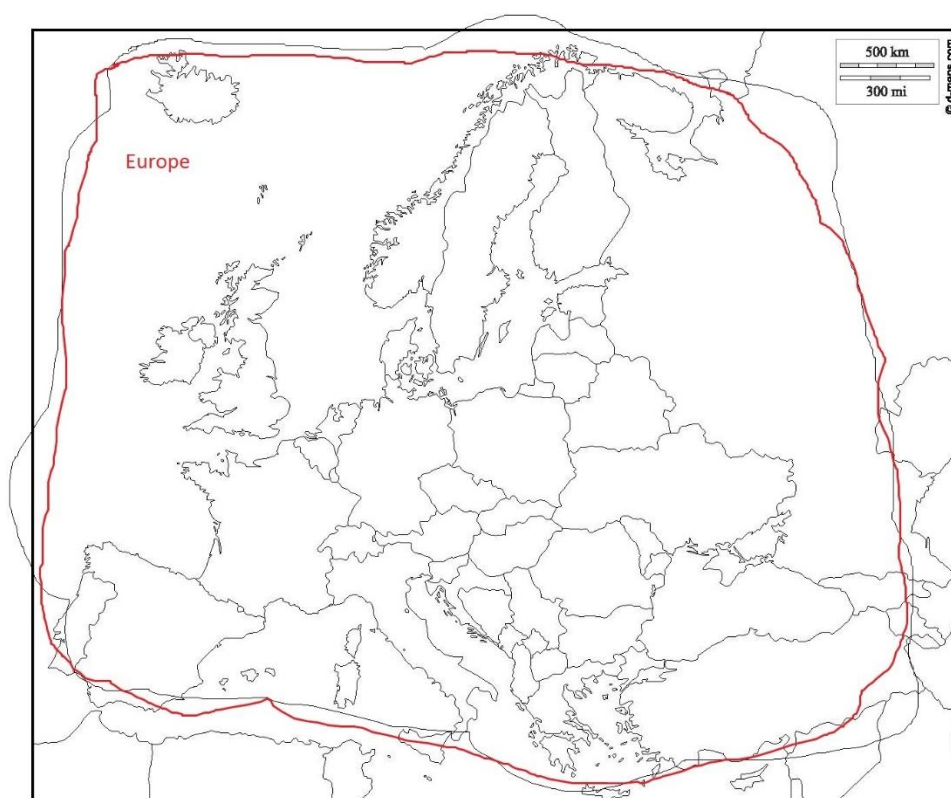
In a way, Europe for the migrants of this category appears as a physical space hosting the collective imaginary of the European continent. Europe represented on the mental maps is presented as a space of universalist values, illusions, and perfection. Karol[224] and Constantin[225] (see figure 5.11), by circling the whole map and writing "cause we are people", express a peaceful and humanist ideal.

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[224] The interview with Karol was conducted in English on the 28/10/2021.
[225] The interview with Constantin was conducted in English on the 30/01/2021.

Figure 5.11: Mental map of Constantin, from Romania

Visually, most migrants in this category used linear figures to separate what they called the "European" space from the "non-European" space. The respondents concretely circled the space they associate with Europe: this resulted in a succession of binary choices (including or excluding such and such a country) when drawing the mental map. The analysis of their discourses enables us to highlight the systematic and repetitive process of selection based on the logic of inclusion and exclusion. Běla said: "I put England. I put Norway. I don't put Turkey. Ukraine, I put it."[226] Dimitrinka (see figure 5.12), a psychologist from Bulgaria, proceeded in the same way as Běla when she stated: "I don't put England. Albania, Macedonia: they are not in. Former Yugoslavia, it's not in. Germany, and all that, it is in."[227] The respondents determined on a case-by-case basis which countries they include and which they exclude based on their idea of Europe, and by arbitrating randomly the particular and sensitive cases, such as the Balkan countries, Turkey, Russia, the UK, Iceland, and Norway. The interviewees oscillate between categorical statements ("this yes", "this no") and a state of indecision ("I don't know if... I don't know"; "But I don't really have a specific reason";

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[226] The interview with Běla was conducted in French on the 13/08/2019.
[227] The interview with Dimitrinka was conducted in French on the 14/08/2019.

"I don't know, I am so indecisive"), sometimes leading to the inability to complete the exercise ("It is more in three or four hours that I could do this"). Stefan, a Polish migrant and public finance inspector, mentioned the influence of his upbringing on his spatial representations.[228] He explains the difficulty he had in carrying out the exercise due to "his accurate knowledge of the Europe," declaring: "I am polluted by my university background as a geography student."

Figure 5.12: Mental map of Dimitrinka, from Bulgaria
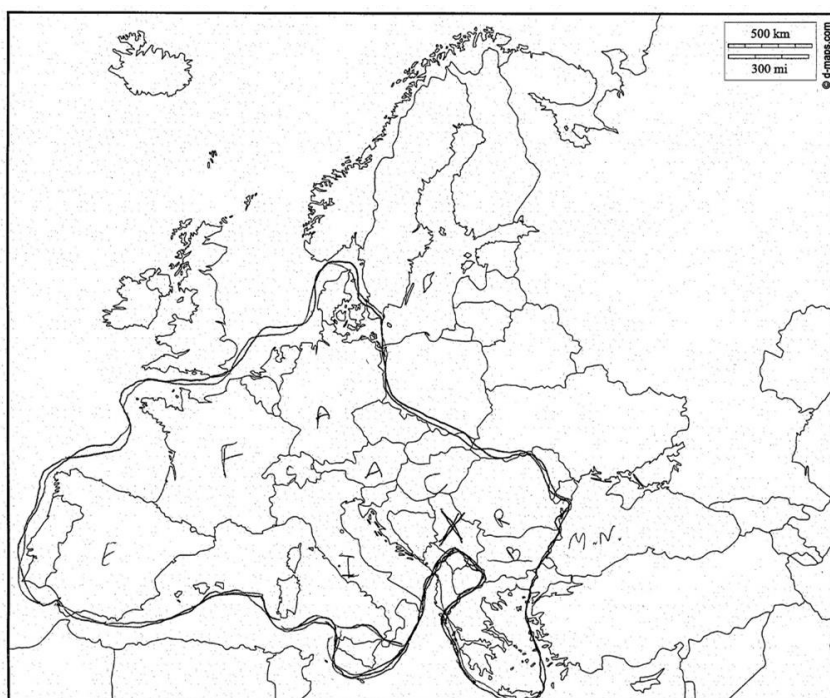
Using a GIS (QGIS), the representations of the migrants of this category have been synthetised in three figures (see figures 5.13, 5.14 and 5.15). The plots of the respondents' mental maps have been aggregated to represent the level of inclusion of each country in the whole called "Europe." The first map (figure 5.13) is a compilation of all the migrants' mental maps that idealise Europe independently of their host country, while the figures 5.14 and 5.15 detail the representations of the respondents, living respectively in France and the UK to highlight the differences in representations according to one's country of residence. The first map (see figure 5.13) highlights a South/North division and an East/West inclusion gradient: it reveals a macro-region polarised towards the West, around the founding

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[228] The interview with Stefan was conducted in French on the 13/12/2019.

countries of the EEC. It is interesting to note that there is a reverse gradient (with lower inclusion in the centre) around Kosovo, a Muslim majority country.

Figure 5.13: The level of inclusion in Europe based on the mental maps of the respondents idealising Europe
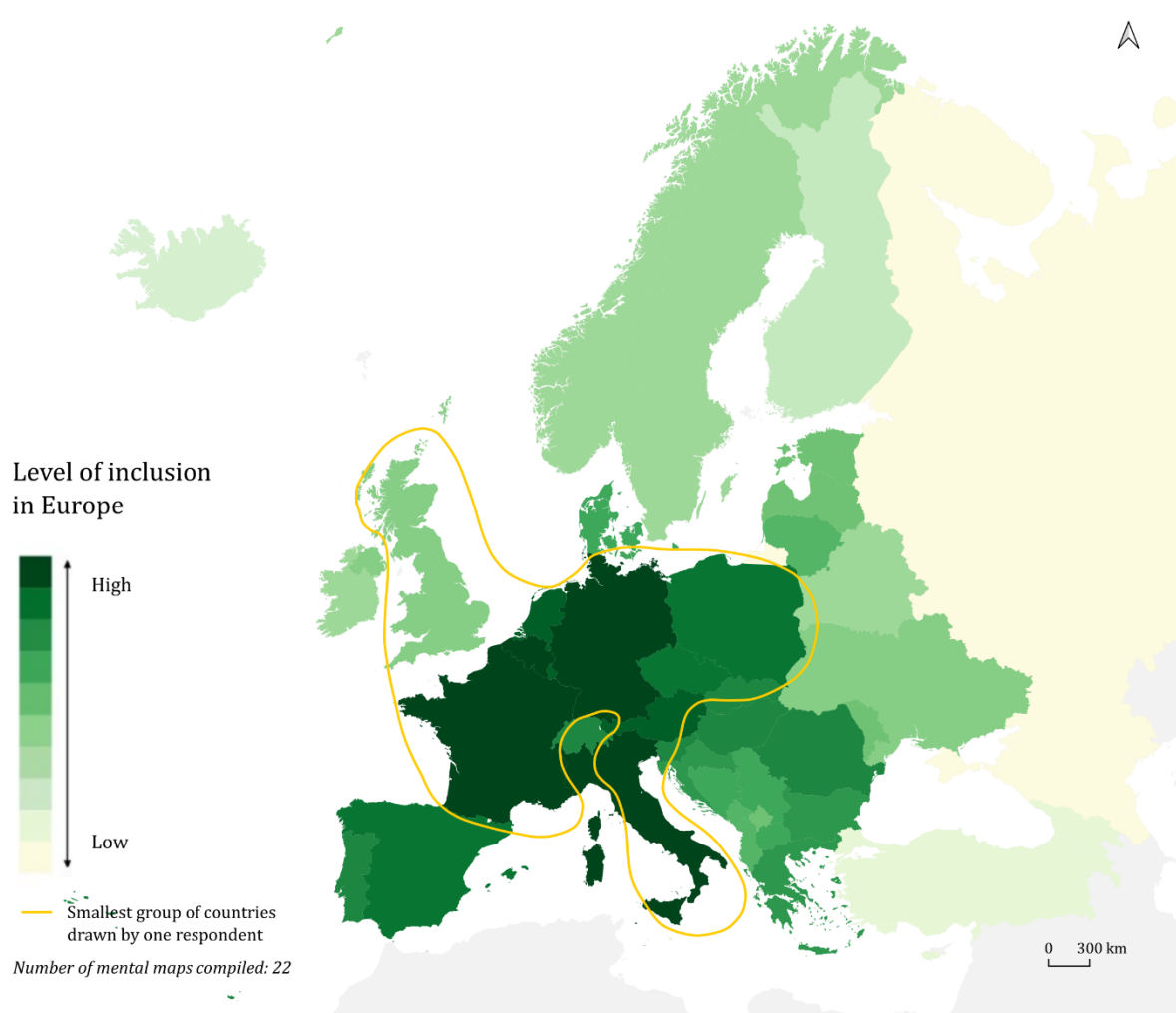
Map background: Natural Earth – Sources: Mila Sanchez (2021); Fieldwork (2019 to 2021).

Figure 5.14: The level of inclusion in Europe based on the mental maps of the respondents idealising Europe in France
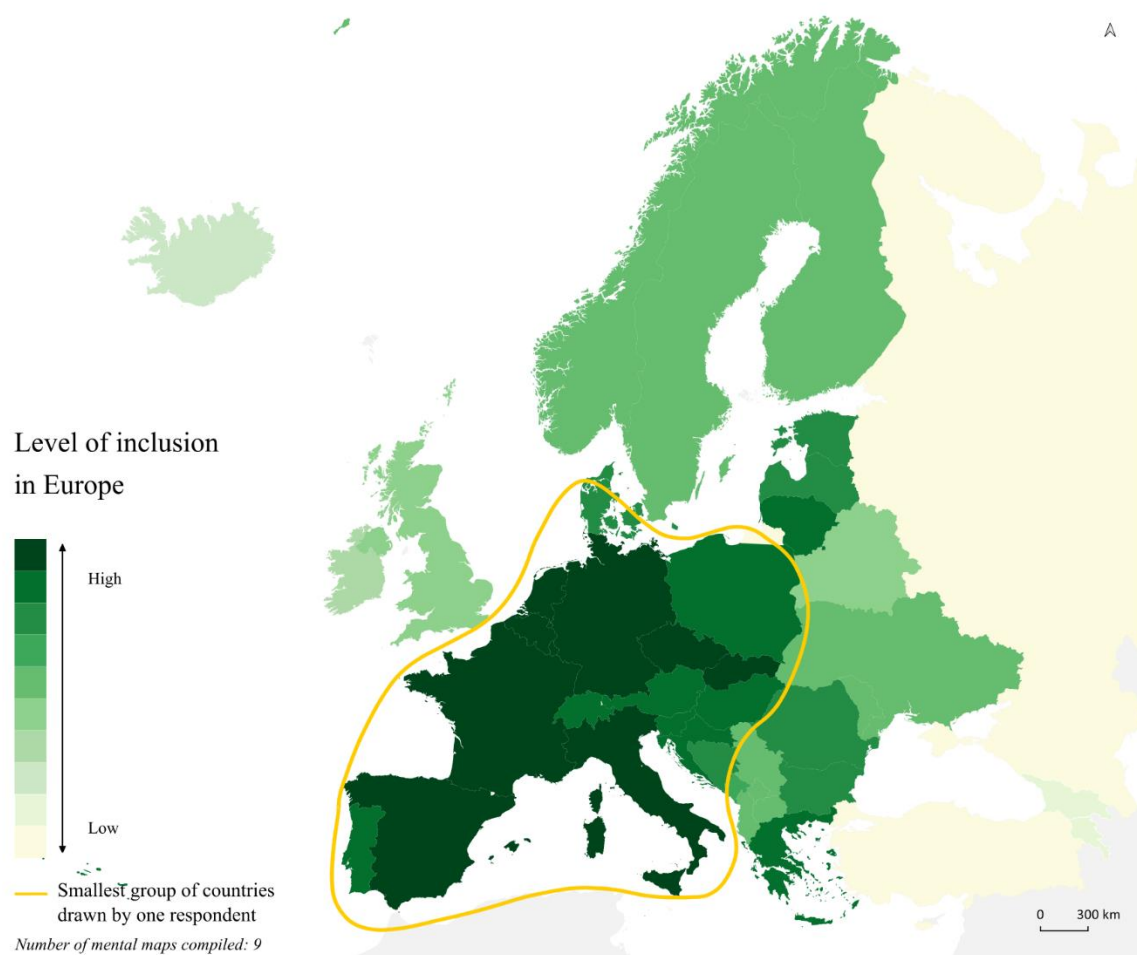
Map background: Natural Earth – Sources: Mila Sanchez (2021); Fieldwork (2019 to 2021).

Figure 5.15: The level of inclusion in Europe based on the mental maps of the respondents idealising Europe in UK
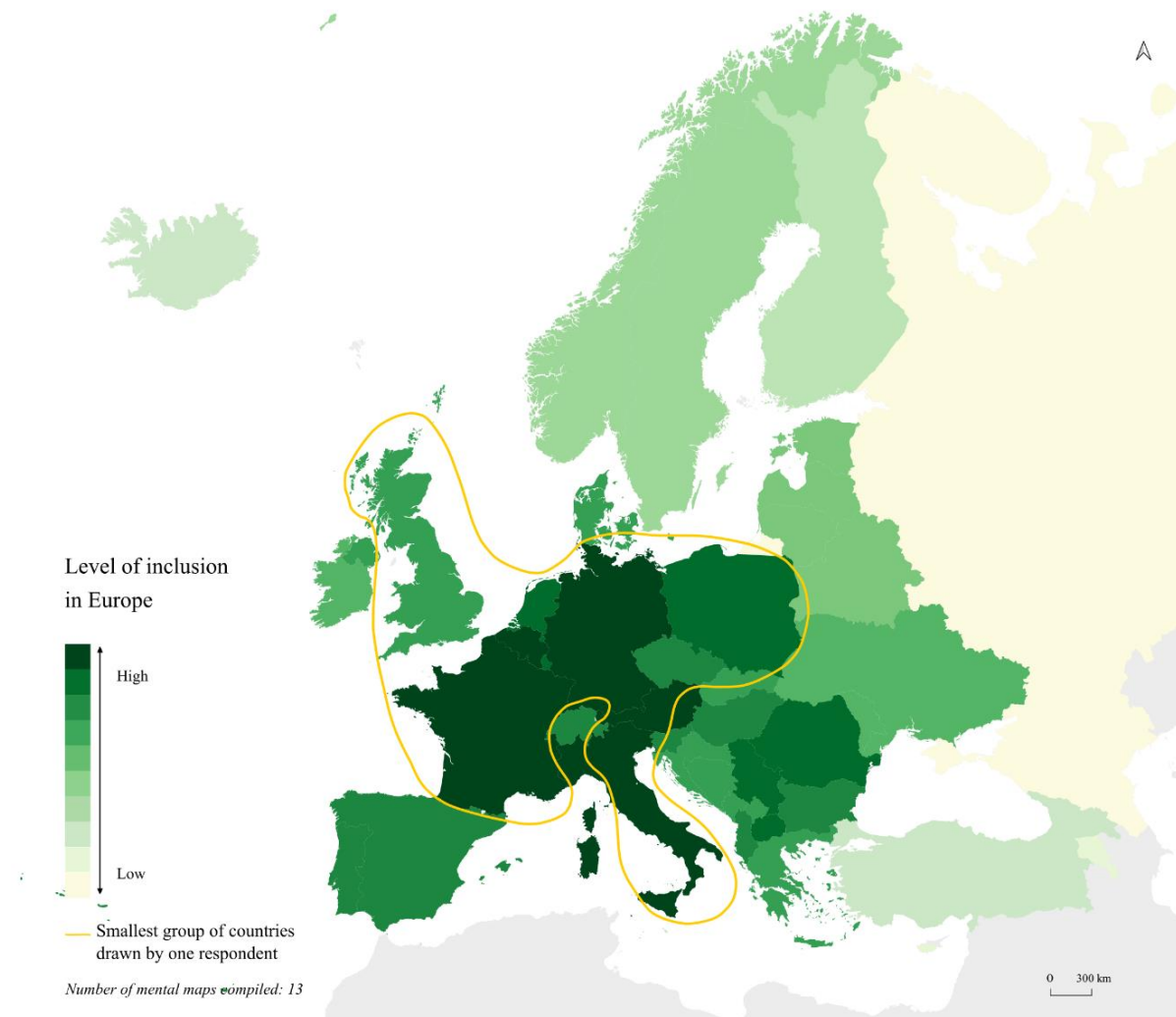
Map background: Natural Earth – Sources: Mila Sanchez (2021); Fieldwork (2019 to 2021).

The weight of the EU in the representations based on the concordance between the limits drawn on the mental maps and the borders of the European Community was an assumption that needed to be verified. While the average number of countries (30) circled by the respondents is close to the number of EU member countries (27), not all member countries were systematically included, and non-member countries were not always excluded. For example, Ireland, which has a unique geographical position within the EU, was less often

included than Ukraine, Switzerland, or some non-member countries in the Balkans.[229] Switzerland, however, stands out for its low inclusion despite its central geographical position: this exclusion shows that the respondents who "circled" Europe expressed a general willingness to make their plots correspond to those of the EU. The average number of countries included hides great disparities between the spaces drawn on the mental maps, as their size varies considerably from one map to another: the smallest plotted group of countries which was drawn by one respondent is composed of ten countries (see the yellow line in figure 5.13) while the largest ones, drawn by three respondents, cover all the countries on the map.[230] Only the four founding countries of the European Economic Community (France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium) have always been included within the boundaries of Europe. The consensual inclusion of this small core of countries is certainly influenced by their long-standing and decisive role in the construction of Europe, as well as by their geographical location in the west of the peninsula.

It is mainly the analysis of the discourses accompanying the production of the maps that confirms the weight of the EU in the representations. Although the limits of the EU have never been perfectly plotted on the maps, it is constantly referenced to in the respondents' discourses. For example, Stanislava (see figure 5.10), deciding to circle what she called "the continent," kept referring to the EU when drawing her map: "Well, it's argumentative whether you can consider Russia, Georgia and Turkey in Europe. They are considered in Europe, in the continent, rather than in the EU."[231] The EU, which is sometimes referred to as "Europe" and other times clearly distinguished from it, appears to be the baseline from which the respondents represent the European space by adapting it randomly.[232] This is the approach of Hanka, a music teacher from Czech Republic, who said: "And here, I'm going to expand it a bit because I've been to Norway, so I am going to include it";[233] and of Běla: "Norway is not in the EU, but I've travelled to Norway, and I find that they are very humanistic and so I am going to put it in."[234] Prior to migrating, both travelled in Europe before the fall of the communist regime as part of their musical and sporting activities.

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[229] Ireland was never mentioned by the respondents in France: it is possible that its exclusion is due to oversights, or to the fact that it is confused or associated with the United Kingdom.
[230] Three respondents circled all the countries on the map.
[231] The interview with Stanislava was conducted in English on the 03/10/2021.
[232] See the mental map of Hanka in appendices, figure F.3. On her mental map, she circled two spaces: she called the smaller "Europe" and the larger "EU", even though the boundaries she drew do not correspond to those of the member countries because of her approximate knowledge of the EU.
[233] The interview with Hanka was conducted in French on the 11/10/2019.
[234] The interview with Běla was conducted in French on the 13/08/2019.

"Culture was the only way to travel. It was much easier to travel with the choir than individually, but we mostly went to Eastern European countries," said Hanka, while Běla confirmed: "I travelled through high-level sport, because I was a professional basketball player. Others travelled thanks to high-level music. It was a privilege, in a way, to be a high-level sportswoman."

Concessions are made by the respondents so that the space represented on their map corresponds to that of the EU. In this way, the United Kingdom is often excluded from the mental maps because of Brexit: it was less included than Switzerland, Poland, or Romania. For example, Dimitrinka (see figure 5.12) said: "I don't put the UK even though I personally, for historical and cultural reasons, consider it in Europe."[235] However, it can be noted that respondents living in the UK were more likely to include it than those living in France. While it was part of the smallest group of countries[236] drawn by a respondent living in the UK (see the yellow line on the figure 5.15), it was excluded from the smallest group of countries drawn by a respondent living in France (see the yellow line on the figure 5.14).[237]

Conversely, some countries are included in Europe because they are part of the EU even though it was contrary to what the respondent would have liked. For example, Běla said about Hungary: "I would like to remove it. If I could, I would exclude Hungary. Because, from a political point of view, Hungary is crazy and dangerous." The idea the respondents have of an objective Europe referring to a political and economic reality (the EU) is therefore confronted with contradictions: its limits are imprecise (because the knowledge the respondents have of the EU member countries and their geographical location is often approximate) or arranged randomly according to individual preferences and choices.

As with the first category, the respondents in this second category rely on their mobility practices, individual experiences, and prejudices to include or exclude countries in Europe. A tension is manifested between a desired objectivity and an unavoidable selectivity, expressed through numerous hesitations. For example, Hanka said: "Maybe I should include Bulgaria... but no, no, no, actually, I don't think so". Other international institutions and

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[235] The interview with Dimitrinka was conducted in French on the 14/08/2019.
[236] Composed of 10 countries.
[237] Composed of 18 countries.

cooperation, such as the NATO or the Benelux countries, were mentioned by the respondents and appear, like the EU, as a baseline to be shaped by subjective criteria.

Figure 5.16: Mental map of Běla, from Czech Republic
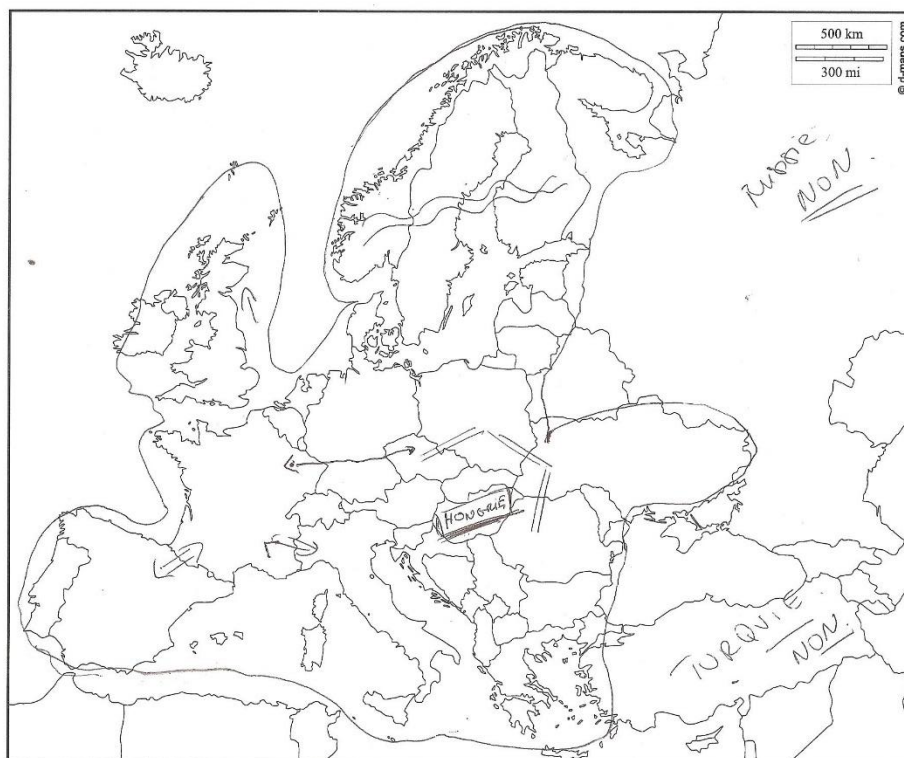
Among the non-EU countries that were the least included into Europe, two were vigorously rejected and condemned by several respondents: Turkey and Russia. Geopolitical, religious, and more generally cultural reasons were invoked. For example, Běla states: "Russia and Turkey are pronounced fascists. Putin, he is crazy and dangerous, and Erdogan, he is crazy and dangerous."[238] This rejection was categorically materialised on the mental map of two migrants from Czech Republic (see figures 5.16 and 5.17), both of whom wrote respectively: "Putin No", "Russia No", "Turkey No". By reducing Russia to Putin, we are reminded of the links between space, territories, and geopolitical issues. The rejection of certain countries is an essential condition of the Europe circled and delimited on the mental maps of the migrants in this category: Europe appears for them as an ideal space constructed in relation and in contrast to the "others". As a result, the idealised Europe has a very strong identity

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[238] The interview with Běla was conducted in French on the 13/08/2019.

dimension for the respondents in this category. This is what Lina, from Lithuania, suggests when she explains how she associated the countries together on her map: "I feel that our identities are, if not similar, then at least compatible. (…) I feel that there are shared struggles and shared identity-crisis that that we are all experiencing."[239]

Figure 5.17: Mental map of Zora, from Czech Republic[240]

There are several reasons why the UK, Ireland, Iceland, and Belarus were frequently excluded. First of all, the English Channel appears to be a natural boundary. The peripheral and insular location of Iceland and the UK has led to their omission. Their insularity has also been used to justify their exclusion and their "non-membership" in "Europe," understood as "a continent". For example, Paweł a migrant from Poland living in France, stated that

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[239] The interview with Lina was conducted in English on the 26/02/2021 (see her mental map in appendices, figure F.7).
[240] Zora was the only respondent in the second category who did not use a linear figure and did not circle Europe on her map. However, she proceeded in the same way as the other respondents in this category (including or excluding countries according to an idea of Europe). The interview with Zora was conducted in French on the 03/03/2020.

"Iceland, it has its life there, on the side, you know" and that "The UK is an island: they have always been separate."[241] In addition to these criteria, which could be described as "geographical", geopolitical criteria were invoked, including Brexit, Iceland's and Belarus' non-membership in the EU, and the latter's relationship with Russia.

Ukraine and the non-EU Balkan countries stand out for their relatively frequent inclusion. This is due to their geographical proximity to the respondents' countries of origin and their Slavic identity. The religion of some Muslim-majority Balkan countries, political (non-EU members), and geopolitical (relations with Russia) reasons were used to justify their exclusion. Ukraine was several times "cut in two" by the respondents: apart from the internal divisions of the country, this can sometimes be explained by the convenience of including Belarus in the whole while carefully avoiding including Russia, or to signify the country's position as an interface between Europe and Russia. Sweden, Norway, and Finland were less often included in Europe than Ukraine. Their exclusion can be generally explained by their peripheral geographical locations and the fact that these countries were visited very rarely by the respondents. The strong inclusion of Ukraine can be explained by its Slav identity and cultural similarities,[242] its geographical proximity to the respondents' countries of origin, and the significant emigration from this country to the former eastern bloc countries, and to Poland in particular.[243] Finland was less often included than Norway (which may be surprising given that Norway, unlike Finland, is not part of the EU): the relationship between Finland and Russia was often mentioned by respondents to justify its exclusion. This is also why Estonia was often excluded from Europe. On the other hand, Lithuania has been included more often than the other two Baltic countries due to its geographical proximity to Poland. Finally, it is interesting to note that Greece was more often included by respondents living in France than those living in the UK. This is perhaps because the heritage of Greece and its linguistic and cultural influence on the Roman Empire, the remains of which are particularly important in France, creates a sense of proximity and a feeling of belonging to the same Mediterranean civilisation. If Romania was more often included by respondents living in the UK than those living in France, this may be a sample bias as many more Romanians were interviewed in the UK.

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[241] The interview with Paweł was conducted in French on the 21/09/2019.
[242] Jana, a respondent from Poland admitted: "Not everybody in Poland would be agree with me, but Ukraine and Poland are the same culture. It is really the same culture… Because I have a friend from Ukraine, and I can see that we are the same." The interview with Jana was conducted in English on the 03/10/2019.
[243] Jana from Poland states: "A lot of people from Ukraine are going to Poland".

The table below (table 5.2) presents a classification of the criteria given by the respondents to circle Europe.

Table 5.2: Criteria used by the migrants to represent Europe

Cultural	Linguistic and alphabet
	Religion
	Everyday life, customs, and habits
	A random and arbitrary feeling that it is like that
Economic	Economic development
	Investments and dependencies
	Economic exchanges
Geopolitical	International organisations and cooperation (EU / NATO / Pro-Russian)
	Democracy, Peace
Geographic	Continent, Geographical, and visual unit.

In delimiting Europe, the respondents sometimes faced difficulties: some countries are difficult to classify, and their integration or exclusion was not so obvious. Arbitrary choices were thus made by the respondents to justify their plots by explaining the cases that raise questions. The countries they did not manage to spontaneously classify are often non-EU countries, peripheral countries, or countries where the political situation is problematic and unstable. The following table (table 5.3) presents the countries whose inclusion or exclusion from Europe raised questions among the respondents and summarises the arguments that were given to justify their exclusion and those that were given to justify their inclusion, considered as non-obvious, and controversial.

Table 5.3: The reasons given by the respondents to exclude and include countries in Europe

Countries	Reasons given for their exclusion	Reasons given for their inclusion
UK	"They *want* to be separated"; "They're leaving the EU"; "They've always been separated".	"It shouldn't leave"; "I personally consider it to be"
	"It is an island"	
	"They drive on the left"; "They kept the queen"	
	"They are much more closed to the United States"	
Iceland	"It's not Europe"; "It hasn't influenced us"; "I don't know that country"; "I've never been there"	Migrants who have visited Iceland included it.
	"It is an island"; "It has got its life over there, alongside"	
Norway	"They are unique"; "You feel like you're not in the European Union"	Migrants who have visited Norway included it. "They're very humanistic too"
	"They are independent"; "There's not a lot of choice in the stores. They have only national products in their stores."	
Switzerland	"They are super independent"; "They are bankers, they're on another planet"	"They have the same mentality"
	"They are not in the European union"	
Romania	"I wouldn't know where to put it", "it's an issue for me"; "No, Romania, no" *N.b. The migrants that didn't include Romania are Hungarian*	
Scandinavian countries	"They're further away geographically, you have to cross the sea to get there"	Migrants who have visited Scandinavian included them.
	"A different mindset"; "I don't know"; "I have never been there"	
Belarus	"Pro-Russian"; "Too much influenced by Russia"	"They are Slavs"; "Same family"
Bulgaria	"Maybe I should include Bulgaria... but no, no, no, actually, I don't think so"	
Ukraine	"Too much influenced by Russia"; "Too many problems with the proximity to Russia."	"The same"; "Family"; "Slavs"
	Economically speaking it would be a disaster"; "Too backward"	
Russia	"Not the same mentality"; "Not the same culture"; "It is not Europe"	"Slavic"; Language
	"Putin, it is no, too violent"; "Putin is crazy and dangerous"; "They are pronounced fascist"	
Turkey	"It's no, because they're too violent with human rights"; "They are complete fascists"; "Erdogan is crazy and dangerous."	Cultural influence (in food particularly)
	"Not the same religion"; "Muslim religion".	
Hungary	"Unfortunately, there is Hungary in the EU, and Hungary is crazy and dangerous"	

While the criteria used to exclude countries are various (cultural, economic, geopolitical, and geographic), those used to justify the inclusion of some countries in Europe are exclusively of a cultural nature. The cultural dimension is therefore a determining aspect of regional integration for the migrants in this category. However, this criterion seems to be based on pure affect as it covers a vague and fluctuating definition depending on the respondents, and often refers to their feelings, arbitrary opinions, or an assumption that they have about the values and customs of a particular country. Having visited a country is a criterion for inclusion: mobility appears to be a factor in breaking down barriers between countries by making the unknown countries familiar and by creating a feeling of closeness. Referring to different criteria (geopolitical, economic, geographic, and cultural) seems to be an attempt to rationalise the exclusion process by the respondents. This striking contrast (inclusion based solely on the cultural criterion, vs exclusion justified by a multitude of so-called objective and rational criteria) leads us to wonder whether the integration process is not based solely on a question of affect fed by the feeling of forming a community (*i.e.*, cultural) for the respondents. In a sense, it seems that, in order to exclude, the respondents try to objectify and rationalise so as not to suggest that they are rejecting a country out of pure affect for reasons of "racism", xenophobia, or even Islamophobia.

After having delimited on the map a group of countries that correspond to their ideal Europe, the migrants of this category often distinguished sub-groups of countries in their discourses. The distance between what they said and what they drew on their mental map reveals the antagonism that exists between their idea of Europe and the fragmentation they perceive but refuse to take into account. Discourse analysis is necessary to understand the ambiguity of their representations. Even though the mental maps of the respondents may suggest that they believe in the existence of a unified European space, they perceive Europe as a composite space. Běla aptly summarises the respondent's process of representation in idealising Europe and their refusal to subdivide it graphically on the mental maps, even if goes against what they "deeply think", to quote her words. She considers this subdivision to be a risk to European integration: "No, I don't want to. I don't want to because I think that if we start saying that, then there is no Europe anymore. But I know deeply that Central Europe is very different from Western Europe. But I don't want to draw it because otherwise it is no longer Europe and then, we wouldn't be able to function as Europe."[244] It appears that internal

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[244] The interview with Běla was conducted in French on the 13/08/2019.

divisions persist but they are covered up. Although migrants verbally use the same generic names (Western, Central, Eastern, Northern Europe) to designate various groups of countries within Europe, they do not refer to the same geographical realities. The variation of the given definitions and cohesion criteria lead one to consider that the limits of the sub-group making up Europe, as well as the ones of the "ideal Europe", are variable and arbitrary.

To sum up, the NMS migrants in this category tried to draw an idealised Europe based on approximate geopolitical and historical knowledge. The unity of Europe is constitutive of the representation of Europe of these respondents who lived through the communist period and who migrated before the EU enlargement period: according to them, it is a necessity to maintain peace and security in Europe. This is why the perceived divisions are denied and covered up. The institutional and ideological influences on these respondents' representations of Europe are particularly visible through their plots on the maps and their interviews. Here again, the migratory experience is an influential factor in the representations: the idealisation of a free and democratic Europe, built in opposition to the "other", a restrictive and totalitarian communist regime, is rooted in the experience of individuals that belonged to this regime and their efforts and strategies to escape it. Although at first sight the notion of unity central to the representations of the NMS migrants of this category seems to be in contradiction with the notion of multiplicity of the rhizome, it conceals the multiplicity of heterogeneous elements (cultural, geographical, economic, political) – sometimes contradictory, sometimes complementary and always connected – mobilised to construct the map. The closed borders (represented by the dividing line) should not be taken per se: the interviews make it possible to nuance this representation of a closed space, because the borders are often blurred, approximate, and fluctuant. Moreover, these ideal representations of Europe are only one dimension of the macro-regional space and must be placed in a larger set of representations: since exhaustiveness is impossible to achieve, the integration process is never complete but always open-ended and composed of a multiplicity of elements.

1.4.3. Regionalisation of Europe

The third and last group of respondents divided Europe into smaller groups of countries. The migrants of this third category, who are the most numerous (44 respondents), never explicitly answered "yes" to the initial question (see figure 3.4, p. 109): no categorical

answer was given when they did not say "no", which can be explained by their uncertainty face to the difficulty of the exercise. The migrants with a PhD are over-represented in this category: in France, they make up more than half of the respondents of this category and ten of the sixteen respondents that have a PhD in the sample are in this category.

Visually, the mental maps of these respondents are distinguished by the use of linear figures (multiple groups of countries have been circled or linked together on the maps) or, as shown by ten respondents, by the use of surface figures (multiple groups of countries have been hatched or coloured). One respondent used letters to differentiate several groups while several others named the groups on the map. The respondents regionalised Europe by constructing a spatial typology based on vague and often undefined criteria that mixed historical and cultural knowledge (more or less approximate), sensations, and individual opinions: the phrases "I think", "I find", and "this is my personal feeling" were regularly used by respondents.

Economic, linguistic, historical, cultural, and religious criteria of imprecise content were invoked by the respondents to classify the countries. The generalisation of the reference to numerous criteria to characterise the groups of countries highlights the great diversity of elements, which are difficult to define and identify, and which come into play and are juxtaposed in this process of regionalisation. Like the rhizome, the spaces drawn are heterogeneous, multiple, and composed of an open-ended combination of elements and modalities of different natures: the links and interactions between countries are not considered according to their degree of intensity, but according to their difference in kind. In this way, the normative pitfall denounced in Chapter 2 is avoided, as the aim is not to evaluate or measure the integration process but to characterise it according to the dynamics and links between countries. Sometimes, the links between countries are difficult to qualify and determine: some countries, characterised as "in-between", do not fully correspond to one category predefined by the respondent, but correspond partly to several at the same time. This preliminary remark makes it possible to understand that despite the representations of the groups of countries as closed and self-contained spaces, the borders delimited by the respondents of this category – such as the ones delimited by the respondents that idealise Europe – are fluid, fuzzy, and approximate.

The respondents named the sub-groups drawn on the map based on linguistic, political, or geographical categories including East, West, Pro-Russian, Western-oriented countries, Balkans, Ex-Yugoslavia, Slavs, not Slavs, Scandinavia/North countries/Nordics, Central Europe, Ex-communist bloc countries, underdeveloped regions, Romans, Latin countries, Francophones, Anglo-Saxon/Anglophones/British, German, Baltic countries. Some names refer to a subjective assessment such as: "very European countries", "aside from", "in-between." Some respondents categorized countries according to the supposed mentality of the inhabitants, such as Adela,[245] from Romania, who classified Europe according to "warm people", "individualistic people" and "communist mentality," or Emilia,[246] who described northern countries as "quiet" and "tolerant and confident"; eastern countries as "traditional"; western European countries as "proud and arrogant," and southern European countries as "open, happy and friendly". Emilia's map (see figure 5.18) shows a rather classical and traditional categorisation of European countries and the existing stereotypes[247] of each area insofar as she proceeds to a social categorisation of the space and she presents a caricatured image, usually accepted and conveyed about the personality traits of inhabitants.[248]

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[245] The interview with Adela was conducted in English on the 01/02/2021.

[246] The interview with Emilia was conducted in English on the 16/11/2020.

[247] According to Jacques-Philippe Leyens and Nathalie Scaillet (2012: 105), stereotypes are defined as "implicit theories of personality shared by all members of a group about all members of another group or about their own group". As the same personality traits were attributed by several respondents to some countries, it is possible to conclude that they are part of common beliefs conveyed by the media, films and/or from the collective unconscious.

[248] Karol, from Poland, also referred to stereotypes to classify the countries in Europe. He associated Eastern Europe with the words "tradition, vodka, alcohol, family life, very happy food"; Western Europe with the phrase "hot-blooded" and "wine"; he reduced Turkey, Serbia, Albania and Montenegro under the label "Muslim" and defined the Northern countries as "Open countries, very cultural, lot of food, lot of music." The interview with Karol was conducted in English on the 29/11/2020.

Figure 5.18: Mental map of Emilia, from Poland
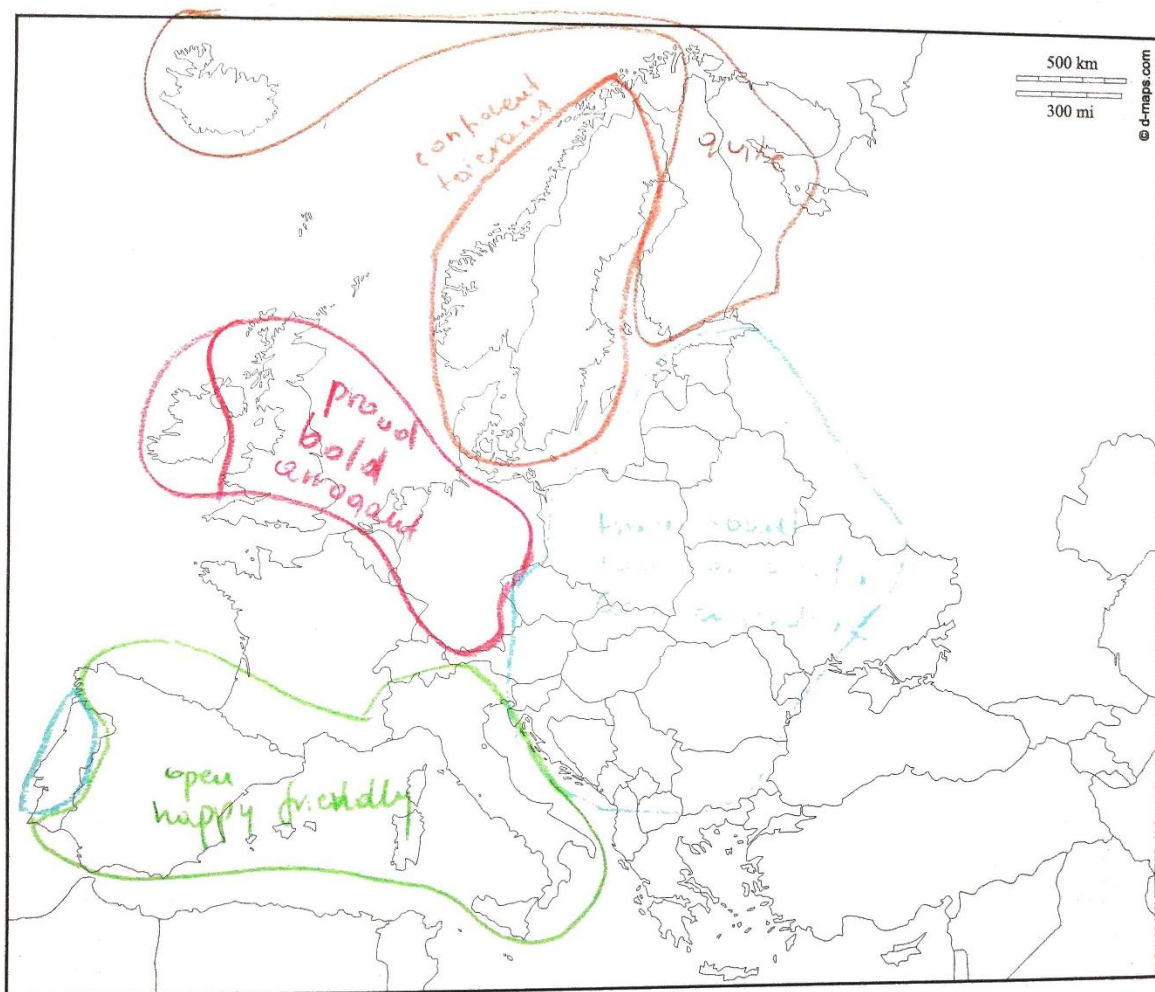
Although the same category names (such as Baltic countries, Scandinavia, East, West, German, Slavs) are used on many maps, the delineated spaces associated with these words are almost never identical. While for the respondents, the existence of categories (such as Slavic, Balkans and Scandinavian) is obvious and unmistakable, the spaces they cover in their maps are imprecise, fluctuating, and difficult to delimit due to a lack of knowledge and the relativity of these categories (Grataloup, 2009).

Language: a tool for the regionalisation of Europe?

The notion of language influences the migrants' representation of Europe: it appears as a determining factor in the representations and was used by almost all the respondents to regionalise[249] Europe. Either perceived as a tool for the appropriation or differentiation of space, language, taken in its symbolic sense as a set of symbols attached to a specific place, is a grid for reading the macro-regional space for the migrants in this category. For example, Kasia,[250] a migrant from Poland, circled different groups of countries and constructed a spatial typology[251] based on vague and relatively undefined criteria that she called the language (see figure 5.19). Inaccuracies and errors reflect her ignorance of the linguistic particularities of some countries. She included Hungary and Romania in the area she describes as "Slavic" and Iceland in the "Anglo-Saxon" area. She was also confronted with her own ignorance: "Belgium, Luxembourg, who are they with? I am doing another group of countries in relation to languages, but I don't know... I can say 'German', something like that. I don't know...". Her choices of classification, disguised under a linguistic logic, are subjective, random and arbitrary, which she admits indirectly: "So, I find that Scandinavia, they are together. Because... because! They are together." This tautological formula shows the weakness of the arguments she mobilises and the fragility of her regionalisation of Europe based on her personal and subjective appreciation. She explicitly acknowledged this: "But it is from my knowledge, my life, and so on, that I can say that".

More than the knowledge of the linguistic particularities of the countries, the notion of language is indicative of the relationships that respondents have with space. For example, Kasia uses the word "family" to refer to Slavic countries: "We are a family. The Slavs, generally the Slavs, we are a family, and with Belarus too. I'm saying that because of the language, because, you see, I'm able to understand Czech, Belarusian, Russian, Ukrainian. Serbian too and all that Balkan stuff, too." Language creates a sense of familiarity, and reflects a strong emotional bond, a sense of belonging, and closeness to countries with a similar communication system, therefore enabling better mutual communication.

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[249] Eight linguistic categories were generally identified by the migrants: "Anglo-Saxon", "Francophone", "Slavic", "Scandinavian", "German", "Latins", "Belgian" and "Balkan".
[250] The interview with Kasia was conducted in French on the 11/10/2019.
[251] She identified six linguistic categories: "Anglo-Saxon", "Slaves", "Scandinavia", "German", "Romanes" and "Balkan".

Figure 5.19: Mental map of Kasia, from Poland
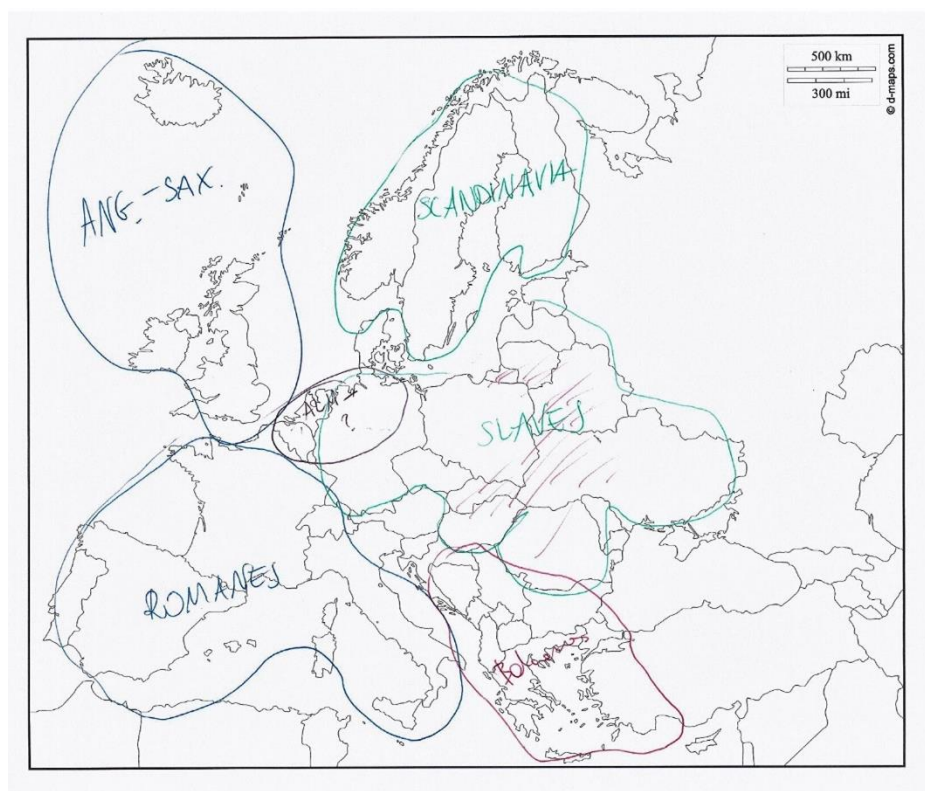
She ends up broadening the classification criteria when she realises that the identified spaces cannot be reduced solely to linguistic criteria. She concludes: "Languages and culture go together. Climate and all that, too." Damján, a respondent from Hungary, confirms this when he states that: "It's more than languages, it's also culture."[252] Damján, like Kasia, differentiated spatial areas on his map according to language (see figure 5.20). The originality of his map is that he tried to represent the ethno-linguistic groups without considering borders. The categories are not systematic as he mixes language groups (such as "francophone", "Slavic"), countries ("UK", "Belgium"), and cultural regions ("Scandinavia"). The names of the linguistic categories reveal inaccuracies: Italy, Romania, and the North of Spain are not "francophone" countries, but Roman language countries. Another interesting feature of his map is that this Hungarian migrant isolated and differentiated Hungary within Europe by leaving most of it blank. Like Michal's map (see figure F.1 in appendices),[253] this map reveals the limitations of the stato-centric base map

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[252] The interview with Damján was conducted in French on the 03/10/2019.
[253] The interview with Michal was conducted in English on the 12/02/2020.

approach because the respondents' plots cross national boundaries and are made from small parts of the countries.

Figure 5.20: Mental map of Damján, from Hungary
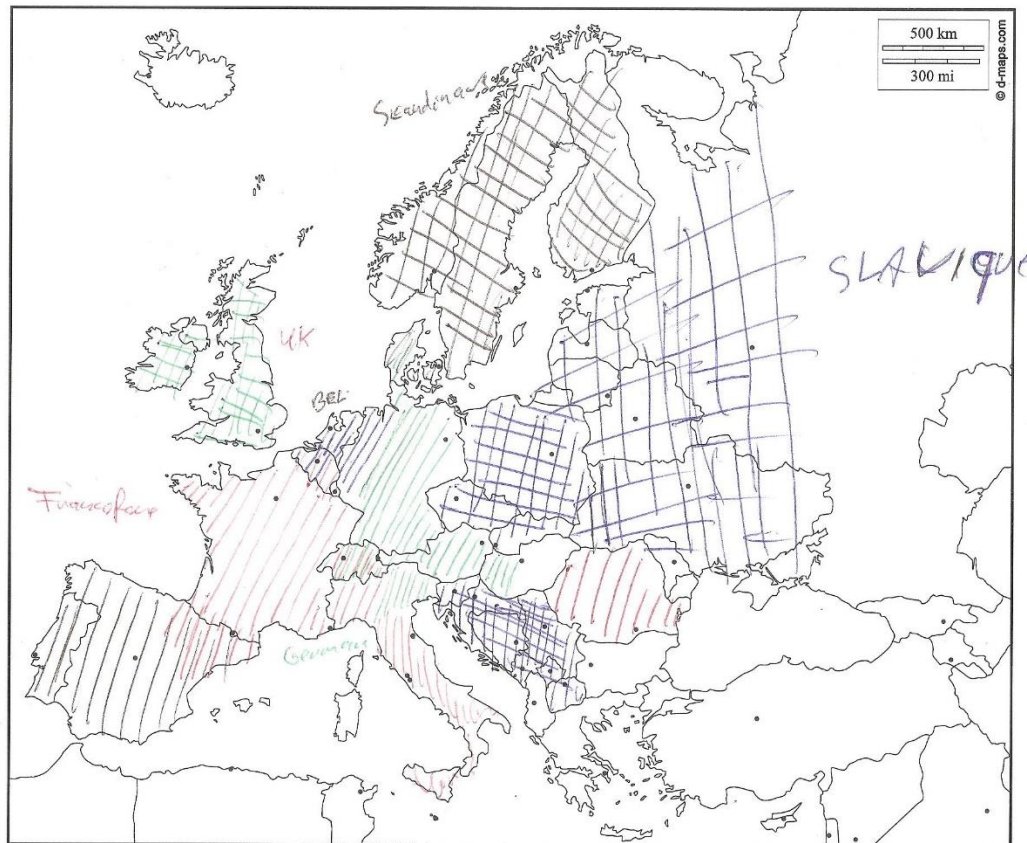
In general, on the maps of respondents in this category, Hungary stands out for its relative isolation: its nationals tend not to associate it with other countries and define it in terms of its difference to other countries.

Figure 5.21: Mental map of Ilona, from Hungary
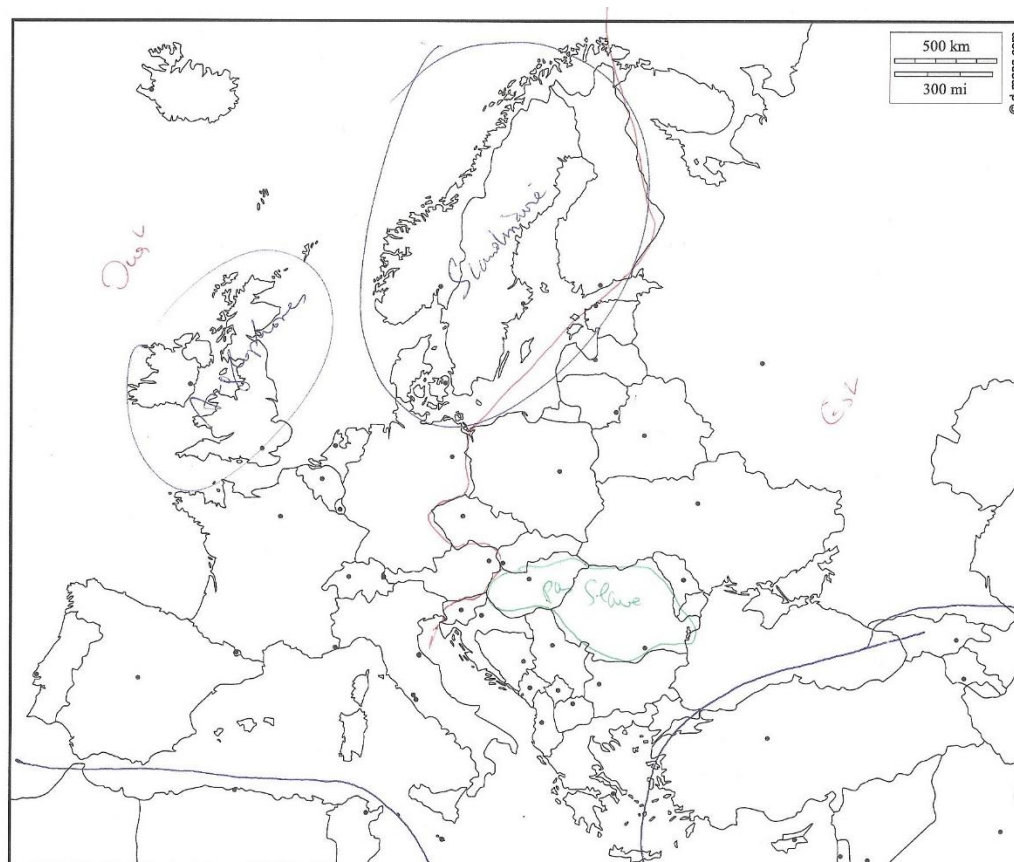
Ilona also isolated Hungary on her mental map. In a way, she identifies herself by not belonging to an ethno-linguistic group when she describes her country of origin as "not Slavic."[254] She associated Hungary with Romania, which is also distinguished by its linguistic specificity in eastern Europe (see figure 5.21). This association (Romania/Hungary), however, is rare[255] because of the conflictual past between the two countries, often recalled by the respondents, such as Drago, a respondent from Romania, who said: "We don't like Hungarian, they don't like us: it is a mutual conflict between us. Because during the second world war they committed a lot of crimes, they killed a lot of people, and they invaded Romania. They don't like us. They think we are gypsies and bad people, and we think that they are criminals."[256]

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[254] Ilona used the expression "pas Slaves" in French. The interview with Ilona was conducted in French on the 14/12/2019.

[255] Made on less than one in two maps despite the geographical proximity of the two countries.

[256] The interview with Dragos was conducted in English on the 17/10/2020.

Language, transcending national borders, shows how migrants position themselves within a macro-regional space developing a sense of closeness and familiarity with countries and peoples with whom they share (sometimes supposedly) a language. Language is therefore no longer considered as a skill that enables one to fit into a given national society but a real filter for representing space at a macro-regional level. The migrant's space of identification and belonging can be reconsidered as well as the notion of social integration to encompass a transnational space in which language is a parameter among other permitting to understand how migrants relate to space.

The space that has been most systematically drawn and referred to in a similar way is the Scandinavian or Nordic space composed of Norway and Sweden,[257] which is sometimes associated with Finland, Iceland, Denmark, and the Baltic countries. Two countries also stand out in the East because of their relative isolation due to a lack of strong associations. These are Romania and Greece, which have sometimes been excluded from certain groups because they are not Slavic. While some respondents explained Romania's exclusion as a result of political disputes (with Hungary, for example) or linguistic differences ("an island of Latinness in a Slavic Sea"),[258] few explanations were given in the discourses or in the mental maps for Greece's exclusion.[259] Hypotheses, however, can be made. Greece's earlier membership of the EU may play a role in its exclusion. This is what differentiates it from its direct neighbours, whether they are non-members or have joined recently. Csilla, a respondent from Hungary, expressed her incomprehension concerning Greece's membership in the EU: "But it's true that they [Greece] are in Europe because it's cheaper for Germans to go there on holiday. Honestly yes, that's what I think. That's why they joined the EU early. Because it was good for the Germans."[260] The bitterness that emanates from her comments testifies to a particularity of Greece compared to its neighbours, which stems from its long-standing relationship with the founding countries of the EEC. This specificity manifests itself in its frequent isolation on mental maps. The political and economic difficulties that Greece faces are elements that may also explain its exclusion, but this was not formulated in the interviews.

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[257] These two countries are the countries that have been the most often associated (38 times).
[258] The interview with Ilona was conducted in French on the 14/12/2019.
[259] Katarzyna from Poland declared: "Greece will be… I don't know, Greece will be alone. I don't know why." The interview with Katarzyna was conducted in English on the 14/11/2020.
[260] The interview with Csilla was conducted in French on the 12/12/2019.

The representations of the migrants in this category have been synthetized thanks to a geographic information system (QGIS) in three figures (see figures 5.22, 5.23 and 5.24). The plots of the mental maps have been aggregated to represent the number of times that two countries were associated by the respondents in the same group of countries. The first map (see figure 5.22) is a compilation of all the mental maps of migrants that regionalised Europe independently of their host country, while the figures 5.23 and 5.24 detail the representations of the respondents living respectively in France and the UK to highlight the differences in representations according to the country of residence. These maps are link maps: the thicker the lines between two countries are, the more often they have been put into the same group of countries on the mental maps. Due to the higher number of mental maps collected in the UK and the disproportion between the number of respondents that regionalised Europe living in France (14) and in the UK (44), the synthetic map of the representations of all the respondents is very similar to that of the respondents living in the UK.

Figure 5.22: Regionalisation of Europe based on the number of associations between two countries represented on the total respondents' mental maps
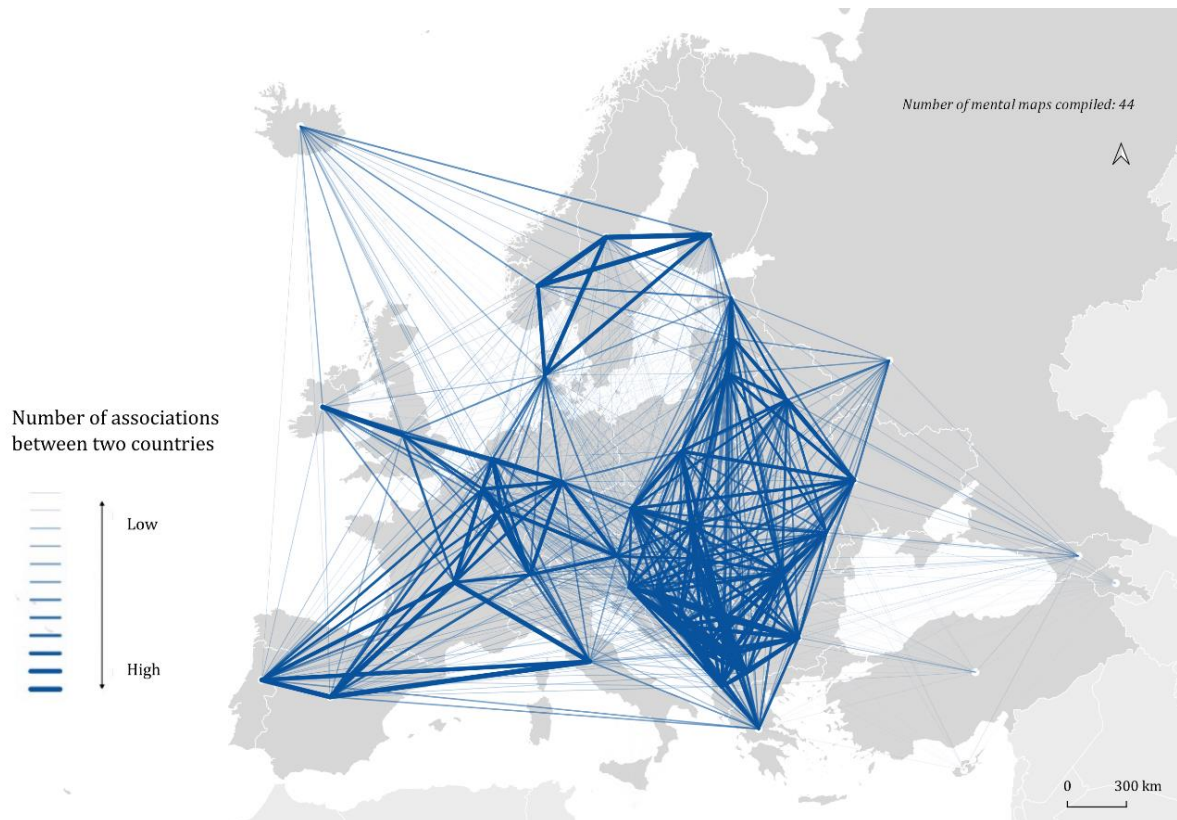
Background: Natural Earth - Sources: Mila Sanchez (2020) Fieldwork (2019 to 2021).

Figure 5.23: Regionalisation of Europe based on the number of associations between two countries represented on the mental maps of the respondents living in France
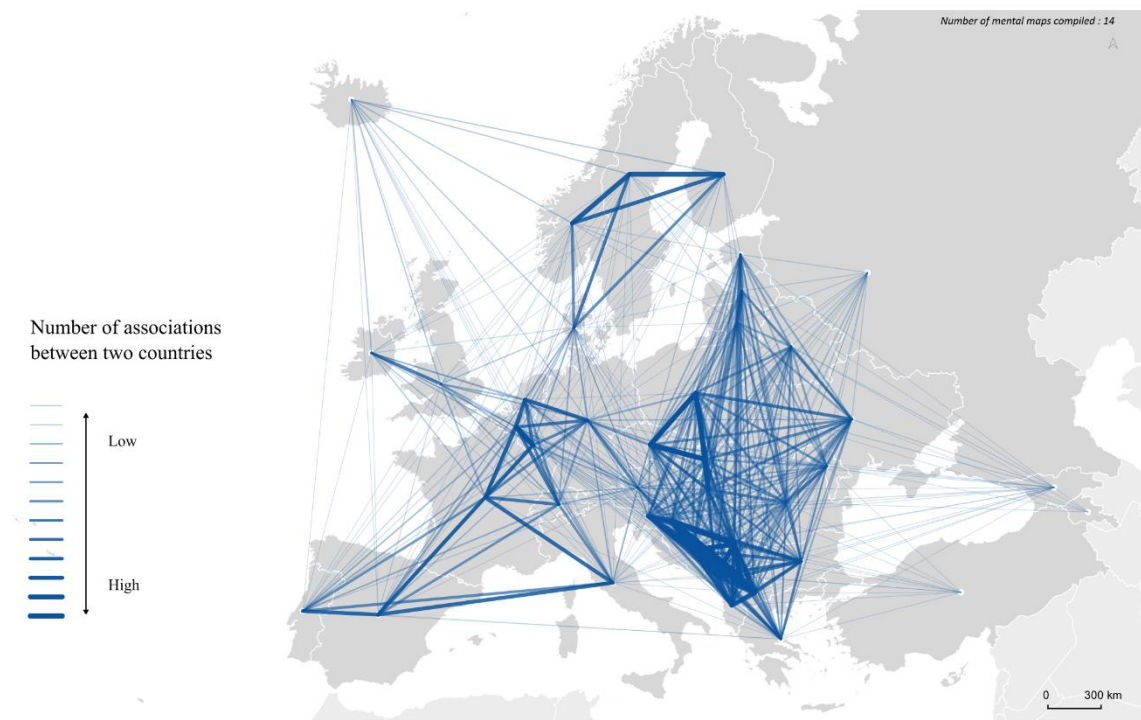
Background: Natural Earth - Sources: Mila Sanchez (2020) Fieldwork (2019 to 2021).

Figure 5.24: Regionalisation of Europe based on the number of associations between two countries represented on the mental maps of the respondents living in the UK
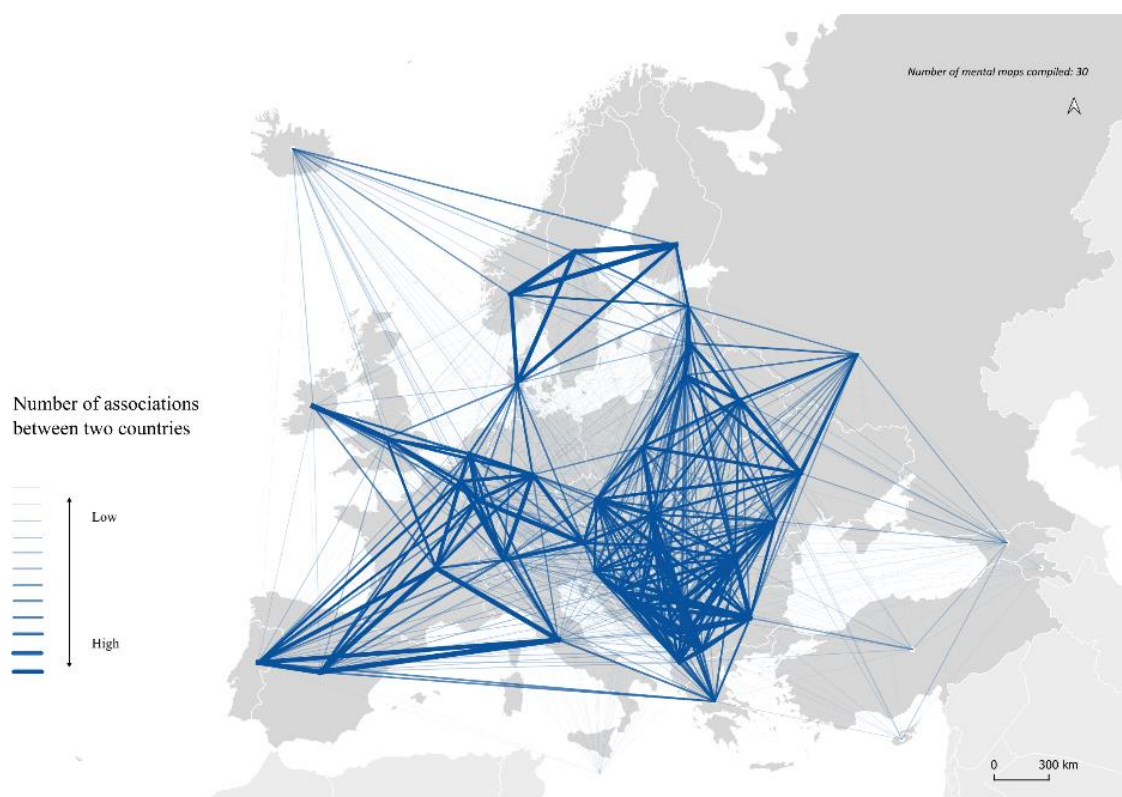
Background: Natural Earth - Sources: Mila Sanchez (2020) Fieldwork (2019 to 2021).

On the summary map of respondents living in France (figure 5.23) four main groups of countries stand out, while only three main groups emerge on the map summarising the representations of respondents living in the United Kingdom (figure 5.24), and on the map aggregating all the mental maps (figure 5.22). Indeed, the fracture observed on the 28 at the level of the Channel is largely attenuated on the figures 5.22 and 5.24. This is because respondents living in France have often isolated the UK from France and continental Europe, either consciously because of Brexit, or unconsciously because of forgetfulness (due to its insular and peripheral position). This main and significant difference confirms the influence of the place of residence on the representations of Europe.

The groups of countries revealed by the synthesis map are fairly expected and comparable structures to those revealed by the synthesis map of the representations of Europe by respondents who idealised Europe. Indeed, there is also here a North/South discontinuity constituted by the North Sea and the English Channel. The Scandinavian countries appear as

weakly associated with continental Europe; similarly, the peripheral and insular location of some countries[261] explains their possible omission or even voluntary exclusion. The map shows a core of countries in the West composed of the founding countries of the EEC and the Iberian and Italian peninsulas; a group formed by the United Kingdom and Ireland, sometimes associated with Iceland (mainly in the mental maps made by migrants living in France[262]); a Northern Europe comprising three to eight countries, depending on whether or not Denmark, the Baltic States, and Iceland are associated with Norway, Sweden, and Finland; and finally, an Eastern Europe, with Slavic and non-Slavic countries differentiated by the respondents. The group of countries in the East seems to be more integrated than the other subsets: it has the largest number of countries and associations.

A fault line, a "phantom border" (von Hirschhausen, 2017), and the legacy of the Cold War mark a strong discontinuity between East and West at the level of Poland and the Czech Republic. Austria, characterised by an unexpected lack of strong links in view of its central location, has an intermediate position between two well-separated regional spaces. This divide is exacerbated and much clearer on the map that summarises the representations of respondents living in France than the one for respondents living in the UK perhaps because the physical distance between the UK and the country of origin is compensated by the respondents with more important links between eastern and western countries. The European space perceived by migrants in this category is deeply structured by this East/West divide, the weight of which is systematically mentioned in the discourses.[263] Madalina, a psychiatrist from Romania, states: "We clearly perceive a separation between the Western and the Eastern countries. It is certain that this separation between the 'communist bloc' and the 'West' has left its trace on us."[264] This trace is both visible (notably through the economic consequences of the post-communist period and the corruption of certain government and health professions denounced by Madalina) and invisible (though the memories of the communist period influencing current behaviour and attitudes). Though communism is no longer in power, its influence is still felt in mentalities and behaviour,

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[261] The United Kingdom, Ireland and Iceland are distinguished by their obvious strong isolation on several maps.

[262] Migrants living in the UK were more likely to associate the UK and Ireland with the founding members of the EEC and Iceland with the Scandinavian group.

[263] Olga, from Poland stated: "Well, I can definitely divide Eastern and Western Europe. That would be the main division point because Eastern and Western Europe are very much different." The interview with Olga was conducted in English on the 18/11/2020.

[264] The interview with Madalina was conducted in French on the 08/03/2020.

according to Madalina: there is a double dynamic of presence/absence at the same time. Ilona, a university professor in finance from Hungary, also considers that the East/West separation is fundamental in her representations: "So for me, there is clearly the difference between Eastern Europe and Western Europe."[265] Respondents explain this division in terms of the remnants of the communist period, especially in the economy[266] and mentalities.[267] Two Bulgarian respondents explained the difference between East and West by the presence of corruption in the East.[268]

Europe, for migrants in this category, appears to be a space that is divided into several smaller regional units, which then can be added together to form a regional whole. In other words, Europe is composed of a juxtaposition of regional subgroups with blurred boundaries and varying criteria. This is what several respondents tried to show on their mental maps, representing several levels of sub-groups of countries that fit together like Russian dolls. For example, in her map (see figure 5.25), Agnieszka, a chemistry teacher-researcher from Poland, drew the first group of countries, composed of France and Germany, nested in a second, larger group of countries consisting of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, which is enveloped in an even larger space to which Spain, Italy, Denmark, and the United Kingdom have been added.[269] The lines of the groups of countries are not borders, unlike the lines drawn by the respondents in the second category: they are spaces of potential relationships. We find here the characteristic of connectivity specific to the rhizome. The sub-groups represented are juxtaposed: they are "layers" that are added to each other "in the manner of a Venn diagram" (Venn, 1880), according to Agnieszka's map, which was influenced by her scientific training. Agnieszka included Poland, her country of origin, in both "Central Europe" and "Eastern Europe." This dual membership is reminiscent of a virulent debate on Poland's intermediate position between two opposing geographical groupings.

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[265] The interview with Ilona was conducted in French on the 14/12/2019.
[266] Hannah from Poland declared: "I think it has to do maybe with the last 50 years of history and the fact that there is quite a difference between the countries from the Soviet Republic and the countries in the west of Europe when it comes to like development". The interview with Hannah was conducted in English on the 14/11/2020.
[267] Ewa from Poland explained: "Because it's not easy getting rid of fifty years of Communism. It was destroying the morale of the countries." The interview with Ewa was conducted in English on the 12/11/2020.
[268] For example, Jaklina declared: "I think when it comes to political factors, there is less corruption in the Western countries than in Eastern European countries". The interview with Jacklina was conducted in English on the 01/02/2021.
[269] The interview with Agnieszka was conducted in French on the 03/03/2020.

Figure 5.25: Mental map of Agnieszka, from Poland
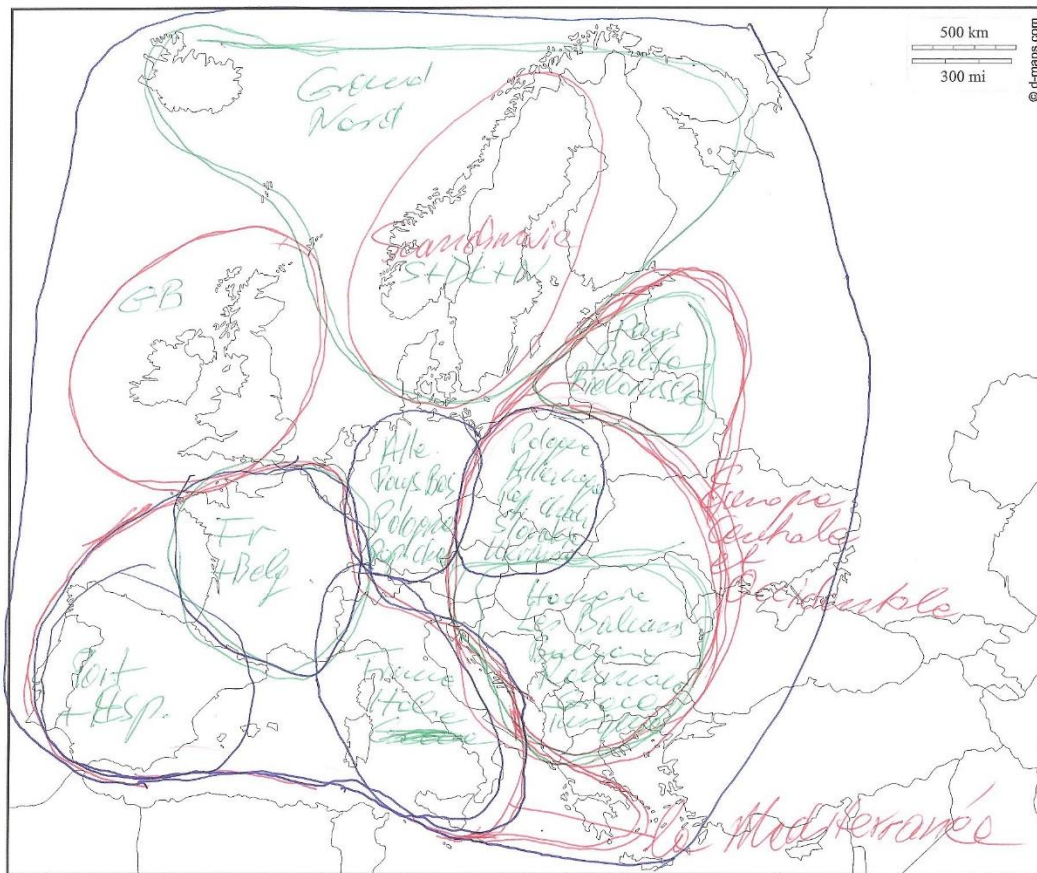
Magda's map (see figure 5.26), just like Agnieszka's map is composed by a juxtaposition of regional subgroups of countries. Just like Agnieszka, Magda referred to the debate polarising the population in Poland (and accompanied by strong identity issues) about whether Poland is part of the East or the West. She decided to represent Poland in Central and Eastern Europe at the same time in order to symbolise this debate and illustrate how it divides the Polish population (see figure 5.26): "There are people who say that Poland is part of Central Europe and there are people who say that Poland is part of Eastern Europe."[270] If Magda drew fewer subgroups of countries than Agnieszka (Magda only represented four main groups, while those of Agnieszka are innumerable), the way she drew her map and explained the perceived relationships between countries is the same. It is interesting to notice that Magda mainly detailed and represented groups of countries in continental Europe, without including the peripheral countries such as Spain and Portugal and islands such as UK and

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[270] The interview with Magda was conducted in French on the 02/10/2019.

Ireland. Also, on Magda's map, the greatest level of detail is concentrated in Central Europe and the two countries in which Madga lived, France and Poland are the countries with the most links to other countries. This can be interpreted as the fact that the level of detail represented is correlated with the respondent's level of knowledge of the countries. The more detailed the respondent's knowledge of the countries is, the better he or she is able to represent relationships between countries.

Figure 5.26: Mental map of Magda, from Poland
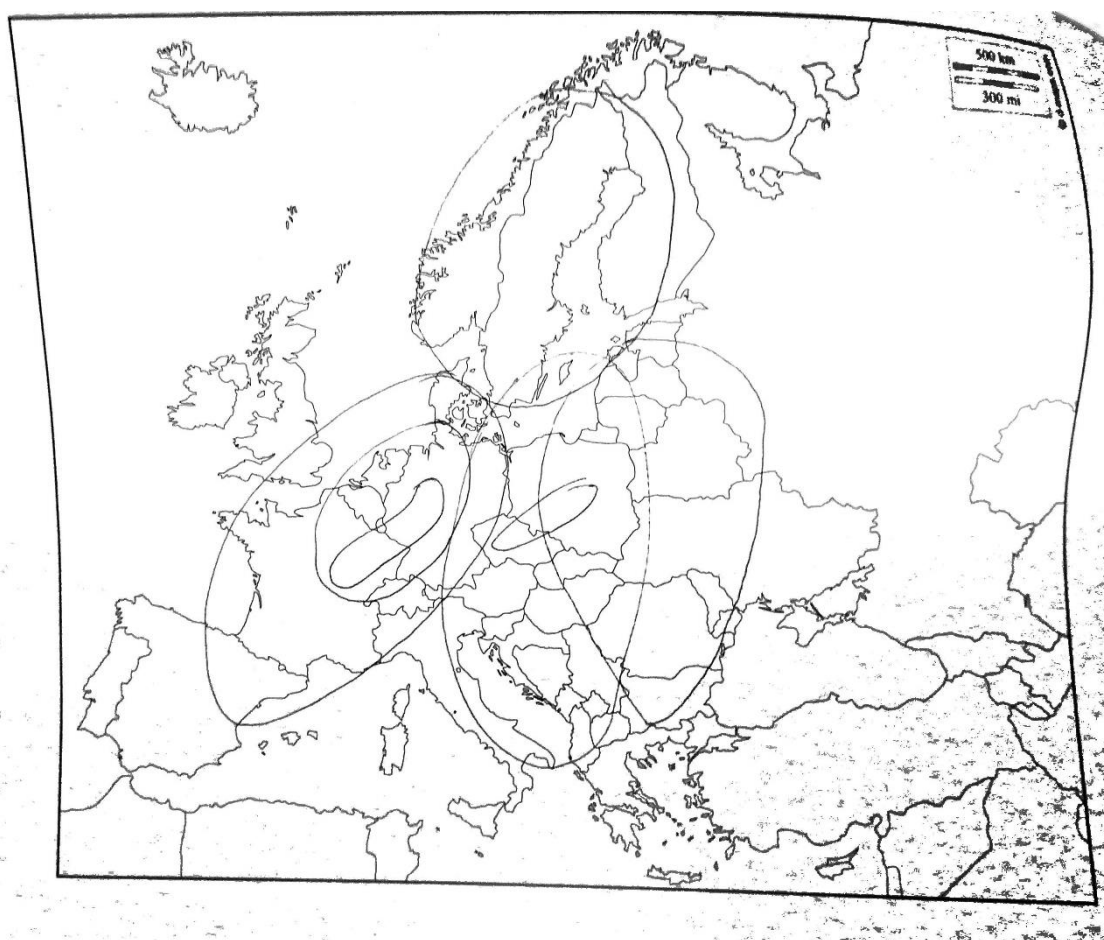
Monika also represented the intermediate position of Poland by dividing it into two (see figure 5.27).[271] If her map is very different from Magda's and Agnieszka's maps (Monika used a surface figure while Magda and Agnieszka used linear figures) the ideas behind the choices made and the representation of several groups of countries are the same: Monika associated and juxtaposed several groups of countries according to the colour and orientation

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[271] The interview with Monika was conducted in French on the 12/12/2019.

of the hatching she used. A specific feature of her map is the separation of Poland in two with a line: this strong separation (whose style differs from the rest of her map) shows a particularly significant division, according to Monika, between East and West. She says that there is a greater difference between east and west Poland than between west Poland and Western Europe: "Half of Poland for me is Western, and the other half is not." The juxtaposition of regional groupings in Poland makes it possible to account for its multiple memberships and above all for its role and inclusion at the heart of a larger regional grouping under construction, which seems to be result of the encounter between Western and Eastern Europe.[272]

Figure 5.27: Mental map of Monika, from Poland

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[272] Several Polish respondents underlined the ambiguous and central position of Poland, like Hannah who said: "I didn't know where to put Poland, so I just put it in the middle". The interview with Hannah was conducted in English on the 14/11/2020.

To summarise, the respondents of this category used a multiplicity of heterogeneous elements to regionalise the macro-regional space. These elements are of different natures and include economic, linguistic, historical, cultural, and religious criteria, as well as feelings and individual judgments. In addition to the rhizome's characteristics of multiplicity, heterogeneity, and connection, the principle of asignifying rupture is perfectly illustrated by these mental maps. According to this principle, the macro-regional space is not composed of predefined articulations and developments: Agnieszka's map reminds us that all connections, combinations, and superpositions are possible and that the assemblage is a never-ending process. Regionalising space makes it possible to go against normativity: the spaces are not associated with each other according to their degree of integration but according to their characteristics, the nature of their links, and their multi-dimensional interactions. This approach enables us to consider integration not as a threshold to be reached, but as a dynamic process to be qualified.

2. Words and representations of Europe

The technique of associated words has been carried out in several research to complement mental maps and to help interpret them by providing information about the content of the space sketched out (Didelon *et al*., 2011-b; Brennetot *et al*., 2013; Toureille, 2017). The aim of this technique is to detect the spontaneous words that appear in the respondent's imagination when a specific word is mentioned (Collomb and Guérin-Pace, 1998). It enables one to understand the modalities in which the delimitations of a space are drawn and how they can be linked to the discourses. Respondents were asked to describe Europe in one word: they were asked an open-ended question based on the principle of free association ("If you had to describe "Europe" with one word, what would it be?").[273]

An analysis of the semantic content of "Europe" makes it possible to identify the lexical registers of the associated words and to observe their tonality. The words used by the migrants can be listed and classified into four different categories according to their lexical field and the number of times they were uttered (in brackets) in the table below (table 5.4). Several words and expressions were aggregated when they belonged to the same linguistic

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[273] Although it would probably have been wise to ask for more than one word (three for example) in order to analyse more reliably the frequency of the words, asking for only "one word" was a way of questioning the notion of unity, seeking to know whether it was appropriate to address the macro-regional space.

origin (for example: culture/cultural, union/unity or diverse/diversity). The words categories were determined according to their dimensions and the type of perception of Europe that they imply. Four categories of words were identified according to the lexical fields of geopolitics, universalist values, feeling and figurative representations referring to more concrete elements. These words are globally part of three types of representations: a symbolic representation of Europe (referring to universalist values), a sentimental representation of Europe (referring to the feelings produced by Europe), opposed to a more analytical representation of Europe (referring to institutions, political organisations, and to figurative and physical characteristics).

In a way, these three semantic categories refer to three ways of representing Europe: the symbolic words refer to the idealisation of Europe, the sentimental words to Europe as a lived space, and the analytical words to the regionalisation of Europe. However, there are no matches or correlations between the categories of the words and the mental maps, which leads one to believe that several types of representations may coexist among the respondents and are revealed differently depending on the methodology used.

Table 5.4: Words associated with Europe by the respondents

Symbolic	Sentimental	Analytical	
Universalist values	**Feeling**	**Geopolitical**	**Figurative representations**
- Culture (12)	- Security (2)	- Holidays, mobility, travel (7)	- Europe, Continent (8)
- Diversity (9)	- Comfort (2)	- Union, Unity (5)	- Architecture (4)
- History (7)	- Friendship (1)	- Prosperity, privileged (3)	- Sun (3)
- Freedom (6)	- The feeling to be European (1)	- European Union (1)	- Food (2)
- Openness[274] (4)	- Home (1)		- Brussels (1)
- Organization (3)	- Paradise (1)		- Polite (1)
- Democracy (2)	- Love (1)		- Laid back (1)
- Peace (2)			- Style (1)
- Traditions, roots (2)			
- Togetherness to make the world better (2)			
- Work (2)			
- Humanism (1)			
- Civilisation (1)			
- Integrity (1)			
- Hope (1)			
- Evolution (1)			
- Beauty (1)			
- Modern (1)			

The respondents associated many different words with "Europe": very few words were used more than four times (6) and 17 words were used only once. The multiplicity of terms used could be interpreted as a manifestation of the heterogeneity of "Europe" and the lack of a consensual perception. Even though the corpus of words associated with "Europe" is vast (more than 40 different words were used), it reveals a rather coherent and convergent imagination about "Europe", laudatory and positive narratives. The presence of mainly positive lexical fields in the dominant representations (no respondent referred to the EU crisis, or to the failure of the integration model for example) may suggest the existence of very few contrasting views within the study population.

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[274] "Ouverture" in French.

Most of the words used are common nouns, sometimes accompanied by an adjective reflecting a value judgment (such as "rich culture" or "good food"). Proper nouns have also been used and refer to regional political institutions (the "EU") or cities ("Brussels"). The word most often used to describe Europe was "culture" (with a frequency of 12), followed by "diversity" (9), "continent" (8), "history" (7), "freedom" (6), and "unity" (5). The lexical field of "mobility" is also frequently invoked (7) through words and themes such as "travels", "adventures," and "holidays," which refer to the freedom of movement within the European Union. Beyond the table of apparently disconnected one-word definitions, some relationships exist between the words used to describe Europe. For example, "laid back", "polite", "style", and "organized" refer to social behaviours and the aim to characterise the inhabitants of Europe; "Brussels", "architecture", "sun", and "food", refer to physical and concrete elements; "peace", "freedom", "hope," and "integrity" refer to ideals. In this way, the macro-regional space is at the same time defined by its social, ideal, physical, and environmental dimensions. The associated words method allows us to see that the macro-regional space is multi-dimensional and includes both concrete and imaginary elements: it is at the same time a space of daily life, but also a space of illusions and the projection to be built "together".

The word cloud (see figure 5.28) produced with the software NVivo, based on the occurrence of words used to describe Europe, highlights the structuring character of culture and diversity in the representations.

Figure 5.28: Word cloud of the words used to describe "Europe" by the respondents

The profusion of terms that associate Europe with "culture" and "civilisation" and the way of life and mentality of the inhabitants recalls the theme of the European cultural area, as defined by Fernand Braudel (1987). Europe appears as a cultural area captured through a way of life, behaviours, and mentality, as well as through its geographical characteristics. This is particularly clear when the word "Europe" is associated with the word "continent" and also to places and landscapes. If the word "civilisation" can be understood in its first sense as the characteristic features of a given society, from the technical, intellectual, political, and moral point of view, without making value judgements, it can also have an ideological dimension when it refers to the political and evolutionary concept, which developed during the Enlightenment. According to this second definition, "civilisation" covers a normative conception and refers to an ideology that considers a set of great moral values as universal and contingent to progress. This definition echoes some of the terms that have been used, including "humanism", "integrity", "modern," and "evolution". The emergence of the theme of "modernity" and "progress" is not insignificant in the context of Eastern European countries. Galena, from Bulgaria, recalls: "My father considered everything to be a lie, and for him the real progress and the truth was in the Western world. That's where the democracy really is."[275] The dominant and hierarchical position of Europe is also manifested in the terms that refer to its economic power: "privileged", "richness," and "prosperity". Moreover, on his map, Aron did not include certain countries under the pretext that they were not economically powerful enough. For instance, he describes Ukraine as "too backward." He considers that it would be possible to "integrate Ukraine… politically speaking yes, why not, but economically speaking it would be a disaster."[276]

The ideals of the European Union are key to the structuring of representations. We find the universal values and political models promoted by the EU expressed by means of words such as "democracy" (2), "unity" (5), and "diversity" (9). The word cloud (see figure 5.28) highlights two opposed words ("unity" and "diversity") that recall the motto of the European Union: "United in diversity." These two opposing words remind us that multiplicity and diversity can create a functional system, resulting from the assemblage of diverse and heterogeneous elements. In general, several words used by the respondents are reminiscent of the meaning of the EU motto recalled by the European commission: "The motto of the European Union (…) signifies how Europeans have come together, in the form of the EU, to

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[275] The interview with Galena was conducted in French on the 17/05/2019.
[276] The interview with Aron was conducted in French on the 03/10/2019.

work for peace and prosperity, while at the same time being enriched by the continent's many different cultures, traditions and languages."[277] Indeed, keywords such as "together", "prosperity", "continent", "rich", "culture", "tradition" were used by the respondents. The ideals of EU are also echoed in words such as "hope" (1) and "peace" (2), which illustrate the illusion and expectations linked to the political project of European integration.

Europe was twice defined by the word "security". Dagmara describes Europe as a "safety bubble," a "safe space," and affirmed that she feels unsafe outside Europe: "I feel reassured here, you know. For example, when I was in Brazil, I felt uncomfortable. Even in the United States, you know, I didn't feel comfortable." Here again, we find one of the proclaimed objectives of the EU to ensure the internal security of its citizens. Do Dagmara's words reflect the stereotype of the threatening and dangerous "other", or serve as an affirmation of the central role of the EU at the heart of the process of pacification on the continent, when she declares that she no longer feels safe either in the United Kingdom, where she has lived for five years, since Brexit? In any case, the use of the term "security" confirms the role of institutional and political structures in the representations and relationships to Europe. The reference to Brussels, the capital of the EU, is symbolic since it recalls the central and structuring dimension of the European project. There is no reference to the crisis of the integration model. The official discourses of the EU are reflected in the discourses associated with Europe and show that membership of the EU influences individual perceptions.

To conclude this semantic analysis, it can be said that Europe appears as a cultural area, expressed through behaviours, mentalities, and a way of life, as well as being considered a centre for the dissemination of more general values and certain norms, notably ideological, political, and moral ones, as part of a regional model of integration. In general, the respondents tend to develop homogeneous visions of "Europe" by choosing relatively similar semantic contents, referring to great moral and political values and positive words. Finally, given the small number of respondents in the sample and the disproportion between the number of mental maps collected in France and the UK, it was not possible to identify lexical specificities according to individual variables and to draw definitive conclusions on trends. This makes it difficult to determine the role of one's place of residence and the

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[277] https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/symbols/eu-motto_en

individual. The representations about Europe are multiple and particularly anchored in old representations, such as that of an "old continent", or in the more recent ones concerning the European construction. Based on subjective visions of Europe, dominant representations are revealed by the occurrences and lexical fields of the associated words. The respondents often directly refer to the norms and values carried by the European political system, which confirms the hypothesis of institutional and political weight in the representations.

Conclusion of chapter 5

Chapter 5 sought to describe the subjective representations of Europe based on mental maps and the particular words used to qualify Europe (1). The aim was to make a typology of these representations (2) and to identify, when possible, the determinants of these representations (3).

The analysis of the mental maps and of the associated words reveals that the respondents' mobilities, migratory trajectories, and temporality of migration (particularly in relation to the enlargement and the fall of the Iron Curtain) influence their appropriation and understanding of the European space. The migratory trajectories and mobility practices and projections of NMS migrants are determining elements in their representations, which were not always represented on the map, but were systematically mentioned in the interviews. Culture, affects, feelings, and memories of historical events (such as the Cold War) were all emotional factors that influenced spatial representations at the individual level.

The cross-analysis of the interviews and the mental maps reveals the image of a multifarious Europe, which is crossed and inhabited, idealised, and regionalised, with nuances depending on the respondent's country of residence. The macro-regional space is fluid, its boundaries are blurred, and it is composed of a multitude of interconnecting and interlocking spaces. The process of regional integration appears multifaceted and even contradictory: the corpus of mental maps reveals at the same time integration dynamics from a central core (*i.e.*, idealised Europe) and from clusters of countries (*i.e.*, regionalised Europe). The analysis of the associated words enables us to see that the macro-regional space is a combination of multiple and heterogeneous feelings, ideals, and concrete elements, connected to each other. While the institutional weight in the representations is undeniable through the corpus of associated words, the European macro-regional space is nonetheless a space that is difficult

to characterise, that presents itself in multiple dimensions, and the coherence of which results precisely from this endless multiplicity. It is interesting to notice that the European Union, the weight of which is important in the representations, is also built on this heterogeneous and dynamic assemblage of social and individual representations.

In a sense, this chapter presents regional integration at the grassroots level, by observing the construction of the multiple, dynamic, and complex representations of Europe at the individual level, far from the "top down" integration process led by governments and institutions. The representations appear to be always "in the making" as they constantly assemble and re-assemble elements, without beginning or end. This process is akin to the rhizome.

The analysis of the mental maps and the associated words reveal the cultural, affective, and imaginary dimensions that influence the spatial representations and mobilities of the NMS migrants: these considerations make it possible to nuance the figure of the Eastern European migrant, traditionally studied under the prism of the economic variable, as the respondents often engage with space in an emotional, individual, and irrational way. While this chapter focused on the presentation and analysis of subjective representations of Europe, the following chapter will focus on the consequences that macro-regional representations have on NMS migrants' attachment to space and their sense of belonging.

Chapter 6: Macro-regional feeling of belonging in progress: grasping a European identity?

After having analysed in chapter 5 how NMS migrants perceive the macro-regional space through their mental maps and associated words, in chapter 6 I will consider the ways in which they define themselves within this space in order to grasp the geographical dimension of their identities. Since this chapter aims to study identity *with* space, emotions and feelings will be involved (Relph, 2021). This chapter relies on the constructivist approach, which questions the ability to explain the world as it is. From this perspective, the space can be apprehended from the meanings, emotions, and significances that individuals attribute to the situations in which they find themselves. Decoding and interpreting the meanings and significances that respondents attribute to a space can reveal how the macro-regional space is socially constructed. This approach is not prescriptive because what is found is not taken for granted and it does not aim to specify how individuals should act and relate to space. By contrast, the objective is to understand how the respondents relate to space, based on semi-directive interviews, and how their feelings of place attachments[278] lead to the shaping of their identity and, more broadly, to the emergence of a supranational and European identity, which was one of the objectives sought by the founding fathers of the Community area (Duchesne and Frognier, 1995). Thus, the aim will not be to define the set of components of European identity, but to show the mechanisms that lead NMS migrants to consider themselves as members of a macro-regional community. Above all, it is the individual sense of identity and place attachment that will be studied in this chapter.

While the general discourses on European identity pre-date World War II (Heffernan, 1998), the idea of a European identity based on political and cultural ambitions officially emerged from the unity of the nine member states at the time with the Declaration of European Identity, which was adopted during the European Summit in Copenhagen in 1973. This declaration shows that the idea of a European identity is closely connected to the construction of the EU. European Identity was shaped in line with European integration, especially following the Maastricht Treaty in 1991 when the EU shifted from being a project of economic integration to one that also included political and cultural integration: the

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[278] On place attachment, see Lewicka, 2011; Manzo and Devine-Wright, 2014; Seamon, 2014.

concept of European citizenship was introduced as a form of integration that transcended national identity (Leith *et al.*, 2019). While there was no clear agreement to define what constituted a European identity, cosmopolitanism and diversity commonly became the two main characteristics of European identity. This was probably based on the attempt to make amends for Europe history, marked as it was by nationalism, racism, and xenophobia (Braidotti, 2015). In *Liquid Modernity* (1999), Zygmunt Bauman presents the search for identity as one of the main challenges of modern society, constantly changing, moving, and transforming. These liquid characteristics force one to consider identity as dynamic and fluid. Migrations and increased mobility enable one to understand his approach to identity as a new problem, which takes on its full meaning through the very act of moving: "we seek and construct and keep together the communal references of our identities while on the move" (Bauman, 1991). Some researchers, inspired by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), referred to migrants' identities as nomadic identities to both challenge the idea of unitary and fixed national identities and propose a more hybrid and complex vision of identity as constructed in movement (Braidotti, 2015; Vandenbroeck *et al.*, 2009).

Identity will be understood in this chapter neither in an administrative sense (materialised by the identity card) nor an essentialist one (understood as inalienable and necessary), but rather in a constructivist way (as opposed to simply being given). The notion of identity can be defined in three main types: a social identity, which corresponds to the classification of an individual or a group based on characteristics attributed by others such as professional, family, sexual or gender status; an individual identity resulting from subjectivity and self-consciousness; and a collective identity, which refers to the feeling and will shared by several individuals belonging to the same group based on social, historical, or economic backgrounds for example (Pożarlik, 2013). The representation of the "self" and "us" is constitutive of the definitions of individual and collective identities, on which this reflection is based. Individuals are not fully aware of the identities that often escape them and that can often be blurred, fluid, hybrid or fractured (Hall, 2009). Many scholars have underlined the determining role of others and the construction of difference in shaping identities (Barth, 2010; Fage-Butler and Gorbahn, 2020; Glissant and Chamoiseau, 2009). According to these scholars, the identity of an individual is relative, contextual, and influenced by the perceptions she/he has of others, leading to mimicry or differentiation.

Several geographers have used identity as a synonym for belonging (Duchesne and Frognier, 1995; Antonsich, 2010; Armstrong 1998; Madsen and Van Naerssen, 2003; Sporton and Valentine, 2007). Belonging is here considered as one parameter of identity. Belonging is a vaguely defined and under-theorized notion (Crowley, 1999; Anthias, 2006), which some studies have linked to the feeling of being at home in a place (Antonsich, 2010). "Home" does not refer here to the domestic material space but to a symbolic space of familiarity, emotional attachment, comfort, and security (Hooks, 2009). Belonging, which is understood as a feeling and sentiment of attachment to a place and is developed through individual and everyday practices, must be differentiated from the other definition of belonging as an official membership manifested in citizenship (Fenster, 2005). Belonging has a spatial dimension (place attachment) and a social one (identification with a group of people or society).

I choose to approach belonging through feelings ("feelings of belonging") insofar as this allows us to question belonging to a place from the point of view of the individual. In this sense, belonging will be considered above all as a feeling, a sensation that emanates from individual subjectivity and self-consciousness. The translation of "feelings of belonging" is complex; the expression that best corresponds to it in French is "sentiments d'appartenance" (Antonsich, 2010). This diversion through translation shows that talking about "feelings" of belonging raises the question of belonging as it is experienced, felt, and presented through the respondents' discourses. This approach is part of the humanistic geography movement and is inspired by the notion of spatial experience, understood as the way in which a person both experiences and constructs a reality. Spatial experience contributes to the ways in which an individual arranges the world via perceptions, representations, emotions, and conceptions and makes sense of situations, shapes his/her being and positions herself/himself in the world. This notion implies a reflexive return on oneself (Tuan, 2006).

The "new regionalism" approach, on which my research work is largely based, argues that the creation of a collective identity is the final stage of regional integration and that shared representations among members of a society along with feelings of place attachments are the expression of a collective identity (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000). While the previous chapter demonstrated that there is no single fixed and defined representation of Europe, the typology (see chapter 5) did highlight striking similarities in the relationship to Europe. The existence of similarities in the representations can be interpreted, based on the conclusions

of the NRT, as the manifestation of the ongoing construction of collective identities. However, such a consideration implies that integration is conceived as a linear, chronological, and unidirectional process. The normative and conceptual limits of such a definition were demonstrated in the previous chapters, in particular by using the concept of the rhizome to think differently about the idea of a process. By taking up the notion of collective identity central to the new regionalism, the originality of this chapter will be to reject the linear and monolithic aspect of this theory and show that integration can be apprehended as the series of interpersonal relationships that form over time as well as multidimensional and multi-spatial attachments (Ryan and Mulholland, 2015; Ryan, 2018). It is therefore not a question of considering collective identity as a determining and inevitable stage of regional integration, but of acknowledging the respondents' identification with a macro-regional space and wondering whether the frequency/diffusion of this feeling among the respondents can be considered to be a contribution to a collective (European) identity under construction.

The link between spatial representations and individual and collective identities has been highlighted by several studies, which consider that individual migratory trajectories, spatial representations, and sense of belonging enable one to understand the formation of collective identities (Guérin-Pace, 2006; Belhedi, 2006). The grouping of individual feelings of identity can give rise to collective feelings of territorial identity (Guermond, 2008). Several geographers have stressed the need to consider the personal and subjective dimension in the analysis of collective identities, arguing that studying collective identities cannot be done without taking into account individual identities, from which the collective is composed (Berdoulay and Entrikin, 1998; Berque, 2004). Focusing on identities and their spatial dimensions from the perspective of individuals permits us to go beyond a normative and essentializing definition of (European) identity. This perspective is based on the consideration that collective and macro-regional identity is (also) embodied in individuals' feelings of (not) belonging, place attachments and shared representations. This consideration is a prerequisite for showing how regional integration can be understood from a social constructivist approach. Studies have shown that the way individuals relate to a space is an influence on the construction of that space since it determines the representations, practices, and uses of it (Di Méo, 2002) Therefore, it seems relevant to ask if and how place attachments and the expression of a European identity contribute to the construction of a European space from "below," which is one of the main purposes of my research. To

understand the interrelations between identity issues and regional integration, I based my thinking on macro-regional studies about multi-scalar identity enlightened by the geographical concept of territorial identity (Debarbieux, 2006; Guérin-Pace and Guermond, 2006).

Chapter 6 is going to focus on feelings of belonging and place attachments as these were the topics most frequently addressed by the respondents in the interviews: these topics, in regard to NMS migrants' identities, must be understood through the prism of mobilities and international migrations. Place attachments are not static: over a lifetime, individuals develop attachments to places several times and in various locations. For international migrants, this process of identifying with a new place is very specific as it involves roaming and rootedness in very different places and countries with different cultures, socio-politic environments, and landscapes. International migrations have been presented as a source of transnational belonging (Fortier, 2000; Christiansen and Hedetoft, 2004; Conway *et al*., 2008), which increases plural forms of belonging "here" (the host country) and "there" (the country of origin and the places in which an individual has lived in general). In this way, increased mobility transforms the links that individuals have with their hometown or home country and diversifies the place attachments and forms they take (Taylor, 2010). The prism of mobility crystallizes the multiplicity of scales and place attachments (Gilmartin, 2008).

Several studies have criticised the sterility of the debates concerning the notion of European identity, considering it to be non-existent. Taking these into account, the aim of this chapter is to acknowledge that the respondents identify as "European" and to understand how they relate to the macro-regional space. Many studies have reported that regional integration often developed in an economic and commercial manner, and was distinct from a population's feelings of belonging, which contributed to the lack of interest that populations showed towards economic-based regional areas such as the EU (Paux Samson, 2016). This lack of interest is regularly illustrated by opinion polls such as the Eurobarometer (Schwok, 2009).[279] This chapter goes beyond this initial pragmatism by taking into account the role of subjective feelings of belonging in regional integration. While it is impossible to embrace all the modalities of the construction of macro-regional belonging, chapter 6 will use the

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[279] https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/screen/home

respondents' interviews to focus, via an empirical approach, on the existence of this feeling of belonging, its intensity, and its main dimensions.

While chapter 5 highlighted that NMS migrants perceive Europe through a heterogeneity of elements (cultural, religious, linguistic diversity), chapter 6 will consider how this perceived heterogeneity contributes to a sense of belonging and a collective (European) identity, both of which are seen as determinant factors of regional integration according to the NRT. The assumption that underlies chapter 6 is that a sense of belonging to a macro-regional space is the manifestation of a regional integration process that is already underway. Do NMS migrants' feelings of belonging to a macro-regional space contribute to the strengthening of European integration and the development of a European identity, as was claimed by a third of the respondents? It is important to note the tension between individual feelings of belonging, based mainly on emotions, and the more rational collective social identity, which is always an intellectual, social, or political construct (Guermond, 2008).

This chapter is structured in two parts. The first section will analyse the way in which respondents referred to their feelings of belonging, mobilising the national scale or rejecting it, mentioning a transnational space. The second section will argue that NMS migrants are crucial players in regional integration through their identification with a macro-regional space.

1. Multiplicity of spatial belonging

1.1. Two homes?

« *Moitié français, donc et moitié libanais ? Pas du tout ! L'identité ne se compartimente pas, elle ne se répartit ni par moitiés, ni par tiers, ni par plages cloisonnées. Je n'ai pas plusieurs identités, j'en ai une seule faite de tous les éléments qui l'ont façonnée, selon un 'dosage' particulier qui n'est jamais le même d'une personne à l'autre.* »[280] *(Maalouf, 1998: 10).*

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[280] Personal translation into English: "So half French and half Lebanese? Not at all! Identity cannot be compartmentalised, it cannot be divided into halves, thirds or compartmentalised areas. I don't have several identities, I have only one made of all the elements that shaped it, according to a particular 'dosage' that is never the same from one person to another."

In this passage, the writer Amin Maalouf (1998: 10) recalls the subjective dimension of identity and the difficulty of grasping the several elements that shape it. He expresses the uniqueness of identity, composed as it is by components that are arranged by each person according to a multitude of potential referents such as social, religious, and professional affiliation. The identification with a space (in this case with a country) is only one potential identity referent among others. Both individually and as groups, people identify with places, such as the region or city where they grew up or are now living, or one's place of birth as proof of one's personal identity. However, Maalouf suggests that this referent, although it is not necessarily and always mobilised by individuals, is particularly central and determining for migrants as migration leads the individual to question where they belong and their identity more broadly (Krzyżanowski and Wodak, 2008).

Identity can be manifested at the individual level by reference to a particular place to which an individual feels particularly attached (Guermond, 2006).[281] This attachment may correspond, for example, to the places in which an individual has lived. As several transnational studies have shown, migrants are doubly engaged as they live both "here" and "there" (see chapter 4): their reference space is multi-sited and encompasses both the country of origin and the host country (Mazzucato, 2008; Ng and Zhang, 2022). Some respondents, such as Madalina,[282] a psychologist from Romania living in Nancy, use the expression "in-between" to describe their identity and the difficulty of positioning themselves within two countries (Boccagni, 2016; Beck-Gernsheim, 2007; Yildiz and Hill, 2017): "How can I put it? It's a mosaic. I see myself as having an identity that is now a bit in-between, i.e. I will never be really French, it's not possible, but I'm not completely Romanian either, I'm a bit in-between. I think it's a bit of a challenge for each first generation of emigrants to find this in-between identity. It's not always easy to find a place between the two." With these words, Madalina reminds us that identity is not definitive but is negotiated daily. Defining identity as "in-between" and as a "mosaic" reminds us that identity is plural and made by multiple relations, many place attachments, and heterogenous elements.

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[281] Space provides emotional parameters for identity (Georgiou, 2010) in so far as the way individuals define themselves can be spatialised – in relation to the places in which they have lived, such as to their neighbourhood, their city, their country (Peace *et al.*, 2004).

[282] The interview with Madalina was conducted in French on the 08/03/2020.

The characteristic of identity as an "in-between" state, which has been the subject of extensive literature, recalls the characterization of the rhizome as "always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 25). This characterisation helps us to understand that migrants' identities have no organisation or chronology and are characterised by movements and changes. Édouard Glissant used the image of the rhizome to describe his concept of plural identity (1996). According to this approach, identity is not fixed and cannot be well defined: by contrast, it is unstable, shifting, and at the crossroads of relations. The rhizome-identity, as defined by Glissant, admits neither a single place of origin, nor a univocal history, but is born of the relationships it creates. This is also voiced by Amin Maalouf when he states that identity is "made up of all the elements that are shaping it."

Madalina uses the word "challenge" to underline the fact that identity is not something given but is almost a quest or difficult process. However, paradoxically, Madalina establishes certain limits, notably the fact that she can "never be really French"; without being able to name these limits, she presupposes that some immutable characteristics frame identity and limit its field of possibilities, which goes against the idea that identity "is not a given." Finally, the word "mosaic" evokes both the cultural fragmentation of identity that is echoed in her mental map of Europe (see figure F.6 in appendices), but also the multiple influences constituting identity. The fact that she uses the same word "mosaic" to describe both Europe and her identity underlines the close link between her identity and her representation of space.

Being at home represents an intimate mode of belonging (Hall, 2009). Often the respondents referred to "two homes" or to the host country as a "second home."[283] Ilona, a university professor from Hungary living in Nancy, refers to her "two homes" as "two loves," expressing the deep sentimental bond she feels for the two countries to which she is attached: "I live it daily as two loves. There is the love that you don't choose from the country where you were born and that is often the parents' love. We are attached to it as we are attached to our parents. And the other love, which for me is France, is the chosen love: the love of the spouse. The second love is just as important as the first one. When I am with one love, I miss the other one, but afterwards, once I am in the other country, with the other

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[283] Zuzana said: "I like this country and I like the people as well. So, we can say it's my second home." The interview with Zuzana was conducted in English on the 12/11/2020.

love, I miss the other one. I have to navigate between the two. You need both. Both are equally important in fact. I really feel like I'm both."[284] This quote enables us to understand that elements constituting identity are not necessarily hierarchical. Ilona evokes a difference in nature rather than degree: her feelings of belonging to Hungary and France are not on the same level and are thus not in competition as they are different kinds of love. In fact, they complement each other and represent a necessity for her: while one is imposed on her, the other is a choice. Through this comparison, Ilona invokes the tension that exists between social determinism and free will and suggests that identity is a mixture of these two elements. Her notion of choice is very interesting and reminiscent of Taylor's work suggesting that identity with a place has for many people become a matter of choice rather than necessity (2010). Ilona's identity is an open-ended process, evolving and shifting from being partly inherited (the parents' love) to being constructed through choice (the spouse's love). Ilona's relationship to space is here not rational but purely sentimental and is triggered by a feeling of "lack," which was also described by other respondents.

Several respondents expressed a feeling of being at home when they spoke of the lack they felt when finding themselves away from a country. Ula, a Polish migrant living in Swansea, misses Poland or Wales depending on where she is: "I feel like I've got two homes. When I'm in Poland, I kind of miss Wales. When I'm in Wales, I miss Poland."[285] Dora, a migrant from Poland living in Swansea, also says that she realised how attached she was to Swansea when, after a two-week holiday with her family in Poland, she couldn't wait to go back to Swansea. Zuzana, a Polish migrant, explains that she realised she was at home in the UK when she returned to Poland after studying there and missed Cardiff: "After university, I decided to go back to Poland because I didn't know what I wanted to do, what kind of job I wanted to have. But after a year, I decided to come back here because I found that life is easier here. I have loads of friends here, so I was missing them, I was missing my boyfriend and I think I got used to the style of living here."[286] It is ultimately the dissatisfaction and impression of a place's incompleteness (due to the lack of social relations and the differences in everyday practices) that strengthens the respondents' attachment to where they are not.

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[284] The interview with Ilona was conducted in French on the 14/12/2019.
[285] The interview with Ula was conducted in English on the 03/10/2020.
[286] The interview with Zuzana was conducted in English on the 12/11/2020.

Conversely, this sense of being at home was sometimes expressed through the respondents' feelings when they went somewhere else. Maja, a Polish migrant living in Swansea, explains: "When I go to Poland for a holiday break, I feel like I'm going home. But then, when I'm coming back here, I also feel I'm coming back home. So, I feel like I've got two homes."[287] Maja has a similar feeling when she is going to Poland and to Wales: this is why she feels she has "two homes". For Emilia, a Polish migrant living in Swansea, this feeling is revealed by a somewhat unconscious automatism: "I feel like I do have two homes. I think this is my home because it is where my closest family is, but when I go to my parents, I still say: 'I am going home.'"[288] The fact that she uses the word "still" shows that her relationship to Poland as "home" is explained by a kind of habit and almost uncontrolled reflex: it is because she is used to calling where she comes from "home" that she feels she has two homes. Tomasz, a Polish migrant living in Swansea, also states that he has two homes and that his feelings of belonging are expressed through happiness: "It is a strange feeling. When I am here, I'm happy here and when I go to Poland for a couple of weeks, I'm happy there."[289] The use of the adjective "strange" shows the difficulty he has in describing this feeling. He places Poland and Wales on the same level through an identical and repetitive grammatical construction. The interviews of Maja, Emilia, and Tomasz help us to understand that feelings of belonging are not hierarchical and manifest themselves through feelings that may be difficult to describe.

Both the presence and absence of a place may trigger this dual feeling of belonging, which sometimes seems to occur when one leaves a place, or when one arrives somewhere. It is therefore through the feeling of lack and the very act of moving that the feeling of belonging is expressed for the respondents. Thus, we can see that a sense of belonging means something very specific for migrants, particularly mobile individuals. Their relationship to space is purely emotional and difficult to express in words. The repetition of the verb "to feel" underlines the subjectivity of the respondents' comments and the sensory prism through which they approach the space. However, they try to rationalise these feelings of belonging by mobilising several justifications.

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[287] The interview with Maja was conducted in English on the 04/02/2020.
[288] The interview with Emilia was conducted in English on the 16/11/2020.
[289] The interview with Tomasz was conducted in English on the 01/02/2021.

1.2. The role of time and family

There were two main reasons given by the respondents to explain why they feel at home in their host country: time and social relations such as friends and family. According to the respondents, time exercises a strong influence on their feelings of belonging: the longer someone stays somewhere, the more attached they feel to the place (Erdal and Ezzati, 2014). This argument is used as a justification for feeling at home somewhere and functions almost as an unquestionable argument from authority. Margarita, a Bulgarian migrant living in Cardiff, declared: "I feel I have both identities now, because obviously for so many years living here, I absorbed a lot of the local culture. But also, you know, I lived 27 years in Bulgaria so it's a part of me, it's not something I think that will ever go away."[290] She suggests that feelings of belonging accumulate as time goes by. She has an essentialist conception of identity, stating that her identity is structured by behaviours and culture. However, this does not mean that she considers her identity to be stable and fixed: on the contrary, she considers that it evolves over time.

Dimitrinka, a Bulgarian migrant living in Nancy, considers that the time she has spent in France is the logical and indisputable reason for her sense of belonging: "This year, in fact, I did a little calculation and it's been 18 years in Bulgaria, and 18 years in France. I've been living in Bulgaria for half my life and this year I've been living here for half my life."[291] Ilona segments her life in terms of the time she spent living in France and Hungary: "I feel as much French as Hungarian in fact. French, because I've lived more than two thirds of my life in France". The use of the word "because" emphasises the causal link Ilona sees between the time she lived in France and her sense of belonging.

Tomasz also invokes the temporal argument when he says: "I probably feel more British than Polish because I spent more than the half of my life in this country." In a way, duration represents a rational legitimacy for several of the respondents' sense of belonging when there is in fact nothing universal about it; a person could live in France longer and not feel any attachment and vice versa. The use of the temporal argument demonstrates a desire to rationalise feelings of belonging by giving them a status of legitimacy. However, this raises normative limits and questions the forms that attachment to space might take as well as the

[290] The interview with Margarita was conducted in English on the 11/02/2021.
[291] The interview with Dimitrinka was conducted in French on the 14/08/2019.

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temporal limits from which this attachment is legitimised. This position is all the more dangerous as it could contribute to a denial of people's sense of belonging and rendering invisible the other factors of attachment to space, which cannot be measured according to a time scale.

According to other respondents, social links, especially familial ties, contribute to the establishment of a sense of belonging to space. Boryana declared: "UK and Bulgaria both feel part of me. I feel like I belong to Bulgaria, and I do belong to here as well, in a way. I definitely say I feel at home for one main reason: having my partner and my son. They make it feel like it's definitely a place where we all belong. Personally, I think family is how to make it feel homely. It's something that is very important to me."[292] Similarly, Ida considers feelings of belonging to be rooted in social interactions: "It is not only the city, but it's also my life here, it's also my friends, it's also my social life, it's my professional life."[293] These statements recall the definition of belonging as a mode of social interaction developed by Suzanne Hall (2009), which highlights the close links between social and spatial relations: it is not so much the physical characteristics of a place that create attachments and feelings of belonging so much as the social ties that are formed and embedded there and give sense to the place.

1.3. A lack of spatial belonging

Although the majority of respondents insisted on the multiplicity of their spaces of belonging, it is also necessary to consider those who rejected the idea of belonging to any space whatsoever since they do not recognize themselves in the identity structures proposed by the national framework (the national identity is understood here as a legal bond that links an individual to a particular state and attributes rights and obligations to each) and they could not find any other reference structures to support their identity. Dovy, who moved ten years ago to Swansea from Lithuania, stressed his absence of feelings of belonging: "I don't feel anywhere at home. I am homeless. I am still different, I am still not the Welsh, British type. And Lithuania, I don't want to live there, I don't want to die there."[294] By defining the typical Welsh/British person based on preconceived and stereotyped ideas such as politeness

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[292] The interview with Boryana was conducted in English on the 17/02/2021.
[293] The interview with Ida was conducted in English on the 02/12/2020.
[294] The interview with Dovy was conducted in English on the 07/02/2021.

and friendliness, Dovy insists on his difference and uniqueness in order to justify his lack of belonging. It is by essentializing the average Welsh/British person that Dovy expresses his feeling of being different. He also highlights the link between identity and spatial belonging when he states "I am still not" to justify why he feels "homeless." Finally, by introducing the idea of will ("want to live"; "want to die"), he places one's sense of belonging within a wider life project, composed of choices. This approach is shared by Erika, when she declares: "It doesn't really feel like home, to be honest. I wouldn't say that Lithuania feels like home either. So, I think I am going to try and find somewhere where it does feel like home, because the UK, I don't think it that's it, to be honest. People can't even tell that I am foreign, but there's always been that little thing that I don't feel I'm at home and I don't feel I want to stay here forever. It's maybe because I kind of want to move around and I don't really want to stay in one place, for my whole life. So maybe that's also why."[295] Erika, like Dovy, refers to her status as a foreigner and the feeling of being different. In both cases, it is their desire to move that contributes to their lack of belonging. Erika's identity, like Dovy's, is constructed "on the move," and is based on the possibility of migrating. In some ways, it is this purported spatial detachment and openness to the outside world that best capture their migratory identity. This recalls the definition of a migrant's nomadic identity as being constructed on the move (Braidotti, 2015; Vandenbroeck *et al*., 2009), as well as the notion of identity being an open-ended process, constructed through choices (Taylor, 2010).

Four respondents referred to their identity as being composed of percentages of nationality, thereby underlining the multiple aspects of their sense of belonging.[296] Although Amin Maalouf (1998) criticised the division of identity into different nationalities, the respondents' use of percentages illustrates a desire to rationalise one's identity and to control and understand one's emotions. Daria, a Polish migrant living in Wales, declared: "Nowhere I feel I really belong 100%. I don't belong in Poland 100% or in UK 100%."[297] Her sense of belonging is expressed by an incomplete sense of belonging to her country of origin as well as to her host country. She explains this feeling of incompleteness by her rejection of certain national elements from both countries: "There are many things that I really don't like about

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[295] The interview with Erika was conducted in English on the 25/02/2021.
[296] Except for Dagmara, according to who the nationality of origin represents the largest share, and the nationality of the host country occupies a larger share as time goes by. She emphasises the role of time when she says: "Now it's 60% Polish, and 40% French, you see." Dagmara's reference to percentages is thus more reminiscent of a fragmentation of identity than its multiplicity.
[297] The interview with Daria was conducted in English on the 02/12/2021.

Poland, but there are many things I love about Poland. And it is the same with Wales." Daria's sense of belonging is therefore not a total adherence to a space but is based on an individual and arbitrary selection: she described her identity as being a combination of elements chosen according to her preferences. This selective identity, constructed from liked and disliked elements reminds us that identity as such has a performative dimension through the way an individual embodies, enacts, and presents himself/herself. This approach reminds us of the works of Judith Butler, and, in particular, her argument that "identity is performatively constituted" (1990: 33). Whilst her theory is centered around gender identity, this American philosopher and gender theorist insisted that it can be applied to identity as a universal concept involving performance and choices. She argues that identity can be understood as an ongoing process and a perpetual process of becoming, always provisional rather than complete, immutable, or stable.

The language of percentage does not lead the respondents to describe their identity as simply being divided between the country of origin and the host country because the percentages do not always add up. Ida stated: "Maybe I am 70% from Poland and 70% from Wales. So, when you combine it together, it's more than 100%!"[298] By qualifying her identity as exceeding 100%, Ida expresses the fact that her identity is enriched by her migration experience, which does not erase and replace her past identity but represents a real added value to an already-present feeling of belonging. Ida reveals that her identity is dynamic and fluctuates: "I sometimes feel I belong to Wales and sometimes I don't. It fluctuates." Assessing the identity of an individual is thus difficult as it evolves according to its temporal and spatial context. Though the reference to percentages shows a desire on behalf of the respondents to measure their degree of belonging, this is frustrated by the difficulty of being precise. The respondents' degree of belonging thus remains somehow fuzzy even if they refer at first sight to specific measures. It appears that identity cannot be measured as it relates to feelings, which are not quantifiable. Even if some respondents try to measure their sense of belonging using percentages, they do not seek to fragment or hierarchise place attachments based on their migration trajectory and the percentage rate assigned.

While migration has sometimes been considered as being responsible for weakening feelings of belonging and triggering a certain disruption or rupture of identity, researchers have

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[298] The interview with Ida was conducted in English on the 02/12/2020.

pointed out that the mobility paradigm has changed our relationship to spatial belonging (Di Méo, 2004; Guérin-Pace, 2006). Indeed, residing in a foreign country today is no longer synonymous with a rupture of identity and belonging because, in many cases, it is not an irremediable process, and it is facilitated and smoothed by the developments in transport and communication. Some studies have even suggested that mobility can reinforce spatial belonging (Gustafson, 2009; Van der Land, 1998). The absence of belonging felt by some migrants is not related to or produced by the migration process, which has often been blamed for producing uprootedness and loss of meaningful attachment to places. For Marta, a PhD student from Poland living in Nancy, the lack of spatial attachment she feels was not caused by moving, but was present prior to her migration: "I miss this sense of belonging to somewhere. I don't think if I were in Poland, I would have a sense of belonging 100%, because I never had it."[299] The feeling of incompleteness is not necessarily due to a loss of spatial identity caused by migration. Thus, if it is not a consequence, a disruption caused by displacement, one might ask whether it is precisely the absence of the spatial component of an individual's identity that might drive them to migrate. Marta is not the only one who justified migrating because she did not feel at home in her country of origin. Miky,[300] Irina,[301] and Julia[302] also stated that they never really "fitted" in Romania or Poland before. Attachment to space is intimately intertwined with the social relationships that take place there and which directly influence the respondents' feelings of belonging. The spatial dimension of people's identity can thus be seen as a continuous, never-ending process that is part of a broader life course, and of which migration forms only one modality.

By considering the feeling of belonging as a non-hierarchical spectrum (*i.e.* where one national identity does not prevail over another), one is able to go beyond the normative aspect of integration. The relationship that migrants have to a multi-national space explains how macro-regional integration unfolds at the individual level: the more that a space has been inhabited and visited by an individual, the more likely he/she will develop feelings of belonging to a macro-regional space. NMS migrants in France and the UK contribute to the development of feelings of belonging to a common space they call Europe. Indeed, active links between the country of origin and the country of residence can lead to the emergence of a macro-regional space invested by representations. The links are often manifested in

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[299] The interview with Marta was conducted in English on the 20/02/2021.
[300] The interview with Miky was conducted in English on the 29/01/2021.
[301] The interview with Irina was conducted in English on the 06/02/2021.
[302] The interview with Julia was conducted in English on the 18/11/2020.

concrete terms through travel, circulation, and economic, social, and political exchanges. However, they can also take on a more symbolic and emotional dimension by referring to the individual's place attachments and belongings, as expressed by the respondents.

2. Turning Europe into a space of reference for macro-regional identities

2.1. European identity, the great absentee

The respondents often described their sense of belonging as a feeling that does not fully coincide with a single country. By contrast, for most of the respondents, the national scale appears as an insufficient or even unsatisfactory means of describing place attachment (Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore, 2017). The European scale is often mobilised through reference to European identity, which is considered to be a more adequate way of expressing the respondents' feelings of belonging. European identity can be defined as a psycho-sociological or socio-political process of attachment to the European space or to the EU. This multi-dimensional process emanates from various actors (individual, political, institutional) and is therefore composed of a series of ambiguities, arising directly from the very complexity of the actors: similarity and difference; objectivity and subjectivity; individual and collective; permanence, contextuality and transformation. These are all elements and notions that must be taken into account when considering this process (Duchesne, 2010). By European identity, I refer to the representations and manners that individuals relate to their "European identity", and more generally as a collective identity as opposed to national identity. This analysis is based on the respondents' perceptions of their own identity, their feelings of belonging, and the way in which they present themselves as "European".

The discourses on European identity that emerged in the post-World War II period of reconstruction are rooted in the policies of the EEC/EU institutions and became a rhetorical pillar of foreign and security policy in the framework of the enlargement of the EU requiring the creation of a supranational identity. These considerations are based on the assumption that the economic integration of the EU was not a sufficient basis, and that the EU should be supported by a common – in this case supranational – identity to legitimate its existence. By reaffirming the dominance of national identities and the otherness of nationals from other

EU member states, the Brexit crisis has revealed the controversies surrounding the notion of a European identity at a regional level. This crisis led to a collective questioning of the content of this collective identity, with a particular focus on the role of immigration in European identity (Schwok, 2009; Ashcroft and Bevir, 2016; Wellings, 2018; Leith *et al*., 2019). In this context, it is relevant to question this notion through the analysis of the interviews of NMS migrants and the way in which they do or do not identify themselves with the European space. The word "identification" refers to De Swaan's definition of social identification, which is the "process in which people come to feel that some other human beings are much, the same 'as they are and still others are more, unlike' them" (De Swaan, 1995). The expression "identification to Europe" is preferred to "European identity" since it emphasises the notion of process and the relational dimension.

Skeptics of European identity denounce the lack of theoretical underpinnings for the notion (Favell, 2005; Favell and Reimer, 2021) and argue that national identities are the only ones that are solid because they are supported by institutions. This approach considers that identities presuppose a collective history negotiated by groups and relayed by the institutions for the individuals to recognise themselves in it. No official definition of "European identity" exists and the weakness of the institutional apparatus is held for the deficit of European identity by a number of studies (Slijkerman, 2017). These studies show that while the institutions have participated in a quest for a symbolic imaginary (flag, anthem, passport, identity card, citizenship, euro), the populations have not invested it with meaning and emotions (Leith *et al*., 2019). The relativity of perceptions and the multiplicity of relationships with Europe complicate the discourses on European identity and call into question the very point of talking about it. What is more, talking about a European identity raises important normative issues. Firstly, this identity category is insubstantial because it is indefinite and was never precisely defined by the respondents. Moreover, this designation reinforces the false image of a unified totality, which has been critiqued in the previous chapters (see chapter 2, 1.2.4), and which serves to exclude "others", those who are not "European", which, once again, runs counter to the fundamental force of integration. However, the fact that various respondents identified with "Europe" should not be ignored because it may lead to questions about the forms that these feelings of belonging take and their consequences for the macro-regional space.

2.2. "Not really from there, not really from here, I am European"

This sub-section will focus on the identification of an individual as "European". Studies have evidenced a European awareness and consciousness emerging from "the other Europe" (Rupnik, 1993), motivated by the aspiration of the population to defend it, or to join it in the post-Cold War context (Prażuch, 2003). Several respondents referred to Europe in order to express the feeling that their country of origin inadequately reflected their sense of belonging, thus illustrating the need for a redefined space of identification in which national identity no longer dominates. This does not mean that the feeling of being "European" is incompatible with the adherence to national identity or even regional identities, as shown, for instance, by the fact that attachment to "Europe" has been a key element of Scottish, Catalan, and Welsh nationalism (Dubet *et al*., 2019). This shows that rootedness in a region, nation, and culture does not necessarily form an obstacle to European identity: on the contrary it can contribute to it (Duchesne, 2008). This is what Agnieszka, a Polish migrant living in Nancy, implies when she says: "There is the first identity, the second identity, and there can be the third and the fourth, etc. It is such as the Venn diagram. We are multi-identity. We have a basic identity and then another identity is superimposed, and so on. And all this is part of the European identity. The Polish and French identities are part of the European identity circle. We have a mixed identity. It's not worth insisting which one is more important."[303] By referring to the Venn diagram Agnieszka describes her identity in a comparable way to how she represented Europe on her mental map (see figure 5.25). Finally, European identity appears here as a combination of indissociable and shifting elements, which are arbitrarily and indefinitely arranged. The assemblage of the different elements composing the European identity appears to be individual and not hierarchical.

For some respondents, European identity constitutes one of the most significant groups to which they feel they belong and in whose history they project themselves. This is expressed by Lenka, a Czech migrant living in Nancy: "I feel European, and Czech, I feel Francophile and Francophone."[304] Magdalena, a Romanian migrant living in Wales, lists her different belongings too: "I don't feel British, and I don't think I will ever feel British because I have different roots. I am a Latin person, a European citizen, I am a Romanian citizen. I definitely feel European because I feel welcome wherever I go in Europe. In Spain, Belgium, wherever

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[303] The interview with Agnieszka was conducted in French on the 03/03/2020.
[304] The interview with Lenka was conducted in French on the 20/05/2019.

I go, nobody looks at me differently. Now that Romania is in the EU, they see that Romania and Romanians are not as bad as what they thought. Wherever I am in the continent, I feel very comfortable."[305] For Lenka and Magdalena, the feeling of being European adds to the national feeling. Rather than being opposed to one another, European identity and national identity tend to overlap (Wihtol de Wenden, 2000). The establishment of emotional links to Europe appears to be rooted in the strength of national allegiances: multiple allegiances are the primary vector of identification (Duchesne and Frognier, 2002). It is through mobility (being "welcome wherever (she) go(es)") that Magdalena finds the greatest expression of her sense of belonging. This result is consistent with numerous studies that have presented mobility as a factor in the development of a sense of European belonging. In the 1960s the political scientist Ronald Inglehart established a link between the fact that young people travelled and their support for a political union in Europe. More recently, scholars showed that the Erasmus exchange programmes have also contributed to developing forms of identification with Europe (Carlo, 2013; Rouet, and Côme, 2013; Close, 2013; Oborune, 2013; Mitchell, 2012; James, 2018; Ambrosi, 2013).

"Not really from there, not really from here, I am European."[306] In this sentence, Dimitrinka acknowledge that her sense of European belonging results from her migration, which is responsible for change, instability, and uprooting. Migration, understood as an actual process of crossing borders, as a movement beyond the limits of a place, serves to transform the self. She stresses the inadequacy of the national scale as a reference framework and suggests the need to rethink an integration scale that is macro-regional in order to be able to take into account her sense of belonging. More than a bi-national experience between the country of origin and the host country, she evokes an undefined transnational space in order to inscribe her identity within a supra-national space. Dimitrinka mobilises the European scale because she "no longer feels Bulgarian and will never feel French". European identity appears as necessary for her to find her place in a transnational space when neither the country of origin nor the host country is adequate to reflect how she feels. Mobilising on a European scale is a way for one to find one's position and a balance between being an immigrant in the host country and an emigrant in the country of origin. It is possible to ask whether referring to a European identity is not a way to counterbalance the feeling to not

[305] The interview with Magdalena was conducted in English on the 25/11/2020.
[306] The interview with Dimitrinka was conducted in French on the 14/08/2019.

being at home anywhere. In this sense, European identity would offer a convenient spatial framework for individuals who feel uprooted and lost.

Mobility appears to be a factor in the strengthening of European identity: mobility within the EU in the case of respondents in general, but also outside Europe. It is the encounter with the "other," the non-European, that reinforces the feeling of belonging to Europe. Paweł, a Polish migrant living in Nancy, worked ten years in the US and explained that this experience was decisive in the construction of his European identity: "I feel mostly European, you know, because I've moved around a lot. You know, when I was in the United States, I had a decision to make (either staying there or coming back) because I couldn't afford to work in the US for 6 months and then come back another time. And I said to myself: I have my family in Europe, I have my history in Europe, and I am European (I say European because I've also lived in France at that time). I feel very open."[307] His awareness of being European coincided with his decision to return to France where his close family was living at the time. His sense of identity is very much linked to his individual background (what he calls his "history", and his "family") and is directly rooted in his social relationships. If the EU institutions seek legitimisation through the development of a European identity, Paweł categorically differentiates the macro-regional space with which he identifies and the EU: "European, yes, but not from the European Union in Brussels. It's because I feel European by culture rather than by politics." Paweł's comments reflect a wider sense of disconnection from the EU as a political structure. He argues that it is through culture that identities are constructed. Though, unlike the EU, Europe does not exist as something tangible, Paweł would rather identify himself with an ideal image of Europe, which he cannot really define in a precise manner, but which he roughly associates with continental Europe (Grataloup and Capdepuy, 2013).[308] This process of macro-regional identification thus seems to have been built in parallel with the efforts of the European Commission without the EU's legitimacy being recognised by the population. We might ask whether or not the EU benefits from this process of identification with Europe. Does this process of identification with Europe serve to strengthen the legitimacy of the EU or, on the contrary, to further stigmatise its "political" dimension? Paweł underlines the paradox that although the EU seeks to construct a European identity within its area, that European identity is actually tending to reject the EU as it develops.

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[307] The interview with Paweł was conducted in French on the 21/09/2019.
[308] Paweł's mental map corresponds to the category 2 of the typology (see chapter 5).

The respondents do not describe being European as a homogeneous identity category. As the macro-regional space was regionalised on the mental maps of the respondents (see chapter 5), some NMS migrants described their European identity as falling into several categories based on where they came from: Zora declared that she was a "European from Eastern Europe."[309] She explains: "(it) is something different because we have a different mentality. I am half Bulgarian, half Czech, and I speak Russian, I have a great affection for Russia, not for communist Russia, but Russia of poets, musicians, writers, so it's also another Slavic mentality."[310] This confirms that the long-standing division of Europe between West and East has not been erased as it is still embedded in the NMS migrants' discourses and feelings of belonging. To identify with Europe does not mean to homogenise and make differences invisible but, rather, to use it as a support and manifestation of a strengthened European identity via multiple attachments.

2.3. A process of becoming

The process of spatial identification with Europe takes place over time and covers varying factors as well as a combination of physical, mental, political, and socio-cultural elements. It has been defined, like the rhizome, as a constant process of being and becoming, an idea echoed by a dozen respondents (Kaya, 2005). While Lena does not feel "totally Polish anymore" and "still not British yet," she explained that learning new behaviours and norms in the UK helped to reinforce her European identity: "I am not sure, I would be the same person I am now if I stayed in Poland. I learnt a lot. I can see that Poland as a nation is not as compassionate than people in the UK with foreigners. We are less polite, less compassionate, than British people, especially in Wales."[311] She insists on transforming her behaviour, making her "less Polish" and more of a "European from the West". In a sense, it looks like there is a process of "dissolving" one's identity, rather than producing a new one. This learning has had an impact on the way she interacts with people, especially her colleagues and clients in the hotel where she works. Her attachment to a transnational space is experienced as a disruption of her being: she emphasises the shifting, unstable, and unfixed nature of her identity.

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[309] Zora said in French: "Je suis européenne d'Europe de l'Est".
[310] The interview with Zora was conducted in French on the 03/03/2020.
[311] The interview with Lena was conducted in English on the 29/11/2020.

The notion of becoming is reflected in the respondents' adoption of hybrid behaviours. These hybrid behaviours are the product of plural cultural referents, which are historically situated and expressed particularly through annual celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, and All Saints' Day, which are privileged moments for the expression of traditions. Boryana explains how she celebrates Christmas and Easter, mixing Bulgarian and Welsh traditions: "I learned how to celebrate Welsh traditions, but I do miss the Bulgarian ones. For Easter, back home, we paint boiled chicken eggs in different colours, and we smash them to have good luck through the year, to be a very healthy person, a strong person.[312] I have learnt to celebrate Easter in the Welsh way – hiding chocolate eggs in the garden. Both traditions are really interesting and because I like them both, we kind of do both for Easter now."[313] She insists on learning traditions and says it is a way for her daughters "to feel at home in both Bulgaria and Wales." Transforming her traditions allows her to develop an attachment to space and, according to her, contributes to strengthening the European identity of her two young daughters. For Boryana, becoming European means introducing new traditions into her daily life and into the intimate environment of her household. Becoming passes through concrete actions, which may result from choices (preferred traditions) and the entwining of cultural referents.

Andrius[314] describes his identity as shifting and expresses his identification with Wales through the names given to his daughters: "I choose a neutral name for my older daughter: when you hear 'Gabriella' you can't really say which country she is from, can you? For my younger daughter, we decide to choose a Welsh name: Eira.[315] It is my contribution to this country. I want to become more like a British person instead of just doing like and being a Lithuanian. I don't care much about nationalities, but about respect: if you live in this country, you have to do some things right. For example, my daughters are going to the Welsh school." It is interesting to notice Andrius's confusion when he repeats "British" instead of "Welsh," the specificity and independence of which he vehemently defends.[316] This conflation of Welsh/British national identity has been the subject of extensive literature (Rosie and Bond, 2008; Gamble and Wright, 2009). This confusion reflects the fact that

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[312] Boryana said: "Two people are holding eggs in both hands and you have to break the other one's egg first to win".

[313] The interview with Boryana was conducted in English on the 17/02/2021.

[314] The interview with Andrius was conducted in English on the 18/02/2021.

[315] Eira means "snow" in Welsh.

[316] Andrius declared: "Personally, I think I wish Wales were independent or even, like Scotland, a bit more proud of themselves."

identity contours are blurred, and that for Andrius shifts from one to another are in reality of little importance. Finally, the important thing for Andrius is not what he becomes (the result of becoming), since it cannot be defined in a rigorous way, but the fact of not "just doing like and being a Lithuanian." The phrase "I want to become" emphasises the role of the will and confirms the idea that becoming is an active process with a conscious dimension.

For some respondents, the identification processes which take place across national borders are not limited to the European area. Instead, they connected plural and transnational identities with cosmopolitanism (Beck, 2007). This concept, the origin of which can be found in Stoic philosophy, refers to individuals considering themselves to be "citizens of the world." Thus, the macro-regional space is not the preferred scale of reference for them, as they declare that they identify with the world. It is ultimately a form of identification that goes hand in hand with a desire for mobility on a global scale. For Joanna, a respondent from Poland living in Swansea, this feeling of identification results from her life perspectives, which involve an expansion of space.[317] She declares: "I am moving and changing countries so often. So, I feel like a citizen of the world. I really like Swansea, I'm happy here, I see that my daughter is happy here, but I think it's great we can move so much, we can change the place where we live, we can meet new people, different culture. I don't want to be stuck, I like to think I can go whenever I like and do whatever I like and everywhere." The importance is not about knowing whether she will travel and live all over the world, but about underlining the feeling of openness she has towards the world space, the borders of which she does not envisage but perceives as a space of possible mobility. Her extreme mobility[318] and freedom to migrate contribute to the construction of her identity, which unfolds through the concrete and imagined action of mobility. The repetition of the word "can" shows how crucial this freedom is to her identity. When she said, "I don't want to be stuck" she meant that "learning and listening" to other people and "discover[ing] other cultures, helps (her) to grow as a person". Her identity is defined less as a product of self-consciousness than as an ability to socially situate herself and be ready to move. Once again, the notion of becoming allows us to understand that being a "citizen of the world" is not a given, but a dynamic, transcendental process and therefore, by definition, paradoxically impossible to achieve, just like the integration process itself.

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[317] The interview with Joanna was conducted in English on the 09/11/2021.
[318] Joanna has lived in more than 7 different countries for more than a year before the age of 40.

Monika, a Polish migrant living in Nancy, describes her feeling of being cosmopolitan as "strange." She states: "For three years, it's really strange but I feel cosmopolitan. I've been living in France for seven years already, I studied here, and I started working here, so I have lived here most of my adult life now. I would say I am rather cosmopolitan. I like Poland a lot but sometimes there are some things that annoy me in Poland, and I don't want to go back there at the moment. I don't know why; I just don't see myself living in Poland. Maybe also because my parents are living in Scotland now."[319] The notion of a project is decisive in the identification process because the fact of wanting to continue to live elsewhere than in his/her country of origin contributes to the development of this "spirit of openness" which, according to Monika, characterises cosmopolitan people. Three years after leaving to study in France, her parents moved to Scotland: for this reason, she explains that she has been going to Scotland more often than to Poland in recent years and that even though she never really lived there for long, she feels at home in the house that her parents bought there. Having a transnational, tripartite space of belonging between France, Scotland and Poland has had an impact on the way Monika identifies herself. When Monika says she is cosmopolitan, she is not denying her Polish identity but rather stressing that she feels at home everywhere. In a way, when doing so, she expresses her desire for mobility and openness in a world that she imagines as being borderless. Her identification space is therefore not macro-regional but global.

Conclusion of chapter 6

This chapter has developed the idea that feelings of belonging, which are rooted in transnational space, contribute to the construction of a macro-regional space. This argument has been based on the analysis of the NMS migrants' interviews, showing that the national scale is no longer the (only) reference scale of identification for the majority of the respondents. This result is consistent with other studies that have shown that more mobile people are more likely to identify themselves with "Europe" (Barwick, 2021; Fligstein, 2009; Kuhn, 2015; Recchi, 2015). It is important to specify that the individual and collective identities claimed by the respondents are not objective realities but the result of socially constructed representations with an ideological scope.

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[319] The interview with Monika was conducted in French on the 12/12/2019.

This chapter has focused on the way in which the NMS migrants identify themselves as European. The general analysis has revealed the absence of a strong and homogeneous identification with Europe and has highlighted the disparity in the relationships to space. Identification with Europe appears both to be a complex phenomenon, which can be framed in many ways, and a multiple process with unpredictable outcomes. The feeling of being European does not necessarily imply support for the EU, and a strong identification with Europe does not necessarily exclude national identities. Finally, identification with Europe is often based on stereotypes of people and places described as "non-European." The identities of NMS migrants are not fixed but transform depending on the time and context: there is no such a thing as a collective, fixed form of macro-regional identity, but rather the transnational forms of identification which NMS migrants feel confirm their role as key actors in regional integration through their feeling of being "European" and their ability to identify with Europe. The forms taken by the macro-regional identity, observed at the individual level, seems dependent on subjective identifications and spatial representations, which are highly variable. The respondents have extremely different ways of relating to a space: the identifications that people have with a space are, like the rhizome, hybrid, multiple, and an assemblage of changeable elements. Some respondents expressed that they felt a lack of roots; others insisted on their European roots; and finally, some of them declared that their identity is embedded in relationships with others, such as family and friends.

This chapter sought to approach the question of integration not through a functionalist and political prism (based on the way institutions deal with certain problems), but by understanding the processes by which identities are constructed, and where the individuality of NMS migrants is played out and negotiated. This chapter has evidenced the ways in which respondents may feel European and has also aimed to investigate different forms of enacting being European to generate new insights into the study of macro-regional identity. Studying the process of identification with Europe contributes to our understanding of macro-regional integration as the intertwining of several cultural referents and as a process that relies on fluidity and diverse interactions.

Chapter 7: General conclusion

Though the majority of the research on international migration pays attention mainly to its global dimension (De Haas *et al.*, 2019; Czaika and De Haas, 2014), international migration is a regionalised social phenomenon. It has been proven that migration flows are more intense between countries located in the same part of the world (Mareï and Richard, 2018). This geography thesis, which is located at the crossroads of regional and cultural geography (the geography of representations in particular), fills a gap in regional geography because it studies the role of migrations in the regional construction of space. International migration has been at the heart of the media debate since the so-called "migration crisis" of 2015. In this context, intra-European migration is relatively overlooked compared to irregular migration from third countries. However, Brexit brought intra-European migration into the spotlight by questioning the free movement of Member States nationals after years of open borders in the EU (Moore and Ramsay, 2017). This intra-European migration, specifically from the new member states, and its effect on space stand at the heart of this thesis since they offer a relevant prism through which to study regional integration.

The very idea of the construction of a macro-regional space, *i.e.,* a European territory, which is driven from above by governments and public institutions, seems to have been disqualified by the EU crisis and exacerbated by Brexit, the COVID-19 health crisis (which have had a direct impact on freedom of movement), and the disunity of the Member States on various issues including migration. However, it is not the integration process itself that is being questioned so much as the type of players driving it. Rooted in the New Regionalism Theory (NRT) and based on a constructivist approach, this thesis has sought to rethink both regional space and the notion of integration by exploring the construction of Europe from below, with a particular focus on the role of NMS migrants – residing in France and in the UK – in the macro-regional integration. This PhD presents regional integration at a grassroots level, by observing the construction of multiple, dynamic, and complex representations of Europe at the individual level as opposed to the "top-down" integration process led by governments and institutions (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000).

The bottom-up approach to regional integration allows us to stress that the representations, practices, and spatial appropriations of civil society actors contribute to the regional

integration process as much as, if not more than, government decisions and institutional or political logic because they give a form, a content and a meaning to what is commonly called Europe. Using a "bottom-up approach" makes it possible to place this research in the continuity of works that consider the importance of spontaneous and informal, even unintentional, dynamics, which are driven by civil society (such as migrants) and not piloted by governments (Bennafla, 2002; Pasquier, 2003; Diouf, 2006; Mareï and Wippel, 2020; Hettne and Söderbaum, 1998). The EU has often been defined as a political, institutional entity detached from the population. In contrast to a classical approach (from above) to regional integration, the bottom-up approach addresses this criticism by analysing regional integration beyond regional organisations (which is the most studied prism when it comes to the EU) by showing how regional space is apprehended by certain individuals (here, NMS migrants) The bottom-up approach, as opposed to a functionalist approach to regional integration, allows us to underline the role played by a category of individuals that are rarely studied (here, NMS migrants), or even minimised, in the field of regional geography, in particular with regard to the European Union and its construction (Sérandour, 2020). The increase and regionalization dynamics of migration flows from the NMS confirms that this approach is relevant for addressing regional integration in Europe.

To answer the key question "what is the role played by NMS migrants in regional integration?", this study has drawn on mixed methods, namely the semi-structured interviews (103) and mental maps (83), which were conducted with migrants from the NMS during multi-phase and multi-located research fieldwork in France (Nancy, Metz) and Wales (Swansea, Cardiff). This qualitative methodology permitted to collect individual data on the respondents' spatial representations and relationships with Europe. This methodology made it possible to address the emotional, sensitive, and individual dimensions of spatial representations. This mixed method is complementary in so far as the mental maps provide important visual elements when working on spatial representations, and the interviews help to nuance and interpret the mental maps. The methodology enabled one to verify several assumptions that guided this research work. It confirmed that NMS migrants' circulations, mobility practises, migrations trajectories and aspirations to migrate, as well as social networks, are likely to favour the process of regional integration by connecting places, generating flows, and reinforcing feelings of belonging to a macro-regional space; it helped us identify the emotional and individual determinants of the spatial representations inherent to migration practices; it highlighted the fact that the national scale is not the only space of

reference for identification as it is transcended by transnational feelings of belongings produced by international migration.

1. Discussion and challenges

Some limitations of this thesis should be mentioned. This thesis remains irreducibly dependent and contingent on the spatio-temporal context in which it was produced: the years from 2019 to 2022, which were marked by Brexit and the Covid-19 health crisis, had an impact on the research and methodology. In particular, it was necessary to adapt the methodology by conducting the majority of the interviews remotely via Zoom and to understand the influence of the post-Brexit transitional period on the discourses of the NMS migrants living in the UK because migratory experiences are necessarily rooted in their specific socio-political contexts. The uncertainty and instability in this unprecedented political and economic context had to be put into perspective with the respondents' feelings of temporariness and life on the move (Drinkwater *et al*., 2009; Ryan, 2018; Shubin, 2012). However, the instability due to Brexit and the Covid-19 health crisis is a unique opportunity to "seize" on ongoing fluctuations in representations and as such represents a privileged period to study European integration.

This PhD consists of geographical research: objects, methods, concerns, and bibliography refer mainly to this discipline. The work of economists, historians, or political scientists has not been sufficiently explored although they have written extensively on the regional integration process. This research work, which resulted from a "co-tutelage" between the university of Swansea and Paris 1, constantly had to negotiate between two approaches to the geographical discipline and four supervisors from various academic backgrounds. It must be noted that I have a French academic background, which has influenced the references, the theoretical approach, and the methodology selected as well as how the research was carried out. I had to find a way of reconciling the rigorous empirical focus of French geography research and the innovative theoretical focus of English research, which draws on disciplines such as psychoanalysis, the scientific status of which is debated in France. However, the contributions of the two academic traditions have allowed complementary approaches to my questioning and have allowed new, enriched and interesting insights to be found by drawing on the most relevant elements of each scientific approach. A "co-tutelage" also implies that I had to learn new ways of writing, teaching,

interviewing respondents, and conducting fieldwork. The major difference in the way that the fieldwork was carried out in the UK and France involved the implementation of the Ethics framework. This framework can be a hindrance to the fieldwork, as the process for the ethics to be accepted can be slow, and ethics proposals can be rejected. I found it challenging at first to get the respondents to sign a "participant consent form" (which is neither compulsory nor customary in France) because it made a sincere, intimate and spontaneous exchange more difficult, and it can bias the exchange by introducing a distance between the researcher and respondent. However, the Ethical framework invites one to reflect on his/her own status as a researcher, his/her own positionality, and to think about the impact that his/her research, behaviour and questions may have on others, in particular on a certain type of population such as migrants (Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz, 2020). For this reason, Ethics contribute to the smooth running of the interview (having first thought of all the ways in which an interview could go wrong) and allows one to progress as a person and as a researcher in the fieldwork (Van Liempt and Bilger, 2009).

This research has sought to explore only one aspect of regional integration and one set of representations of Europe, which are contingent on the social group studied (NMS migrants) and the context of production. The multiplicity and diversity of the representations of Europe presented in this PhD put into question the monolithic or simplifying visions of social realities and highlights the role of one specific type of individual in the process of regional integration. It is important to note that the process of regional integrations is not limited to this: not all its modalities have been studied and considered in this geography research. This thesis has sought to reveal only one facet of regional integration from the bottom in order to contribute to the enrichment and understanding of this notion through the prism of the individual without attempting to cover all its complexities and challenges. The study of regional integration is not reducible to this approach, just as it could not be complete without it.

2. Revisiting research objectives and contributions

From a theoretical point of view, my PhD contributes to regional integration research by proposing a constructivist and bottom-up approach to this concept. By focusing on social dynamics taking place at a macro-regional level, understood as an intermediate scale between the local/national and the world, this PhD proposes a different grid for the analysis

of major contemporary issues in a general context of globalization, based on the idea that in a time of globalization, political, economic and social dynamics, such as migration, are still partly determined by geographical proximity (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000). Studying macro-regional integration from a social constructivist point of view contributes to defining the macro-regional space as a complex, dynamic and fluid entity, evolving according to representations, practices and feelings of belonging. In the framework of European integration, studying the mobility practices, spatial representations and feelings of belonging of NMS migrants helps reveal the construction of a European space from below, a space underlying the one elaborated by institutional actors. The relevance of exploring macro-regional integration via a bottom-up and individual approach is to move away from the institutional definitions that are often attached to it. Introducing the notions of identity, representations and belonging facilitate a focus on civil society actors in order to underline their decisive, essential role in the spatial construction.

This PhD has shown that the macro-region is conceptually innovative in proposing a more relevant scale than the national/local and the global one, to analyse social phenomena such as migration taking place at an intermediate scale (between the local/national and global scale). The notion of macro-region is ground-breaking as it allows for the refinement of the notion of transnational space as it can be understood as one of the spatial forms of transnationalism. In the field of migration studies, a transnational space describes the way in which the country of origin and the country (or countries) of residence of migrants are connected through an active link that can be economic, affective, familial, cultural, political... Transnational spaces are produced and maintained by migrants through the relationships they maintain across state borders. Just as regional integration is both a process (the intensification of transnational relations) and a space through the macro-region (understood as a geographical level of social interaction), transnationalism is also a process and a space that results from top-down and bottom-up dynamics. Like the notion of transnational space, the macro-region paves the way for a break with the stato-centric vision and includes the consideration of non-state actors in the construction of space.

The main distinction and the contribution and innovative dimension of the macro-region (compared to the transnational space) is the importance of notions of proximity and spatial and functional continuity attached to it. The existence of transnational networks and social groups does not necessarily translate into forms of regional integration and the production of

a macro-region (Vignal, 2018). In other words, while macro-regions are necessarily transnational spaces, not all transnational spaces are macro-regions because a transnational space is not necessarily contiguous, especially in the analysis of migrations that can lead to the creation of transnational spaces from distant countries. The macro-region, on the contrary, is a space that is always contiguous, which make it particularly relevant in affording nuance to the phenomenon of globalisation.

Macro-region is a concept relevant to research into European integration since it impinges on the spatial and multi-dimensional dynamics at work in Europe. Beyond the EU crisis and the dynamics of disintegration via Brexit and the rise of Euroscepticism and nationalism in general, studying the European space through the concept of the macro-region exposes low-key dynamics of European integration, via the individual scale and civil society actors – social, cultural and identity dynamics, for example – which exist beyond the institutional and political component. The concept of macro-region studied through a social constructivist approach thus makes it possible to consider European integration beyond international treaties and bilateral agreements between states that prove insufficient on their own to account for the multi-dimensionality of macro-regional integration.

Beyond European integration, the concept of macro-region has been used to study other integration trajectories and spatial dynamics in other parts of the world. The concept has been used extensively to analyse the spatial dynamics of proximity in Latin America, for example. We can think of the work of Audrey Sérandour (2020) who showed how the exploitation of a resource (lithium) has led to the creation of a macro-regional space in Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile, through the intensification of exchanges between some parts of these countries around this resource. This example serves as a reminder that the migration phenomenon is only one of the possible variables in the process of macro-regional integration, which can unfold through the proximity dynamics of a multitude of subjects as well as at different scales around the world.

Having shown that the shift from the social integration paradigm to the regional integration paradigm is key for understanding NMS migration, this PhD focused on the flows, spaces and temporalities produced by NMS migrations, thereby demonstrating that the increase (in the numbers of people moving) and regionalization of migration flows from the new EU member States to the old ones are low-key factors in the ongoing integration process at the

EU level. Then, the analysis of the mental maps highlighted the links between the respondents' mental representations of Europe, the length of migration, and the life course. This approach revealed that Europe is a multiple object in the representations with shifting contours, depending on several variables. Finally, the European macro-regional space, as a counterpoint to the outdated national model of integration, appears to be a relevant space of identification and social appropriation for NMS migrants. European identities and a sense of belonging to Europe were facilitated by international migration and practices of mobility within Europe. By exploring feelings of home and the migrants' sense of spatial belonging or not belonging in Europe, my PhD demonstrated that the consciousness of NMS migrants of being "European" is an essential part of European integration.

I had originally hypothesised that there would be differences between the representations, mobility practices and feeling of belonging of NMS migrants living in two different locations, in Wales and in Lorraine, especially because the integration policies of France and the United Kingdom are often presented as being in opposition (see Chapter 2). I would expect NMS migrants living in the UK, directly affected by the Brexit, to perceive a rupture between the UK and the rest of Europe. I expected the Brexit to have an impact on the mobility practices of NMS migrants living in the UK, as well as on their sense of belonging and on their migration experience in general. However, in the end, this assumption could therefore not be verified by the fieldwork and the methodology used: I find that the differences are not that significant between respondents living in Wales, and those living in Lorraine. I do not observe any significant location effect from the responses collected, apart from a marginal difference in the representations: contrary to what I had initially imagined, the United Kingdom is more integrated in the mental maps of migrants living in the United Kingdom than in the ones of those living in France (see Chapter 5). The role of Brexit must therefore be tempered, as it does not appear to have had a significant impact on the respondents. The small sample of NMS migrants interviewed in France does not allow us to say whether this marginal difference is significant or sample bias. The absence of major differences calls into question the importance of a location effect on integration and representations but can also be explained by the transitional period in which the interviews took place (during which Brexit had no major administrative or political consequences on NMS migrants) or the detachment of individuals from politics. Conducting interviews with NMS migrants living in other locations could be a way of confirming or refuting the

importance of the location effect on their representations, mobility practices and feeling of belonging.

1) *Who are these "new" migrants, what are their aspirations and how do they contribute to the construction of a European space of mobility?*

This PhD aimed to portray NMS migrants living in Lorraine and Wales and nuance the figure of the Eastern European migrant, traditionally studied under the prism of the economic variable. It reveals their aspirations to migrate and shows that contrary to the *homo economicus* theory, which states that migrants are driven by rational and economic logic, the drivers for migration are above all based on cultural, irrational and emotional factors, such as desires and relationships. Romantic relationships were one of the main factors given by the respondents to explain why they moved to Nancy or Swansea (to join their Welsh or French partner there). Bi-national relationships play a substantial role in the European integration process: they determine migration trajectories within the EU and influence identification with Europe (Van Wissen and Heering, 2014; Díez Medrano *et al.*, 2014; Haandrikman, 2014). The analysis of the mental maps and the terms used by NMS migrants to describe Europe reveal the cultural, affective, and imaginary dimensions that influence the spatial representations and mobilities of the NMS migrants.

The hypermobility of NMS migrants contributes to the construction of Europe as a space of mobility. Some NMS migrants settle into sustained mobility (Morokvasic, 2004): they no longer leave a place permanently but travel regularly for short periods between East and West. My PhD highlights the specific migrants' mobility practices within the European space by working, shopping, living, studying, and protesting "here and there" at the same time. Several respondents settle in a system of long-term macro-regional commuting, sharing their daily activities (family life, work, study, shopping) between several countries. The diversity of these international settings leads to the existence of an emotionally-invested, macro-regional space that can be understood as an international residential space. The perceived proximity between places in different countries shapes NMS migrants' identities and feelings of belonging to a macro-regional space. Thanks to their hypermobility, NMS migrants are key actors in European integration, strengthening and intensifying regional links between different places within the EU, and contributing to the creation of macro-regional residential spaces and a sense of belonging to Europe.

2) How is Europe represented by NMS migrants?

This PhD analysed how migrants from the new member states in France and Wales practice, identify, and empirically represent Europe in one way rather than another. This research enabled a diversity of representations of Europe to emerge. The representations appear to be always "in the making" as they constantly assemble and re-assemble elements without beginning or end. This PhD put forward the image of a multiple, fluid, and shifting Europe, constantly changing during the course of a fuzzy and multidimensional integration process. Regional integration appears to be a never-ending process of making and remaking the European space. The macro-regional space is composed of a multitude of interconnecting and interlocking spaces and its boundaries are blurred.

The cross-analysis of the interviews and mental maps enabled the construction of a typology of representations of Europe and the identification, when possible, of the determinants of these representations. It reveals the image of a multiple Europe that can be classified into three categories of representations: Europe as a lived space; Europe as an ideal space; and Europe as a regionalised space (see Chapter 5). Beyond the diversity of the representations analysed, these three main categories of representation remind us that there are shared representations of Europe, which are influenced by social characteristics, length of migration, practices of mobility, and life course. These representations are made up of an assemblage of heterogeneous elements. The way in which a large proportion of the respondents represent Europe can be described as akin to a rhizome, according to the terminology set by Deleuze and Guattari, in so far as it makes it possible to account for representations of Europe made up of various geographical objects, links, and criteria in order to think about regional integration as an ongoing process. I used the rhizome theory to go beyond the notion of unity, a constituent of the traditional definition of integration, and to stress that this process of regional integration in Europe is by no means irreversible and is not achieved through the ideal unification of societies. In this sense, the rhizome theory helps to re-imagine integration as potentially reversible and incoherent.

The analysis of mental maps and interviews revealed the predominant weight of mobility practices and institutions in the representations as there emerges a central core of countries, which were always associated with Europe and correspond to the founding countries of the EEC. The use of mental maps is particularly relevant to highlight the never-ending process

of combination, which characterises European regional integration. The analysis of the terms used by migrants to describe European space highlights the fact that NMS migrants also encounter Europe through institutional and ideological discourses. The multiplicity of terms used to describe Europe by the NMS migrants, classified into four different categories (geopolitics, universalist values, feeling and figurative representations) could be interpreted as the manifestation of the heterogeneity of "Europe" and the lack of a consensual representation. However, it reveals a convergent image of Europe, associated with laudatory and positive narratives and the weight of the European Union in the representations. Several respondents quoted words referring to universal values and political models promoted by the EU such as "democracy", "unity", and "diversity." While the institutional weight in the representations is undeniable throughout the corpus of associated words with Europe, the European macro-regional space is nonetheless a space that is difficult to characterize, presenting itself in multiple dimensions, and that has to be understood precisely from this endless multiplicity. It is interesting to notice that the European Union seems to be built on this heterogeneous and dynamic assemblage of social and individual representations.

3) *Do NMS migrants' feelings of belonging reveal the existence of a European space that underlies the one elaborated by the European institutional actors? Can we consider it to be a discrete, socially constructed space that fully participates in European regional integration?*

This PhD aimed to put in evidence the ways that Europe is felt and experienced differently. It also aimed to investigate different forms of enacting the idea of "being European" to generate new insights into the study of macro-regional identity. In a way, studying the process of identification with Europe contributes to an understanding of macro-regional integration as the intertwining of several cultural referents and as a process that relies on fluidity and diverse interactions. This approach thus differs from the traditional definition of integration as a threshold to be reached (see chapter 2) or as a process of assimilation that would take place within a national framework. This PhD showed that the respondents' feelings of belonging, rooted in a transnational space, contribute to the construction of a macro-regional space. Identification with Europe appears to be a heterogenous process with unpredictable outcomes. If there is no such thing as a fixed and collective form of macro-regional identity, as theorized by the NRT, the fact that NMS migrants identify with Europe

confirms their role as key actors in regional integration as they shape and give content to an abstract geographical entity.

By unpacking the notions of the "region" and "Europe", this research draws on previous works that have shown how Europe is a contextual region, a social construct that refers to a space with variable geometries, of which the EU is only one dimension. Europe as a macro-region results from an assemblage of discourses, representations, and practices and is the conveyer of feelings of belonging and identity. This PhD is in line with several studies that consider migrants' integration outside national borders. These studies refuse to consider the national framework as the common frame of reference in the analysis of migrants' integration, arguing that it is inadequate for addressing the multiple situations of the individuals, their complexity, and all the modalities of international migration (Oriol, 1980; Hily and Rinaudo, 2002). Rooted in these studies, this PhD showed that NMS migrants' reference scale of identification is not only national, but European as transnational practices, social networks, and representations have to be taken into account. The phenomenon of the dissolution of national borders and the conception of the European space in pure distance and travel time, without constraints, confirmed that the macro-regional space is a major reference scale for NMS migrants. This research demonstrates that the European macro-regional space is not a finite object but a polysemic and polymorphic geographical entity under construction, a fuzzy and dynamic space, socially constructed by a wide range of actors.

3. Directions for further research

To conclude this PhD, I will briefly review potential avenues of research that could arise from this work, improve it, deepen it.

The content and the form of the European macro-region are ambivalent and sometimes uncertain: Europe appears to be a dynamic geographical object, always under construction, whose form is changing according to the actors considered. Future research could be devoted to studying the representations and practices of other actors to complement and reinforce the role of civil society actors, including less mobile populations. Insofar as the typology of representations has highlighted the weight of the duration of migration in the representations, it could be interesting to study the representations of the same sample of

individuals over a long period of time in order to grasp the evolution of these representations, to bring out the points of rupture, and other individual determinants of these representations which have not been grasped by this study.

Other ways of collecting representations of Europe could be used: for example, while working for three months for the European research project PERCEPTIONS, I worked with the photographic tool which proved to be very relevant for collecting representations of Europe. As part of this project, respondents were asked to choose three photographs of their choice that they felt were representative of Europe. Similar approach could help to re-imagine integration from a more visual but perhaps less spatial dimension (as opposed to mental maps). The work carried out within this framework could even serve as a basis for comparison in order to highlight the determinants of representations, which would be linked to the migratory status (refugee, asylum seeker, free mover).

The main questions of this thesis have probably led us to focus on the major determinants of NMS migrants' representations of Europe and on the repetitions and recurrences of the elements that make up these representations. All these elements finally lead to focus on a synthesis of representations to the detriment of more complex and minority representations. One way of deepening this work would therefore consist, on the basis of systemic analysis, in pushing further the microscopic analysis of certain subsets of representations in order to better grasp minority and alternative representations, insufficiently encountered and analysed in this first work, thereby strengthening the typology outlined in Chapter 5. This work has focused on NMS migrants' representations of "Europe." It could be relevant to question other regional categories perceived by NMS migrants (such as the "Balkans", a macro-regional space particularly mentioned by the respondents) or even to consider ensembles located at other geographical scales, such as cities, or sub-national regions, which are decisive geographical scales in the migratory journey, and which also support significant feelings of belonging and identification. The contribution of this multi-scalar analysis to the study of macro-regional integration would show how intermediate geographical levels are involved in regional integration.

Appendices

A. Semi-structured interview grid

Themes	Sub-themes	Questions
Migration		
Migratory journey	Country of origin	Description
		Opinion
		Interest
	City of origin	Size
		Description
	Date of departure from the country of origin	Year, month
		Age at the time of the departure?
	Previous countries and cities	Why?
		Where?
		When?
		How long?
	Date of arrival in France/UK	Year, month
	Date of arrival in Lorraine/Wales (if different)	Year, month
	Why leaving the country of origin?	Was it planned for a long time?
		When did you take the decision to migrate?
		Linked to the family or job situation?
	Why to this place?	How did you first hear about this place?
		From whom?
	Individual migration?	Alone, or accompanied by family, friends, or others?
	Social connections in the country	Relatives or friends living in the host countries before migrating?

		Who joined or plan to join the migrant afterward?
		Their role, help or support, or not in the preparation of the migration?
	Preparations	Language
		People helping
		Length of the preparation
Migration project	Aspirations/expectations	What?
		How (TV, word of mouth, etc)?
	Conformity	between the migration project and the migration journey
	Plans	Live here permanently or not? Migrate to other cities, countries?
		Why staying, leaving, planning to move to some specific places?
Migration context	Freedom of movement in the EU	Have you seen any differences since your country of origin joined the European Union?
		Which ones?
		Did joining the European Union make it easier for you to settle in the UK/France?
Situation in the host country		
Job	What?	
	When?	
	How did you find it?	Through an agency, contacts, internet?
		Was it difficult to find?
	Match the qualifications and skills?	What did you study and where?
Everyday life	Language	What language do you spoke the most in your daily life? (Language of the country of

		origin or of the host country?)
		Level of French/English?
		Difficulties or not to live in a French/English speaking country? Example of difficult situations.
		Are people asking about your accent? How do you feel about that?
	News	From the country of origin?
		From the host country?
		TV, radio, social media, family, or friends?
	Vote	Host country?
		Country of origin?
Perceptions		
Host country	Likes	
	Dislikes	
	City	In one/three word.s
	Similarities	Are there things in Wales/Lorraine, the city you are living in or in the UK/France in general that remind you of your country of origin? (Shops, places, mentality of people).
	Differences	Description
Country of origin	The missing	Are there things you miss about your country of origin? If so, what are they? (objects, everyday life, mentality, food, social networks…)
	Objects	Do you have objects or anything at home that comes from or reminds you of your country of origin? If so, which

		ones?
Feelings	Home	Where is home?
		What is home?

Mobility		
Travels	To the country of origin	For holidays?
		For work?
		Why?
		How long?
		How (car, train, plane…?)
		How many times a year?
		Where? (city/house…)
		With whom?
	To Europe	Why?
		Where?
		When?
		How long?
		How (car, train, plane…?)
		How many times a year?
	To the world	Why?
		Where?
		When?
		How long?
		How (car, train, plane…?)
		How many times a year?
		With whom?
	In the host country	Why?
		Where?
		When?
		How long?
		How (car, train, plane…?)
		How many times a year?
		With whom?
Frequency	More frequent travels in Europe, in the world, in the country of origin, in the host country?	How many times/year?

Social networks		
In the country of origin	Family/friends/others	Frequency of visits
		Frequency of interactions
		Means of interactions (phone, internet…)
In the host country	Family/friends/others	Before migrating
		After migrating
		How did you meet most of your friends in the city you are living in (leisure activities, associations, your work, your neighbourhood, the church...)?
		Are your friends' locals, nationals, foreigners, from your country of origin?
Elsewhere	In Europe	Do you have family members or friends living in another country in Europe? Where? Links with them.
	In the world	Do you have family members or friends living in another country in the world? Where? Link with them.
Personal identity/Socio-demographic data		
Name		
Age		
Nationality	Country of origin	
	Citizenship of the host country	Have it, or plan to have it?
		Why?
Spoken Languages	Level	How did you learn them?
Studies	Level/Areas	Where?
Job		
Income/month		
Partner's job		
Parents and grandparents' job		
Children	Number	

	Name	
	Age	
Additional contacts to give me	Relationships with them?	

B. Structure and themes of the interviews

Figure B.1: Structure and themes of the interviews
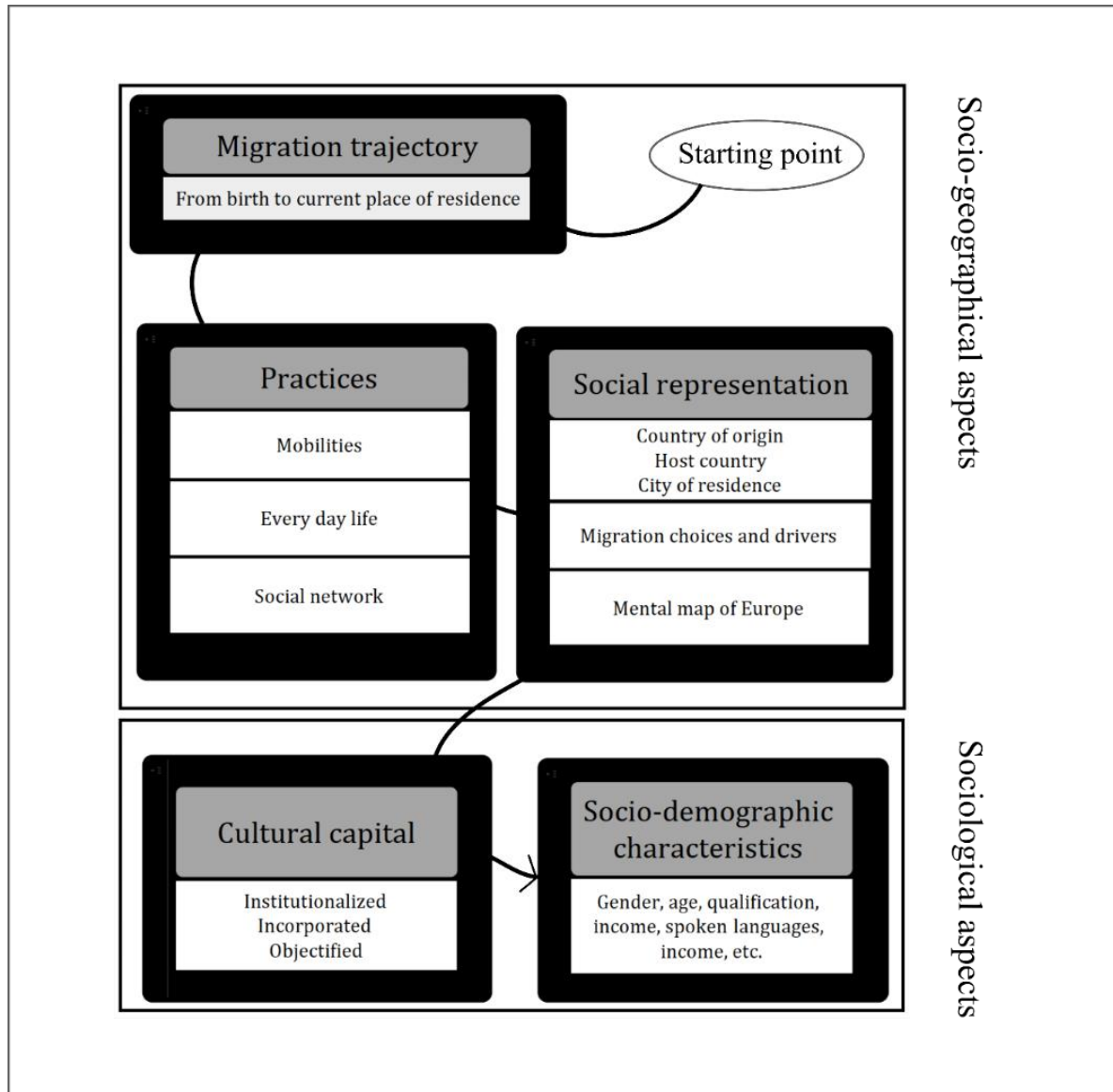
Mila Sanchez, 2021, adapted from Caroline Bouloc, 2013.

C. List of the semi-structured interviews

French Fieldwork

N°	Date	Name	Job/Status	Nationality	Duration of the interview
			Fieldwork n°1		
1	15/03/2019	Czeslaw	Honorary consul of Poland	Polish	1h
2	16/03/2019	Kristof	██████████████ ████████ ████████ ████████	Hungarian (refugee of 1956)	2h15
3	16/03/2019	Xenia	Medical student	Polish	3h
			Fieldwork n°2		
4	17/05/2019	Galena	Guide – Lecture in Art History in Nancy	Bulgarian	1h30
5	20/05/2019	Lenka	Lecturer of Czech language and civilization	Czech	2h
6	25/05/2019	Claire	██████████████ ████████████ ████████████ ████ geography teacher	French	4h30
			Fieldwork n°3		
7	13/08/2019	Běla	Ex-professional basketeer and social worker	Czech	1h30
8	14/08/2019	Dimitrinka	Psychologist	Bulgarian	1h14

9	14/08/2019	Piotr	No profession	Polish	2h
			Fieldwork n°4		
10	21/09/2019	Paweł	Nuclear power station / welder	Polish	4h
11	02/10/2019	Magda	Laboratory	Polish	1h25
12	03/10/2019	Aron	Business owner – wine merchant	Hungarian	2h
13	03/10/2019	Natalia	Kinesitherapist	Polish	1h30
14	03/10/2019	Jana	PhD student	Polish	1h
15	11/10/2019	Hanka	Music teacher and profesor of Czech at ███████████	Czech	1h40
16	11/10/2019	Kasia	Student	Polish	1h39
17	12/10/2019	Bartłomiej	German teacher	Polish	3h
18	12/10/2019	Dagmara	Post-doc in chemistry	Polish	1h07
			Fieldwork n°5		
19	11/12/2019	Evà	Researcher in Biochemistry	Hungarian	3h18
20	11/12/2019	Damján	Computer Engineer	Hungarian	3h18
21	12/12/2019	Csilla	No profession	Hungarian	2h36
22	12/12/2019	Monika	Sales administration & marketing manager	Polish	3h30
23	13/12/2019	Stefan	Public finance inspector	Polish	1h26
24	14/12/2019	Ilona	Professor/Lecturer	Hungarian	2h38
			Fieldwork n°6		
25	03/03/2020	Marek	Retired/ former lecturer	Polish	5h

26	03/03/2020	Agnieszka	Retired/ former lecturer	Polish	5h
27	03/03/2020	Vasile	Retired/ former lecturer	Romanian	1h55
28	03/03/2020	Zora	Social worker	Czech	3h
29	03/03/2020	Sebastien	No profession	French	3h
30	04/03/2020	Adriana	Laboratory	Slovak	3h46
31	07/03/2020	Lorena	Sales administration & marketing manager	Romanian	4h48
32	07/03/2020	Lorena's mother	Retired	Romanian	4h48
33	08/03/2020	Madalina	Doctor	Romanian	3h
34	08/03/2020	Oliwia	Student	Polish	1h
35	12/01/2021	Karolina	No profession	Czech	0h30
36	20/02/2021	Marta	PhD student	Polish	1h
37	04/03/2021	Edina	Teacher	Hungarian	2h
38	08/03/2021	Teodora	Retired	Hungarian	0h55
39	12/03/2021	M-C	Retired	Hungarian	1h

UK Fieldwork

N°	Date	Name	Job/status	Nationality	Duration of the interview
1	16/10/20	Ovi	IT Engineer – Software Development	Romanian	1h20
2	17/10/20	Dragos	Dentist	Romanian	2h21
3	24/10/2020	Dora	Writer	Polish	1h28
4	01/02/2021	Adela	Researcher	Romanian	1h08
5	30/01/2021	Adrian	Vet	Romanian	1h55
6	29/11/2020	Aleksandra	Student	Polish	1h15
7	06/02/2021	Alex	No profession	Bulgarian	1h20
8	03/02/2021	Amalia	Student	Romanian	2h04
9	02/12/2020	Ida	Interpreter + translator	Polish	1h01
10	26/11/2020	Anna	Artist	Polish	0h30
11	30/01/2021	Constantin	Delivery driver and film student	Romanian	0h59
12	09/12/2020	Cosmin	Amazon Warehouse	Romanian	0h36
13	02/02/2021	Cristina	Pastry chef	Romanian	0h57
14	23/12/2021	Csaba	Researcher	Hungarian/Romanian	2h33
15	02/12/2020	Daria	House cleaner	Polish	1h11
16	02/02/2021	Diana	Student	Romanian	1h27
17	10/02/2021	Anda	Lawyer	Romanian	0h53
18	16/11/2020	Emilia	Lecturer	Polish	1h50
19	12/11/2020	Ewa	Associate professor	Polish	1h29

20	18/11/2020	Felix	Student	Romanian	2h12
21	03/02/2021	Florin	Delivery driver	Romanian	0h53
22	14/11/2020	Hannah	Student	Polish	3h07
23	06/02/2021	Irina	Hotel manager	Romanian	0h49
24	01/02/2021	Jaklina	Student	Bulgarian	1h09
25	09/11/2021	Joanna	Professor	Polish	1h29
26	27/11/2020	Agata	No profession	Polish	0h49
27	20/01/2021	Nina	Dental nurse	Polish	1h18
28	18/11/2020	Julia	Student	Polish	1h10
29	28/10/2021	Karol	Senior lecturer	Czech/Slovak	1h10
30	06/11/2020	Karolina	Researcher	Polish	1h14
31	11/02/2021	Margarita	Lawer consultant	Bulgarian	0h44
32	29/11/2020	Karol	Electrician	Lithuanian	2h21
33	07/02/2020	Dovy	warehouse	Lithuanian	1h26
34	29/11/2020	Lena	Hotel manager	Polish/returned in Poland	1h25
35	14/11/2020	Katarzyna	Student	Polish	3h07
36	08/12/2020	Kira	Student	Polish	1h37
37	25/11/2020	Magdalena	senior document controller for an engineering company	Bulgaria	1h13
38	04/02/2020	Maja	Swansea women's aid	Polish	1h03
39	12/02/2020	Michal	Business owner	Polish	2h56
40	07/02/2021	Mihaela	Accountancy	Romanian	1h17
41	02/12/2020	Mihai	Amazon Warehouse	Romanian	0h54
42	29/01/2021	Miky	Assitant manager	Romanian	1h50

43	16/11/2020	Nicolas	Amazon Warehouse	Romanian	1h25
44	18/11/2020	Olga	Student	Polish	0h54
45	13/11/2020	Patrycja	Student	Polish	2h09
46	31/01/2021	Persyana	Student	Bulgarian	1h26
47	27/11/2020	Saul	IT technician / warehouse	Lithuanian	1h09
48	03/10/2021	Stanislava	International product manager	Bulgaria	1h21
49	06/01/2021	Petru	Employer at a transport company	Romanian	1h
50	02/02/2021	Tibor	Entrepreneur	Hungarian	0h46
51	01/02/2021	Tomasz	Senior lecturer	Polish	1h29
52	03/12/2020	Ula	Local council	Polish	0h54
53	11/10/2020	Ioan	Transport manager	Romanian	1h31
54	12/11/2020	Zuzana	Student	Polish	0h47
55	01/12/2020	Wanda	Health care support worker	Polish	0h54
56	12/02/2021	Antoni	Chef	Bulgarian	1h11
57	27/01/2021	Radoslaw	Delivery driver	Romanian	1h24
58	17/02/2021	Boryana	No profession	Bulgarian	1h08
59	25/02/2021	Ona	No profession	Lithuanian	0h52
60	20/02/2021	Dennis	Restaurant	Romanian	2h05
61	18/02/2021	Andrius	Driving instructor	Lithuanian	1h58
62	25/02/2021	Erika	Covid tester	Lithuanian	1h
63	24/02/2021	Krassie	Office	Bulgarian	1h13
64	26/02/2021	Lina	Interpreter	Lithuanian	1h36

D. Participant information sheet and consent form

The participant information sheet

This study is part of a doctoral thesis in geography, funded by the Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University and the University of Swansea. This thesis is entitled "the role of cultural capital in the macro-regional integration of migrants from the new Member States in France and the United Kingdom" and will take place over three years, from January 2019 to December 2021.

This study is being conducted by Mila Sanchez who can be contacted at any time at the following e-mail address : ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or number : ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

In order to carry out my geography thesis, I would be extremely grateful if you would agree to participate in an anonymous interview, the information of which will be used only in an academic context.

The purpose of my thesis project is to identify the dynamism of the migrations within the European Union, from the thirteen new Member States (since 2004) and towards France and the United Kingdom, and more particularly towards Nancy (France) and Swansea (Wales). The objective of this interviw will be to discuss the motivations that led you to leave your country of origin and the resulting cultural exchanges. Your life course, the different places where you have lived and the relationships you have with them will therefore be at the heart of our interview if you agree to participate in my study.

Taking part in my study is voluntary and, as a participant, you will have the right to withdraw at any time if you want. You have been asked to participate because you are living in Nancy or in Wales and you come from one of these thirteen countries : Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyrpus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

If you agree to be part of the investigation, you will participate in an interview at a place and time of your choice, or online (Zoom/Skype) regarding the Covid-19 situation, and you can at any time not answer a question or stop the interview.

All the interviews will be anonymized, names and functions changed in such a way that the personal characteristics of the individual do not make it possible to make the person recognizable.

I you have any questions or comments or if you need further information, please contact me thanks to the mail and number stated above.

Participant consent form

Study as part of the following geography thesis : The role of the cultural capital in the macro-regional integration of migrants from the New Member States in France and in the UK

Contact details : Mila Sanchez – ███████████████████████

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

   ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw or not answering any question at any time, without giving any reason, without my medical care or legal rights being affected.

   ☐

3. I understand that sections of any of data obtained may be looked at by responsible individuals from the Swansea University. I give permission for these individuals to have access to these records.

   ☐

4. I agree to take part in the above study.

   ☐

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
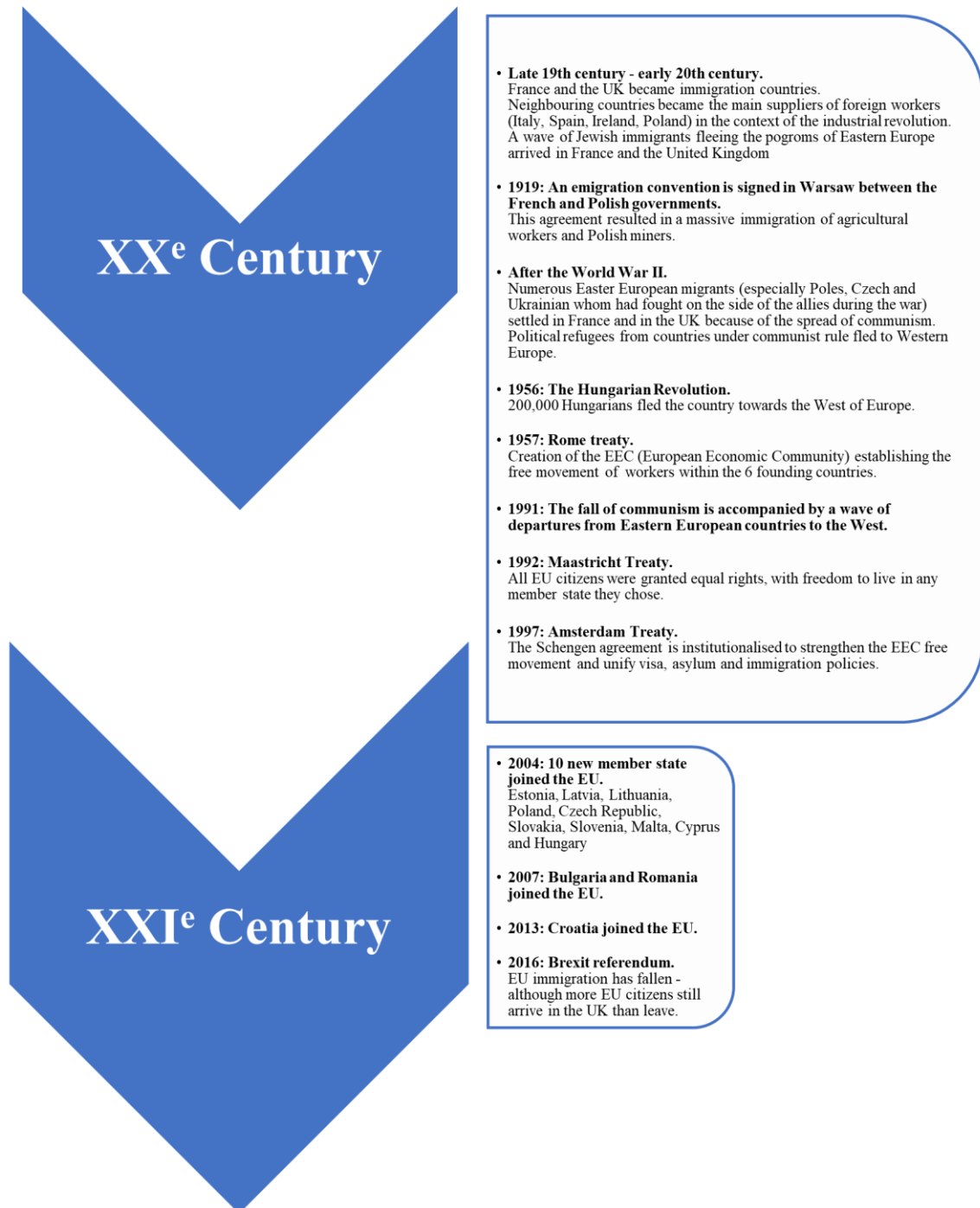Researcher   Date   Signature

Personal data collected on this form will be processed in line with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018. Further information about how your data is managed is available on the University Research Privacy Notice.

https://www.swansea.ac.uk/about-us/compliance/data-protection/research-privacy-notice/

E. Key dates of immigration from Eastern Europe to France and the UK

Figure E.1: Key dates of immigration from Eastern Europe to France and the UK

XXᵉ Century

- **Late 19th century - early 20th century.**
  France and the UK became immigration countries.
  Neighbouring countries became the main suppliers of foreign workers (Italy, Spain, Ireland, Poland) in the context of the industrial revolution. A wave of Jewish immigrants fleeing the pogroms of Eastern Europe arrived in France and the United Kingdom

- **1919: An emigration convention is signed in Warsaw between the French and Polish governments.**
  This agreement resulted in a massive immigration of agricultural workers and Polish miners.

- **After the World War II.**
  Numerous Easter European migrants (especially Poles, Czech and Ukrainian whom had fought on the side of the allies during the war) settled in France and in the UK because of the spread of communism. Political refugees from countries under communist rule fled to Western Europe.

- **1956: The Hungarian Revolution.**
  200,000 Hungarians fled the country towards the West of Europe.

- **1957: Rome treaty.**
  Creation of the EEC (European Economic Community) establishing the free movement of workers within the 6 founding countries.

- **1991: The fall of communism is accompanied by a wave of departures from Eastern European countries to the West.**

- **1992: Maastricht Treaty.**
  All EU citizens were granted equal rights, with freedom to live in any member state they chose.

- **1997: Amsterdam Treaty.**
  The Schengen agreement is institutionalised to strengthen the EEC free movement and unify visa, asylum and immigration policies.

XXIᵉ Century

- **2004: 10 new member state joined the EU.**
  Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Malta, Cyprus and Hungary

- **2007: Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU.**

- **2013: Croatia joined the EU.**

- **2016: Brexit referendum.**
  EU immigration has fallen - although more EU citizens still arrive in the UK than leave.

Source: Mila Sanchez, 2023

F. Additional mental maps

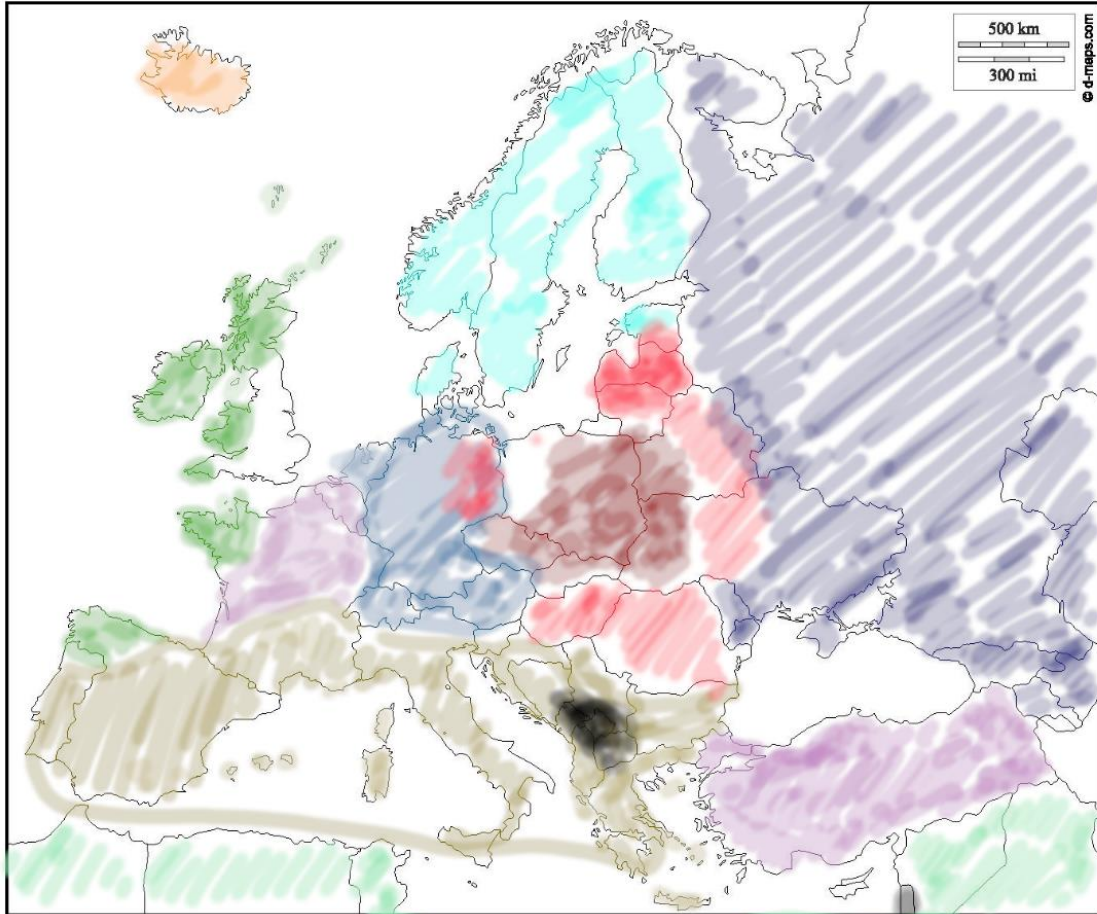## Figure F.1: Mental map of Michal, from Poland

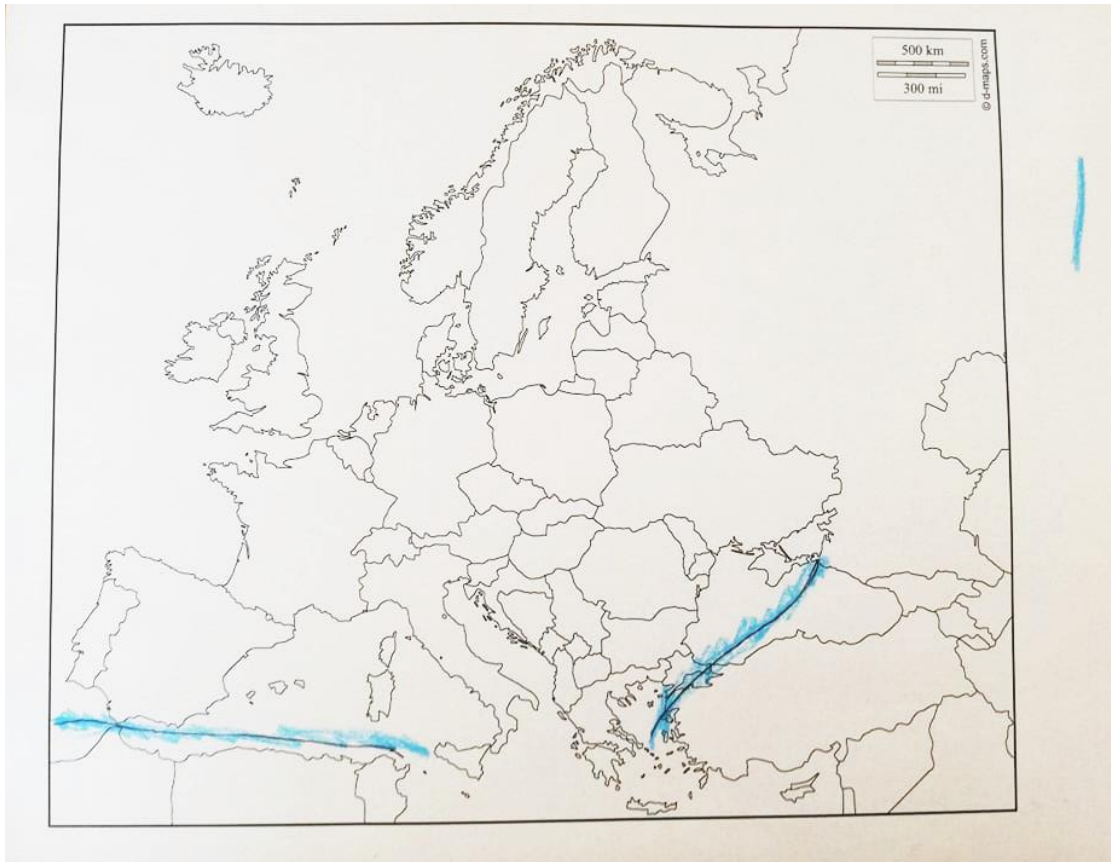**Figure F.2: Mental map of Edina, from Hungary**
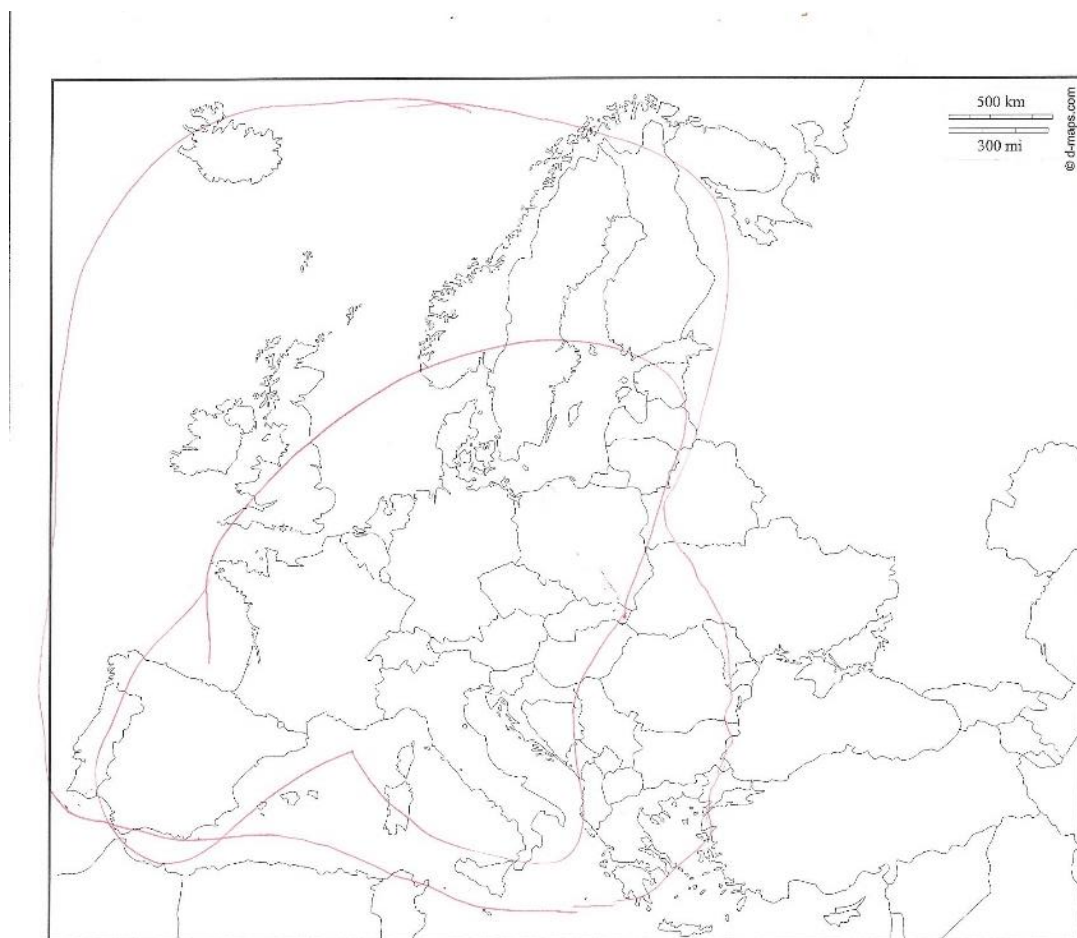
Figure F.3: Mental map of Hanka, from Czech Republic

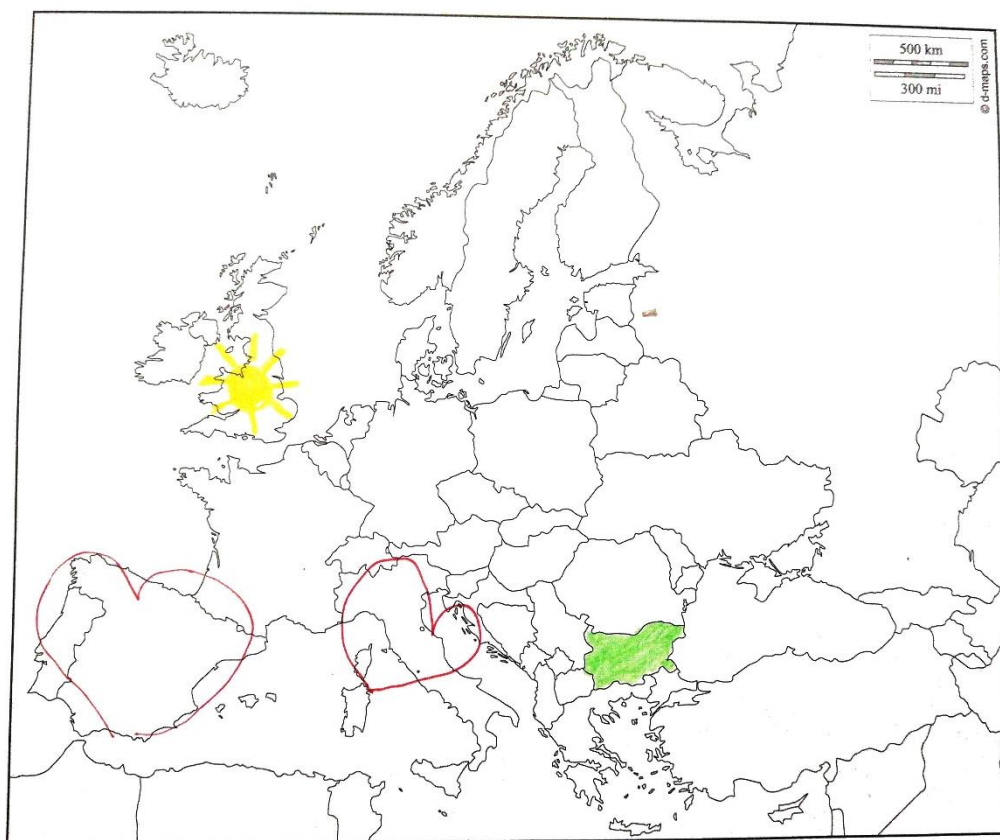**Figure F.4: Mental map of Margarita, from Bulgaria**

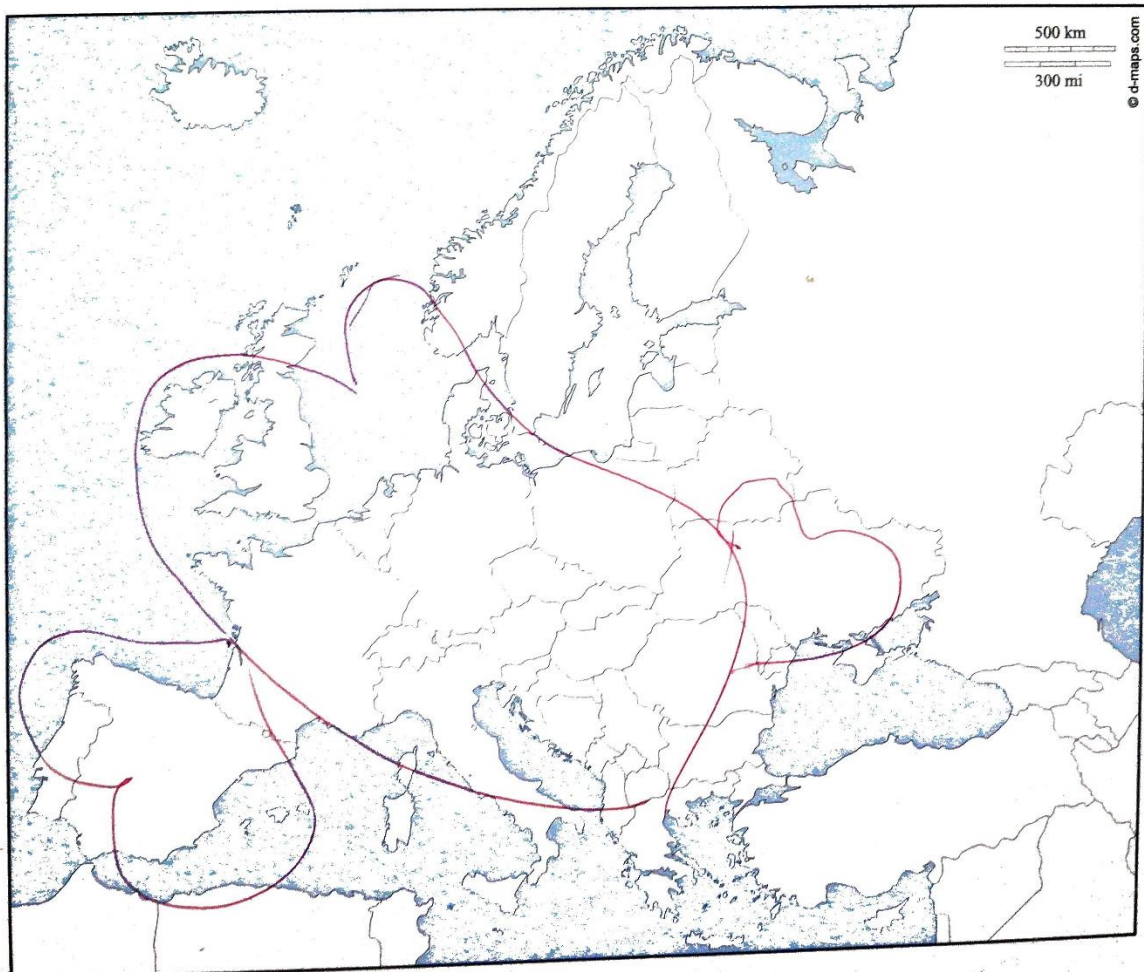**Figure F.5: Mental map of Ovi, from Romania**

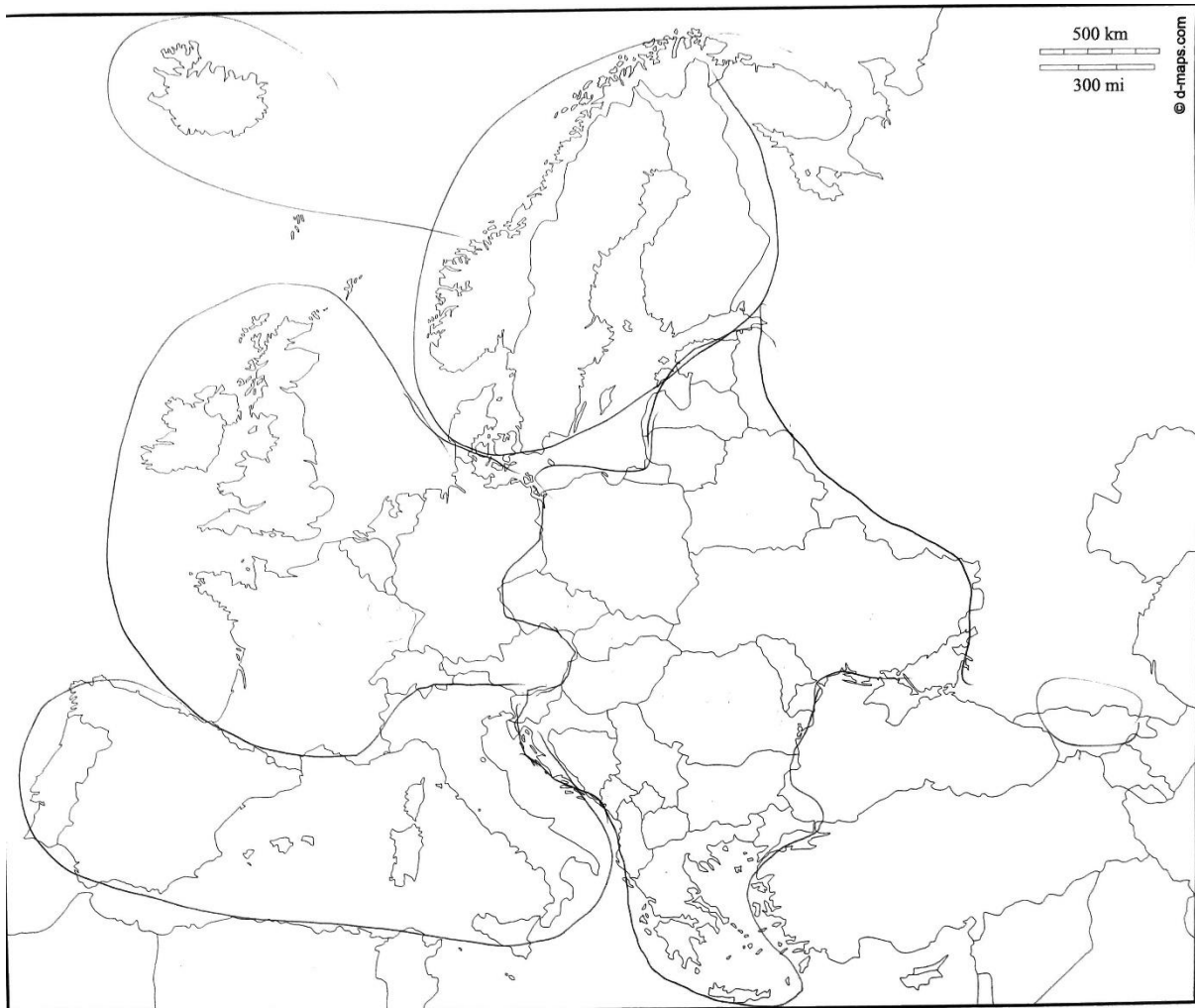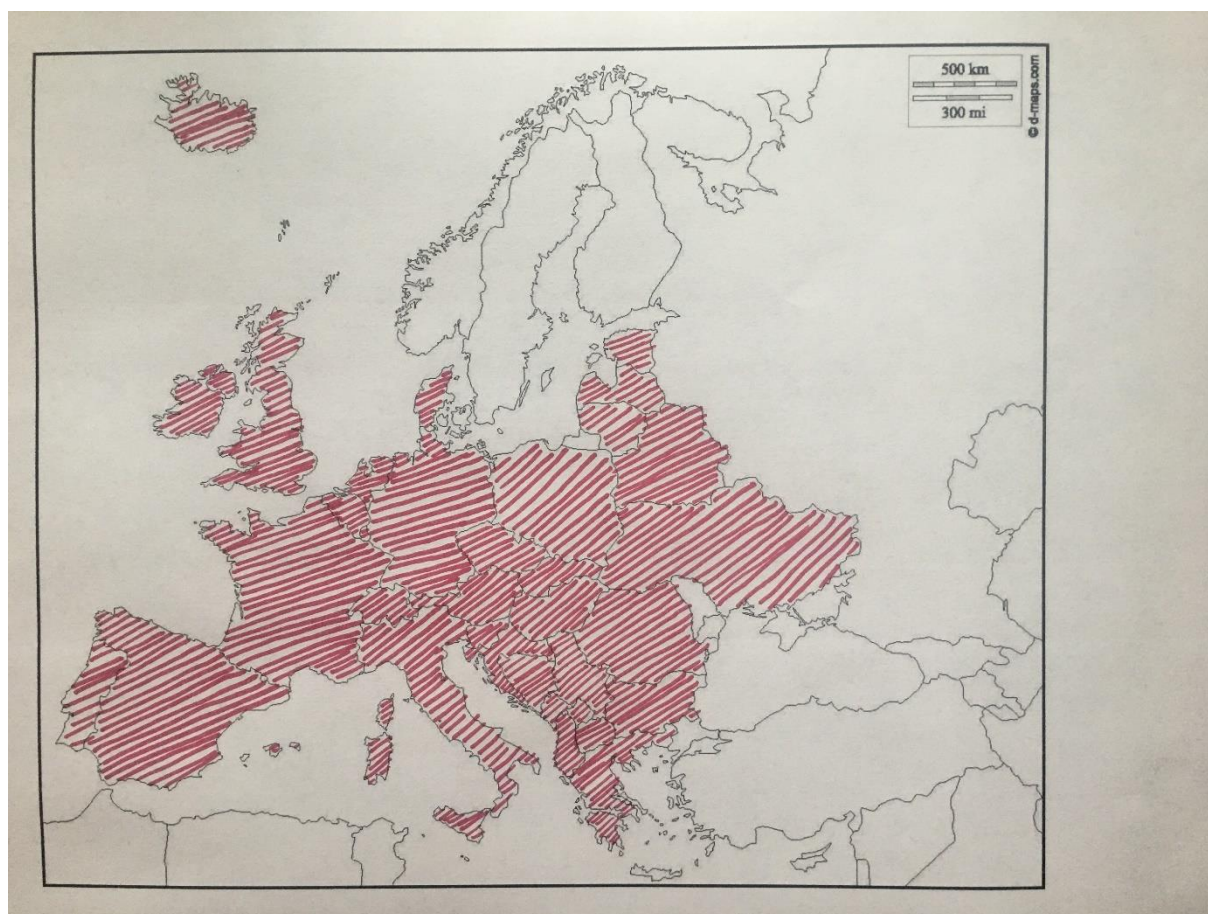**Figure F.6: Mental map of Madalina, from Romania**

Figure F.7: Mental map of Lina, from Lithuania

Lina's comments on her map:

"I filled it the way that I did because I feel that all of us in these countries – in the sense of general population, people's aspirations and difficulties that we encounter on a daily basis – are of similar state. I feel that there are shared struggles and shared identity-crisis that that we are all experiencing. Maybe not of the same kind. There are long-established European countries and powers where people had gone through military and political struggles, such as Germany, France, Spain, Poland, etc. There are 'younger' countries, such as the Baltic states, that are establishing their identity and 'place under the sun.' Then there are countries like Ukraine and Belarus, Kosovo, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Macedonia which are struggling to reach certain steppingstone towards the so-called Western identity. Regardless of the different stages of 'identity building', I feel that, from a simple humanity perspective, we all are going/have gone through similar struggles for similar goals and I feel that our identities are if not similar, then at least compatible. Same with the UK. I was undecided for

a little while, but I feel that, regardless of political 'games', the general population are no different from the rest of the peoples. I cannot really pinpoint why I feel that Scandinavian countries are somewhat more distant in the sense of identity. I have never been there and haven't met many Scandinavians to form an opinion, a feeling. Maybe that is why it feels a little different, a little more distant and unfamiliar. So, all in all, the criteria I went by was:

1. Similar struggles as I perceive them

2. Similar or compatible ideologies that we, as peoples, strive for

3. An identity crisis of varying degree and direction (for example, whilst people of Belarus are striving against across-the-board human rights violations and for freedom of expression, in Lithuania or in the UK people are struggling to better the rights of ethnic, sexual orientation, religion-based minorities. So, basically, the latter is just at the next stage than the former having achieved what the former is trying to achieve as we speak."

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French abstract

Mandatory in the framework of the co-tutelage

Explorer le rôle des migrants des nouveaux États membres (NEM) dans l'intégration macro-régionale en France et au Royaume-Uni.

Chapitre 1 : Introduction générale

1. Origine de la thèse

Cette thèse de géographie est issue d'une co-tutelle entre l'Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne et l'Université de Swansea au Pays de Galles. Clarisse Didelon Loiseau, Marcus Doel, Yann Richard et Sergei Shubin, ayant pour intérêt commun les migrations internationales et l'intégration régionale, ont co-supervisé cette thèse initialement financée par le Labex Dynamite, qui s'est déroulée en France et au Royaume-Uni entre janvier 2019 et septembre 2022.

Ce travail de recherche s'inscrit dans la continuité des travaux menés par le groupe de recherche *Intégration régionale* du Labex Dynamite et de leur ouvrage collectif, *Le Dictionnaire de la régionalisation du Monde* (2018), visant à repenser les notions d'intégration et d'espace régional. Cet ouvrage, coordonné par Nora Mareï et Yann Richard, souligne que la logique de mondialisation a conduit les États à s'associer sous la forme d'ensembles macro-régionaux pour compenser leur perte de pouvoir face à la montée de nouveaux facteurs, notamment économiques. Il montre que des processus d'intégration macro-régionale se sont développés partout dans le monde, dans un premier temps, principalement sur un plan économique et commercial. L'intégration régionale désigne ici la formation de régions fonctionnelles à partir de l'augmentation d'échanges et d'interactions de toutes sortes (économiques, sociales, politiques) entre des pays et des sociétés situés dans une même partie du monde (Richard, 2014). L'expression « l'intégration *macro*-régionale » permet de distinguer ce processus qui se déroule théoriquement au niveau international de celui d'intégration régionale qui peut également renvoyer à un phénomène infra-étatique (Mareï et Richard, 2018). Les auteurs de ce livre collectif déclarent que peu de recherches sur le sujet ont été consacrées aux dynamiques « bottom-up », par le bas, et au rôle de l'échelle individuelle dans l'intégration régionale, et suggèrent que les migrations internationales, en tant que phénomènes sociaux régionalisés, sont un angle d'approche pertinent pour étudier ce processus. C'est dans ce contexte scientifique que ce projet de thèse a émergé, pour contribuer aux recherches sur l'intégration régionale à partir de l'échelle individuelle.

Ce sujet de recherche s'enracine dans le champ des études européennes et s'appuie sur la théorie du nouveau régionalisme (NRT). Selon cette approche, l'intégration régionale n'est pas seulement un processus institutionnel piloté d'en haut par les gouvernements : les populations qui habitent et pratiquent l'espace, qui l'investissent, sont aussi des acteurs clés dont le rôle est encore peu étudié (Sérandour, 2020). L'hypothèse principale de cette thèse est que les flux migratoires en provenance des nouveaux États membres (NEM) de l'UE ont des effets géographiques (c'est-à-dire des conséquences sur les territoires et les sociétés qui les habitent), parmi lesquels la création, l'augmentation et l'intensification de liens entre différents espaces voisins, influençant les représentations et les pratiques jusqu'à produire une macro-région, définie comme une entité multiétatique continue et fonctionnelle (Mareï et Richard, 2018).

2. Contexte général

23 juin 2016. Le résultat du référendum est en faveur du Brexit. Bien que l'UE ait traversé de nombreuses crises depuis sa création, la crise du Brexit est sans précédent : pour la première fois, un État membre, à savoir le Royaume-Uni, acteur clé de la construction européenne, fait marche arrière et initie la première étape d'un laborieux processus de sortie qui prend plus de trois ans. Le 31 janvier 2020, le Royaume-Uni ne fait officiellement plus partie de l'UE.

Ce référendum et son résultat peuvent être interprétés comme la manifestation de la montée de l'euroscepticisme, du nationalisme et du populisme en Europe. Le Brexit symbolise aussi l'échec du projet communautaire européen et le peu d'attrait des citoyens britanniques pour la construction européenne, notamment en ce qui concerne le marché du travail. Si la crise économique a été un argument décisif pour les votants, le Brexit est aussi le symbole d'une crise identitaire : selon l'enquête Ipsos-MORI, réalisée une semaine avant le vote, l'immigration, qui a été au cœur de la campagne du Brexit, est devenue un critère déterminant, avant l'économie, pour un électeur sur trois et un partisan du Brexit sur deux (Charlot, 2016). Un certain nombre d'études ont montré la corrélation entre le rejet de l'immigration et le vote en faveur du Brexit (Arnorsson et Zoega, 2018). Alors que les migrants extra-européens et les réfugiés du Moyen-Orient étaient particulièrement visés par les compagnes anti-immigration, ce sont les migrants intra-européens qui ont été les premiers touchés par le Brexit, qui a mis fin à leur liberté de circulation, à leur droit de vivre

et de travailler au Royaume-Uni (Kone et Vargas-Silva, 2019). La priorité accordée à l'identité nationale, revendiquée par les électeurs favorables au Brexit, s'est accompagnée de la remise en cause de la construction européenne, d'un repli identitaire des britannique et d'un retour en arrière des droits communautaires.

La décennie qui a précédé le Brexit a vu les migrations intra-européennes augmenter significativement : les trois dernières vagues d'élargissement de l'UE en 2004, 2007 et 2013 ont entraîné des flux migratoires considérables au sein de l'UE, principalement en provenance des nouveaux États membres (NEM) et en direction des anciens, d'est en ouest. Le nombre exact de migrants en provenance des NEM habitant en Europe de l'ouest est difficile à mesurer car ils n'ont plus besoin d'avoir un visa (Fihel *et al.*, 2006 ; Friberg, 2012 ; Kaczmarczyk et Okolski, 2008). Toutefois, la Banque mondiale (2006) estime que 1,3 % des Polonais, 3,6 % des Lituaniens et 2,5 % des Lettons ont quitté leur pays d'origine au cours des vingt premiers mois après l'adhésion de leur pays à l'UE (Kaczmarczyk et Okolski, 2008 ; Van Riemsdijk, 2010).

Le Royaume-Uni, la Suède et l'Irlande se distinguent parmi les anciens États membres de l'UE car, contrairement aux autres pays membres qui ont instauré une période de transition pouvant aller jusqu'à sept ans, ils ont ouvert leur marché du travail aux NEM dès 2004, immédiatement après l'élargissement de l'UE (Anderson *et al.*, 2006 ; Drinkwater *et al.*, 2010). La liberté de circulation a attiré de nombreux migrants des NEM, en particulier polonais, au Royaume-Uni. En 2015, les Polonais étaient les ressortissants non britanniques les plus nombreux au Royaume-Uni avec 916 000 personnes (soit 16,5 % de l'ensemble des ressortissants non britanniques résidant au Royaume-Uni, selon l'Office for National Statistics. Plus généralement, l'ONS estime que la grande majorité des ressortissants de l'UE vivant au Royaume-Uni (représentant plus de 50 % des 5 millions d'étrangers en 2015) sont originaires des pays de l'ancien bloc communiste (de Pologne mais aussi des États baltes, de Slovaquie, de Roumanie et de Bulgarie). En peu de temps, le statut des migrants des nouveaux États membres (NEM) est passé de « libre circulants » au moment de l'adhésion de leur pays à l'UE à celui d'étrangers, obligés de faire une demande de résidence pour pouvoir demeurer au Royaume-Uni (*pre-settled*/*settled status*). Ce changement de statut ainsi que la restriction des droits de circulation des migrants intra-européens ont relancé le débat sur l'intégration des immigrants, en réaffirmant la primauté des frontières et en creusant le fossé entre résidants nationaux et immigrants au Royaume-Uni.

La notion d'intégration est une notion multidimensionnelle et pertinente pour analyser les expériences géographiques et sociales des migrants des NEM en Europe, oscillant entre dynamiques d'exclusion et d'intégration. Analyser les expériences migratoires des migrants des NEM permet de comprendre comment l'espace européen se construit à partir d'échanges, de représentations et de mobilités.

Cette thèse n'a pas pour ambition d'analyser de manière exhaustive l'ensemble des dynamiques et des éléments qui composent le processus d'intégration régionale en Europe. Compte tenu du temps et des ressources disponibles limités dont on dispose dans le cadre d'un contrat doctoral, nous nous limitons à l'étude d'une seule dimension spécifique de ce processus : sans nier le rôle des institutions et des acteurs étatiques, ainsi que d'autres acteurs sociaux dans l'intégration régionale, l'accent est mis intentionnellement dans cette recherche sur un seul aspect de la construction régionale. Si celle-ci est un processus multidimensionnel, l'objectif de cette thèse n'est pas d'en proposer une définition complète et exhaustive (en supposant que cela soit possible), mais d'explorer le rôle d'une catégorie de population en particulier, à savoir les migrants des NEM.

Dans la section suivante, nous présentons le cadre spatio-temporel et le cadrage théorique et les objectifs de cette recherche doctorale, avant de formuler les questions qui forment notre problématique et d'exposer le plan de la thèse.

3. À la recherche de la macro-région européenne

L'échelle régionale est une échelle clé pour comprendre les relations internationales, même dans le contexte de la mondialisation : la majorité des échanges économiques, politique et des flux migratoires se concentrent à un niveau macro-régional (Mareï et Richard, 2018). Plusieurs recherches ont montré le rôle déterminant de la proximité géographique dans les flux migratoires : les individus sont en effet plus enclins à migrer vers des pays voisins de leurs pays d'origine. Les flux migratoires contribueraient ainsi à la régionalisation du monde, ou, en d'autres termes, à l'organisation du monde en ensembles régionaux composés de pays proches ou voisins (Wihtol de Wenden, 2010). Selon les dimensions et les critères pris en compte, la forme et le contenu de ces ensembles varient.

La notion de région peut être définie de plusieurs manières. Selon l'approche naturaliste, une région est définie en fonction de critères physiques tels que le relief, le climat et la végétation) ; selon l'approche fonctionnaliste, une région est définie à partir des relations et dynamiques spatiales qui existent entre différentes espaces ; et l'approche constructiviste affirme qu'une région est définie à partir de son patrimoine culturel et social. « L'Europe » est généralement considérée comme étant une entité géographique ou politique dans les débats publics et scientifiques. Lorsqu'il est question de son intégration, elle est traditionnellement réduite et analysée à travers le prisme de l'Union européenne (UE). En analysant les notions de région et d'Europe, cette thèse s'appuie sur des travaux qui ont montré que l'Europe était une construction sociale contextuelle, une notion floue renvoyant à un espace à géométrie variable dont l'UE n'est qu'une seule dimension (Toureille, 2017 ; Grataloup, 2009 ; Paasi, 2001).

Si l'existence de « l'Europe » comme partie du Monde est communément admise, comme le montre l'enquête Eurobroadmap (Beauguitte *et al*., 2012), plusieurs définitions de l'Europe se chevauchent et recouvrent des espaces différents. Ses contours varient en fonction des critères choisis (politique, géographique ou culturel) et des facteurs impliqués (Didelon *et al*., 2008). Les multiples représentations de l'Europe témoignent du flou définitionnel de cet objet géographique et de l'absence de consensus autour de son identité et de ses frontières (Didelon, 2010). L'Europe comme continent est une construction située dans le temps et l'espace : les continents ne sont pas des unités physiques naturelles, mais des découpages du monde aléatoires et arbitraires (Grataloup, 2009). La forme de l'Europe continentale est différente de celle de l'Europe communautaire (dont la composition a évolué de 6 pays à 28 pays), de l'Europe du Conseil de l'Europe (composée de 47 États membres), de l'Europe de l'UEFA (composée de 54 membres), ou encore de l'Europe telle qu'elle a été définie par Huntington (1996) comme une aire de civilisation. La forme de l'Europe continentale ne coïncide pas non plus nécessairement avec les espaces d'appartenance des habitants, dont les contours subjectifs sont dignes d'attention au même titre que ceux dessinés par les acteurs politiques ou économiques.

Les approches récentes de l'espace ont introduit les notions de relations (Malpas, 2012 ; Anderson, 2012), de réseaux (Viard, 1994 ; Castells, 1996), ou encore d'archipels (Veltz, 1996) et ont déconstruit la définition de la région comme un espace continu. La construction de la région se présenterait ainsi comme une production de connexions, d'interactions et de

relations (Mareï et Richard, 2020). C'est dans cet esprit qu'Ansi Paasi (2010) utilise la notion d'assemblage pour caractériser l'espace régional et souligner sa complexité ainsi que multi-dimensionnalité : « A 'region' is normally in a state of becoming, assembling, connecting up, centring, and distributing all kind of things. Yet it has not been always there: it has been constructed and will probably eventually disappear » (Paasi, 2010). Cette notion permet d'introduire une dimension temporelle et conduit à considérer toute région comme un processus dynamique.

L'approche phénoménologique de l'espace, selon laquelle une région n'existerait qu'à partir du sujet percevant (Saint-Julien, 2004), nécessite de prendre en comptes les représentations et les sentiments d'appartenance des individus qui habitent, construisent et pratiquent l'espace pour définir une région (Frémont, 1976 ; Ripoll et Veschambre, 2005).

Face à cette multiplicité de définitions, le mot « Europe » fait référence dans ma thèse à un espace macro-régional, une construction qui s'appuie sur un imaginaire régional, mais dépourvu de limites déterminées *a priori*. Les limites fixes d'une supposée « région européenne » seront également remises en question dans cette thèse où le mot « Europe » doit être considéré comme une commodité et un abus de langage délibéré pour désigner les pays membres de l'Union européenne et leurs proches voisins. Cette thèse s'inscrit dans la lignée des débats théoriques des années 1980 et 1990, qui se sont éloignés de la définition de la « région naturelle » de Paul Vidal de la Blache et qui ont introduit l'idée que les régions n'étaient pas des espaces géographiques *a priori*, des faits géographiques ou ontologiquement donnés, mais des constructions sociales, politiques et culturelles. Cette définition considère que les espaces régionaux sont des processus spatio-temporels, qui peuvent se faire et se défaire dont les limites sont mouvantes. L'Europe est donc envisagée comme un objet non fini, dynamique et multiple à géométrie variable. L'objectif de cette thèse n'est pas de déterminer, de manière normative, les frontières de l'Europe ou d'étudier un espace spécifique et unifié, mais de découvrir quel est l'espace macro-régional (non défini *a priori*) qui fait sens pour les migrants des NEM. Cette thèse aspire à montrer que l'Europe est une région floue, dynamique et hétérogène, construite à partir des liens transnationaux qui existent entre plusieurs pays et qui forment un ensemble régional, caractérisé par des interactions et des échanges plus intenses entre les pays qui le composent plutôt qu'avec le reste du monde.

Dans cette thèse, les migrations des NEM ne seront pas étudiées de manière quantitative et historique : la dynamique générale des flux et des vagues migratoires en provenance des NEM constitue un arrière-plan qui sera mobilisé pour expliquer les faits observés sur le terrain et analyser les entretiens. L'histoire des flux migratoires en provenance des NEM sera présentée dans le chapitre 4 de manière succincte et non exhaustive.

4. Une approche par le bas de l'intégration régionale

L'Europe, en tant qu'espace macro-régional, est souvent étudiée d'un point de vue politique et économique. Peu d'études en géographie ont analysé cet espace macro-régional à travers le prisme individuel. En choisissant d'étudier l'intégration macro-régionale par le bas, *via* le rôle des migrants intra-européens (notamment en provenance des NEM), cette thèse développe une approche « par le bas » de l'intégration régionale. En tenant compte du fait que l'espace régional n'est jamais acquis en géographie, contrairement à d'autres disciplines, cette thèse mobilise une approche socio-constructiviste. Cette approche soutient que l'intégration régionale en Europe n'est pas seulement le résultat de dynamiques mises en œuvre « par le haut », par les gouvernements et les institutions, mais que les pratiques collectives et/ou individuelles contribuent également à la construction de cet objet géographique qui est communément appelé « Europe ».

L'utilisation de l'expression « par le bas » (« bottom-up ») vise à inscrire cette thèse dans la continuité de travaux (Bennafla, 2002 ; Pasquier, 2003 ; Diouf, 2006 ; Mareï et Wippel, 2020 ; Hettne et Söderbaum, 1998) qui ont montré que l'intégration régionale n'est pas seulement un processus qui émane d'une volonté politique, mais qui résulte des intérêts, des décisions, des pratiques et des représentations d'un groupe non étatique individuel ou collectif (Werlen, 2005). Ces études ne nient pas le rôle des acteurs étatiques mais invitent à considérer l'importance des dynamiques spontanées et informelles, voire involontaires, portées par la société civile et non pilotées par les gouvernements. Cette expression souligne l'existence d'un processus intégration régionale par-delà les Etats et les organisations, et souligne le rôle d'une catégorie d'acteurs peu étudiée, voire minimisée, dans le champ de la géographie régionale (Sérandour, 2020).

Mobiliser une approche par le bas pour étudier l'intégration régionale européenne est pertinent au regard la crise politique profonde traversée par l'UE. Accompagnée par le

développement des nationalismes, mis en exergue par le Brexit, et exacerbée par la crise sanitaire du COVID-19, cette crise politique (symbolisée par la désunion des États membres sur diverses questions notamment migratoires) a mis à mal le modèle européen d'intégration, d'appartenance européenne et de libre mobilité en Europe. Si l'idée même de construction d'un territoire européen, impulsée d'en haut par les gouvernements et les institutions publiques, semble disqualifiée par cette crise, ce n'est pas l'intégration en soi qui est remise en question mais ses modalités et l'action de certains acteurs.

Depuis les années 1990, les migrations internationales se sont intensifiées et ont pris des formes multiples, ce qui rend plus difficile la définition du concept de « migrant international ». Aurore Flipo, dans l'introduction de sa thèse (2014), affirme qu'il n'existe pas de définition universelle : chaque appareil juridico-administratif possède sa propre définition de ce qu'est un migrant international. Elle montre que le statut de migrant est intrinsèquement lié aux critères de définition d'un État et différencie les migrants internationaux des expatriés et d'autres formes de mobilité comme le tourisme, ou les migrants transfrontaliers. Krausova et Vargas-Silva (2014) affirment également qu'il n'existe pas de définition consensuelle et unique des migrants. Selon les différentes bases de données disponibles, le nombre de migrants d'un pays varie en fonction des critères et des définitions choisies. Les migrants sont parfois définis en fonction de leur pays de naissance, de leurs nationalités, de leurs passeports, de la durée de leur séjour, de la raison de leur migration, ou encore par le fait qu'ils sont soumis à des contrôles d'immigration (Krausova et Vargas-Silva, 2014). La définition des migrants internationaux proposée par Heaven Crawley (2013) est intéressante car elle inclut la durée de la migration, l'espace, mais aussi l'intentionnalité d'un individu : « Un migrant international est défini comme une personne qui a, ou a l'intention de, changer de pays de résidence habituelle pour une période d'au moins un an » (Crawley, 2013). C'est cette dernière définition qui sera utilisée dans cette thèse car elle fait directement référence au parcours de vie des individus et ne repose pas sur un cadre institutionnel *a priori*.

Dans l'UE, les migrants sont des acteurs clés dans la construction de l'Europe comme espace de mobilité : 3% des résidents de l'UE sont des citoyens européens internationaux et 10 à 15% des citoyens européens ont vécu dans un autre pays de l'UE au moins une fois dans leur vie (Recchi, 2021). Dans ce contexte général de mobilité intra-européenne, les flux migratoires des nouveaux États membres (NEM) vers les anciens (Mendes, 2007 ; Nacu,

2010) se distinguent. D'une part, le démantèlement du bloc de l'Est et les élargissements successifs de l'Union européenne en 2004, 2007 et 2013 ont favorisé la mise en place d'un nouveau système de circulation migratoire intra-européen (Favell, 2008), caractérisé par l'augmentation des flux des NEM vers les anciens (Mendes, 2007 ; Nacu, 2010). D'autre part, les préférences migratoires des ressortissants des NEM montrent une forte concentration intra-européenne des flux migratoires : plus de 80 % des émigrés bulgares, hongrois et roumains ont quitté leur pays d'origine pour s'installer dans un autre pays membre de l'UE en 2018 (Eurostat, 2020) et cinq principaux pays (Allemagne, Espagne, France, Italie et Royaume-Uni) concentrent plus de 70 % des migrants intra-européens (Constant et Zimmermann, 2017). La « régionalisation des flux migratoires » (Diminescu *et al.*, 2003 ; Dubucs et Mourlane, 2017 ; Gildas, 1996 ; Rey et Saint-Julien, 2005) peut être définie comme l'augmentation plus rapide des flux migratoires entre les pays d'une même région du monde qu'avec le reste du monde. Ce phénomène peut être considéré comme l'expression visible de l'intégration régionale par le bas en Europe (Favell, 2010) et comme une conséquence des décisions politiques prises par les États dans le cadre communautaire européenne (telles que les politiques de libre circulation et d'accès au marché du travail) et des stratégies individuelles de mobilité.

5. Une approche comparative internationale

L'approche comparative internationale est une méthode appropriée pour étudier l'intégration macro-régionale en Europe, phénomène qui ne peut pas être étudié à partir de l'observation d'un seul pays. L'approche comparative permet de révéler des dynamiques observables dans plusieurs espaces en facilitant l'analyse des conditions dans lesquelles un phénomène international se produit. Le fait que le même phénomène existe dans des contextes comparables (similaires mais non identiques) permet d'identifier les variables qui le déterminent. Pour cerner les spécificités nationales tout en explorant la portée transnationale de l'intégration des migrants des NEM, j'ai choisi une approche comparative de deux situations nationales (la France et le Royaume-Uni) avec des cadres institutionnels différents (membre de l'UE *versus* non-membre de l'UE), afin d'analyser un phénomène migratoire qui touche une grande partie des pays membres de l'UE (on compte 13 nouveaux pays membres).

Si la co-tutelle de thèse a eu une influence évidente, plusieurs choses ont influencé le choix des terrains de recherche dans deux pays dont les contextes politiques, économiques et sociaux se ressemblent. La France et le Royaume-Uni sont deux des plus grandes puissances économiques d'Europe et figurent parmi les quatre premiers pays en termes d'immigration, notamment en provenance des nouveaux États membres. Par exemple, les Polonais forment aujourd'hui la plus grande population étrangère au Royaume-Uni, qui est également le premier pays de destination des Lituaniens et des Roumains, tandis que la France est traditionnellement un pays d'accueil pour les migrants francophiles ou les réfugiés d'Europe de l'Est originaires de Roumanie, de République tchèque et de Pologne. D'un point de vue historique et politique, la France et le Royaume-Uni ont joué et continuent de jouer un rôle important dans la construction et l'évolution de l'Union européenne depuis le traité de Maastricht en 1992. Le Brexit, influencé par la diffusion large d'un discours médiatique anti-immigration (Somerville, 2016 ; Guma et Dafydd Jones, 2019 ; Moore et Ramsay, 2017), suscite un contexte pertinent pour étudier l'intégration des migrants des NEM dans un cadre institutionnel différent de celui de la France. C'est aussi un cadre idéal pour comprendre les dynamiques d'intégration régionale lorsqu'une forme institutionnelle d'intégration régionale, telle que l'UE, est rejetée par une grande partie de la population d'un pays. Enfin, les différences entre ces pays en matière de politique migratoire rendent leur comparaison pertinente : la France et le Royaume-Uni n'ont pas mis en œuvre les mêmes politiques pour organiser l'accès des migrants à leur marché du travail au moment de l'élargissement de l'UE ; en 2004, la France, contrairement au Royaume-Uni, a décidé de limiter la libre circulation des travailleurs pendant une période transitoire de sept ans.

Le fait que le Pays de Galles ait voté majoritairement en faveur du Brexit a également été un argument décisif dans le choix du terrain (Jones, 2017). Bien que la part des migrants dans la population du Pays de Galles soit inférieure à la moyenne britannique (Guma et Dafydd Jones, 2019), des études montrent que l'immigration, en particulier en provenance des NEM, y a augmenté depuis les années 90 (Crawley, 2013 ; Woods et Watkin, 2008). Aujourd'hui, 5,5% des résidents du Pays de Galles sont nés en dehors du Royaume-Uni (Krausova et Vargas-Silva, 2014). Les Polonais, qui représentent la population étrangère du Royaume-Uni la plus nombreuse, constituent également le plus grand groupe de migrants au Pays de Galles, où la majorité des migrants viennent des NEM, en particulier de Bulgarie, de Roumanie et de Slovaquie, selon the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2011 ; Crawley, 2013).

6. Questionnement théorique et objectifs de la recherche

L'objectif de ce doctorat est de contribuer à l'étude de la construction de l'espace macro-régional européen à travers les pratiques, les discours et les représentations des migrants des NEM. Quel est le rôle joué par les migrants des NEM dans l'intégration régionale européenne en France et au Royaume-Uni ? Telle est la question principale à laquelle ce doctorat tente de répondre. Plusieurs autres questions de recherche découlent de cette problématique générale.

1) Qui sont ces « nouveaux » migrants des NEM, quelles sont leurs aspirations, et comment contribuent-ils à la construction d'un espace européen ?

2) Comment l'Europe est-elle représentée par les migrants des NEM ?

3) Les sentiments d'appartenance des migrants des NEM révèlent-ils l'existence d'un espace européen sous-jacent à celui que construisent les acteurs institutionnels de la communauté européenne, un espace discret, socialement construit, qui participe pleinement à l'intégration régionale européenne ?

Ces questions reposent sur plusieurs hypothèses :

- Les migrants n'ont ni les mêmes pratiques ni les mêmes représentations selon qu'ils résident au Pays de Galles ou en Lorraine.
- Les relations sociales influencent les pratiques de mobilité et les circulations des migrants des NEM ; elles renforcent les sentiments d'appartenance à un espace macro-régional.
- Les pratiques de mobilité des migrants des NEM sont susceptibles de favoriser le processus d'intégration macro-régionale en facilitant les sentiments d'appartenance et d'identification à l'Europe.
- Les espaces de mobilité révélés par les trajectoires migratoires, les pratiques, les aspirations à migrer, sont des facteurs d'intégration macro-régionale.
- L'étude des représentations mentales de l'Europe des migrants des NEM permet d'identifier les déterminants des représentations inhérentes aux pratiques migratoires.

- Les sentiments d'appartenance produits par la migration internationale contribuent à la construction d'un espace macro-régional en transcendant les échelles nationales.

7. Plan

Cette thèse est composée de sept chapitres, dont une introduction générale et une conclusion.

Les trois premiers chapitres présentent l'approche que nous utilisons pour étudier le rôle des migrants des NEM dans l'intégration macro-régionale européenne en France et au Royaume-Uni. Le chapitre 2 de la thèse propose un état de l'art : il expose le cadre théorique, les positionnements scientifiques choisis et les principaux concepts mobilisés. Ce chapitre montre que le passage du paradigme de l'intégration sociale à celui de l'intégration régionale est essentiel pour comprendre les dynamiques migratoires des NEM. Le chapitre 3 présente la méthodologie, notamment la chronologie du travail sur le terrain de recherche et les difficultés rencontrées. Il montre comment la méthodologie (entretiens et cartes mentales) a été sélectionnée et comment les participants ont été recrutés, notamment dans le contexte de la crise du Covid-19.

Le chapitre 4 présente les migrations en provenance des NEM et en direction de la France et le Royaume-Uni, les causes de la migration, ainsi que les conséquences spatio-temporelles de ces migrations. Il démontre que l'augmentation et la régionalisation des flux migratoires des NEM vers les anciens pays membre de l'UE sont des facteurs discrets du processus d'intégration régionale en cours au sein de l'UE.

Le chapitre 5 explore les représentations macro-régionales des enquêtés à travers l'analyse des cartes mentales et des mots associés à l'Europe. L'Europe apparaît comme une région fluide et dynamique, une réalité culturelle, politique et sociale revendiquée ou contestée. Ce chapitre met en évidence les relations entre les représentations mentales de l'Europe, la durée de la migration et le parcours de vie du migrant.

Le chapitre 6 postule qu'il existe un niveau macro-régional d'identification sociale en construction et soutient que les migrants des NEM qui développent un sentiment d'appartenance européenne contribuent à l'intégration régionale européenne par le bas. Après avoir exploré la multiplicité des formes que prennent les sentiments d'appartenance

spatiale des migrants des NEM, ce chapitre montre que l'identité européenne est un processus en devenir.

Le dernier chapitre de la thèse, le chapitre 7, revient sur les objectifs de la recherche et conclut. Il présente les contributions de cette thèse à la littérature scientifique et propose des pistes à développer dans des recherches ultérieures.

Chapitre 2 : Revue de la littérature et cadre théorique

Le chapitre 2 s'appuie sur une approche socio-constructiviste de l'espace géographique (Paasi, 2010). Il propose un état de la littérature scientifique et aborde les notions clés qui sont mobilisées tout au long de la thèse. La redéfinition de la notion d'intégration à travers le prisme de la géographie et de l'intégration macro-régionale permet de dépasser les limites normatives de l'analyse traditionnelle et stato-centrée de l'intégration sociale. L'analyse développée dans ce chapitre montre que le processus d'intégration est un assemblage complexe, un processus rhizomatique, spatialement dynamique et en devenir.

La notion d'intégration est au cœur de ce travail de recherche. Ce mot est défini de nombreuses façons, ce qui en rend l'usage délicat. Le mot « intégration » soulève d'importants enjeux épistémologiques et méthodologique car il renvoie à deux choses différentes et complexes : l'intégration sociale et l'intégration régionale. Dans cette première partie, il est question d'identifier les enjeux définitionnels de ces deux notions, de montrer pourquoi il nous semble pertinent de les articuler dans ce projet de recherche et comment cette articulation peut contribuer à la compréhension du phénomène migratoire intra-européen. Étudier l'intégration conduit à répondre à quatre questions fondamentales. Qui s'intègre ? Dans quoi ? Comment ? Pourquoi ? Ce chapitre expose les problèmes et les enjeux soulevés par ces quatre questions. Le passage du paradigme de l'intégration sociale à celui de l'intégration régionale permet de surmonter les obstacles normatifs et méthodologiques soulevés par l'étude de l'intégration des migrants des NEM en Europe.

La littérature scientifique sur l'intégration sociale est très abondante : elle s'inscrit dans des champs disciplinaires variés (sociologie, économie, pédagogie) et se rattache à plusieurs grands thèmes de recherche (le monde du travail, les minorités, l'école, l'immigration) (Rhein, 2002). Cette première partie n'est donc pas une tentative vaine de proposer une énième définition de l'intégration, afin de se frayer un chemin à travers un méli-mélo définitionnel. Elle doit servir à synthétiser les principales approches afin d'en montrer les limites et de déconstruire les principes normatifs qui les sous-tendent. Un usage « décomplexifié » et « décomplexé » de la notion d'intégration nous paraît essentiel afin de la rendre opérationnelle dans le cadre d'une recherche en géographie. Nous nous intéressons ici uniquement à la notion d'intégration utilisée dans le cadre des études menées sur l'immigration, car ce concept, dans le champ des sciences sociales, a été construit en lien étroit avec les travaux anglo-saxons et français sur l'immigration et qu'il en est devenu une notion centrale (Beaud et Noiriel, 1989 ; Berthomière *et al*., 2015). Cependant, il est important de préciser que « l'intégration des immigrants », expression qui s'est largement imposée dans la littérature scientifique, n'est qu'une modalité du processus d'intégration, qui concerne en général la société dans son ensemble (Paugam, 2014). Cet objet de recherche renvoie à plusieurs définitions et peut être approché de différentes manières qu'il convient de maîtriser pour saisir les controverses qui ont lieu à son propos dans la sphère scientifique et dans le domaine public, qui s'influençant mutuellement.

De manière très synthétique, on peut considérer qu'il existe deux grandes approches de l'intégration sociale : une approche pragmatique et une approche théorique (Rhein, 2002) qui peuvent se compléter, s'alimenter et s'influencer mutuellement. D'un point de vue pragmatique et politique, l'intégration désigne les modalités mises en œuvre par les pouvoirs publics pour permettre ou favoriser l'insertion de populations dans une société donnée. Ces modalités varient d'un pays à l'autre (Berthomière *et al.*, 2015) mais aussi d'une époque à l'autre et sont ainsi en perpétuelle actualisation afin de s'adapter à des contextes sociaux, économiques et politiques mouvants. Ces méthodes, qualifiées de « structurelles » par D. Schnapper (2008), peuvent se manifester concrètement dans différents processus administratifs, dans la mise en place de politiques de redistribution économique et d'accès aux services publics (Lapeyronnie, 2003), dans l'accès à l'éducation (Jamet, 2011) ou encore dans les conditions de participation à la vie collective, *via* la possibilité de voter par exemple (Schnapper, 1991). Dans le cadre de cette thèse, la dimension pragmatique de l'intégration présentée ci-dessus est peu étudiée car nous prenons le parti de nous intéresser

au processus de construction régional par le bas, c'est-à-dire au rôle des immigrants, de leurs pratiques et de leurs représentations, plutôt qu'à celui des institutions sur lesquelles repose l'approche pragmatique de l'intégration.

D'un point de vue théorique, la notion d'intégration en sciences sociales a été élaborée corrélativement à la constitution de la sociologie en tant que discipline en France grâce à E. Durkheim et aux États-Unis grâce à l'école de Chicago au début du XXe siècle (Schnapper, 1991 ; Safi, 2011). En France, E. Durkheim, dans sa thèse de doctorat intitulée *De la division du travail social* (1893), introduit et théorise la notion d'intégration en l'inscrivant dans une réflexion portant sur la cohésion sociale. L'analyse de la transformation des formes du lien social lors du passage des sociétés traditionnelles aux sociétés industrielles conduit E. Durkheim à envisager une socialisation fondée sur la division du travail en tant qu'elle garantit différentes formes de solidarité et d'interdépendance entre les membres d'une société. Dès lors, le travail, ainsi que d'autres instances telles que la famille, l'école, l'État-providence ou l'Église sont garants de l'intégration sociale entendue comme un processus de socialisation et d'apprentissage des normes de la société dans laquelle s'insère un individu ou un groupe d'individus. Depuis, cette première définition est un socle théorique incontournable et quasi systématiquement mobilisé dans les recherches sur l'intégration (Beaud et Noiriel, 1989 ; Schnapper, 1991 ; Rhein, 2002 ; Tiberj, 2014). Toutefois, s'il s'agit d'une conception à laquelle on ne cesse de faire référence, ce n'est jamais sans la critiquer, l'actualiser, ou encore s'en écarter, notamment à partir des années 1960 et 1970 avec par exemple l'apparition de la sociologie néo-marxiste, de la sociologie actionnaliste et de la sociologie critique (Rhein, 2002).

Si les travaux fondateurs de la sociologie en France portant sur l'intégration ne s'intéressent au départ que peu au thème de l'immigration, ceux de la sociologie américaine s'enracinent au contraire dans les travaux sur l'immigration de l'école de Chicago (Safi, 2011) qui orientent l'attention vers les modes de socialisation d'un individu ou un groupe d'individus au sein d'une société d'accueil après une migration. Les textes de R. E. Park (1928), R. E. Park, et E. W. Burgess (1924), W. I. Thomas et F. Znaniecki (1918) sur le devenir des Italiens, des Irlandais, des Polonais, des Afro-Américains, etc. sont à cet égard considérés comme précurseurs dans ce champ de recherche et les bases théoriques qu'ils posent sont, au même titre que celles de E. Durkheim, utilisées comme des références et socles réflexifs dans les recherches ultérieures.

Ce chapitre a pour ambition, d'une part, de présenter les différentes approches de la notion d'intégration à travers l'histoire de la littérature scientifique française et anglo-saxonne et, d'autre part, de proposer des pistes de réflexion pour l'utilisation de cette notion qui permette d'éviter certains écueils, notamment normatifs. L'objectif est de montrer en quoi l'intégration est une notion centrale des études migratoires francophones et anglo-saxonnes sur l'immigration et de synthétiser les principales approches proposées. Les conditions socio-historiques de la production sociologique des travaux sur l'intégration des immigrés sont présentées de manière succincte dans la mesure où elles permettent une compréhension des contextes de production scientifiques actuels ainsi que de l'enjeu définitionnel, particulièrement en France, qui apparaît dans toute étude sur l'immigration. Enfin, ce chapitre met en avant l'apport de la géographie et du concept d'intégration régionale à la théorie de l'intégration, telle qu'elle a été développée principalement en sociologie. Celles-ci permettent d'augmenter la compréhension du phénomène migratoire intra-européen en s'intéressant au devenir des migrants issus des NEM au sein d'un territoire, non pas national comme cela est majoritairement fait dans les études portant sur l'immigration, mais macro-régional.

Chapitre 3 : Méthodologie

Comment appréhender les représentations de « l'Europe » des migrants des NEM ? Quels outils, méthodes et contraintes peuvent être identifiés pour étudier les représentations sociales de cet objet géographique flou, à une échelle macro-géographique ? Le chapitre 3 présente la méthodologie et les outils d'investigation choisis pour étudier l'intégration macro-régionale européenne à partir de l'échelle individuelle.

Ce travail de recherche s'appuie sur une double méthodologie, à savoir les cartes mentales et les entretiens semi-directifs, réalisée avec des migrants des NEM lors d'un terrain de recherche qui s'est déroulé en plusieurs temps, dans deux pays (France et Pays de Galles) et quatre villes (Nancy, Metz, Swansea et Cardiff) entre 2019 et 2021. Ce chapitre montre pourquoi nos choix méthodologiques sont pertinents et adaptés à la population cible – les migrants des NEM – et revient sur la manière dont les données ont été collectées. Les caractéristiques sociodémographiques des enquêtés sont présentées dans la dernière section de ce chapitre.

La démarche qualitative permet d'aborder les migrations en provenance des NEM d'un point de vue subjectif tout en collectant des données individuelles sur un groupe social minoritaire, peu étudié et souvent invisible dans les statistiques officielles (Dickey *et al.*, 2018). Cette approche s'inscrit dans la volonté de repenser les migrations en provenance des NEM en s'éloignant de la théorie *homo economicus*, selon laquelle les migrants, principalement ceux ayant des motivations économiques, sont des acteurs rationnels qui suivent une logique de maximisation des gains (Massey *et al.*, 2003). Les entretiens semi-directifs, permettant la production de données verbales, révèlent des mécanismes migratoires sensibles et émotionnels qui outrepassent les logiques économiques et rationnelles traditionnellement mise en avant. Ils permettent de comprendre certains phénomènes non visibles mais fondamentaux dans l'approche socioconstructiviste, tels que les émotions, les sentiments et les représentations, difficiles à collecter *via* des enquêtes quantitatives ou des recensements.

Notre analyse s'appuie sur un échantillon de 103 entretiens (et 83 cartes mentales) avec des migrants en provenance des NEM résidant en France et au Pays de Galles. Le corpus de cartes mentales a été constitué parallèlement aux 103 entretiens semi-directifs, fait en ligne et face-à-face. L'écart entre le nombre d'entretiens semi-directifs (103) et le nombre de cartes mentales (83) est dû aux refus de certains enquêtés de réaliser l'exercice, et au contexte même de l'entretien à distance/en ligne : plusieurs enquêtés ne m'ont pas renvoyé leurs cartes mentales, malgré des courriels de relance.

La recherche sur les migrations intra-européennes se concentre souvent sur les grandes villes, comme Londres ou Birmingham (Stenning *et al.*, 2006 ; Knight *et al.*, 2014 ; Berroir *et al.*, 2009). Pourtant, plusieurs études montrent que les petites villes et les villes moyennes constituaient une étape déterminante dans le processus migratoire (Dubucs, 2011 ; Giroud *et al.*, 2011), notamment des migrants en provenance des NEM. Plusieurs études utilisent les bases de données de l'allocation du National Insurance Number (NINo), fournissant des informations détaillées jusqu'à l'échelle locale, pour mesurer l'immigration liée au marché du travail au Royaume-Uni (Drinkwater *et al*., 2015 ; Harris *et al.*, 2012 ; Trevena, 2009). Ces études montrent que la répartition géographique des migrants des NEM ne correspond pas aux destinations traditionnelles des immigrés (Pollard *et al.*, 2008) : les flux migratoires des migrants en provenance des NEM sont plus dispersés et orientés vers les zones rurales et les petites villes (Trevena, 2009 ; Stenning *et al.*, 2006 ; Bauere *et al.*, 2007 ; Green *et al.*,

2007-a, 2007-b ; CRC 2007 ; Chappell *et al.*, 2009). Travailler à l'échelle des villes moyennes semble pertinent dans le cadre de cette thèse dans la mesure où elles sont négligées dans les recherches sur les migrations intra-européennes, alors qu'elles attirent des flux importants de migrants des NEM et cristallisent un certain nombre de problématiques migratoires.

Notre recherche s'est déroulée dans deux villes principales, Swansea et Nancy, et deux villes secondaires, Cardiff et Metz, respectivement situées dans le sud du Pays de Galles et en Lorraine, dans le nord-est de la France. L'extension du terrain de recherche principal (Swansea et Nancy) à deux autres villes (Cardiff et Metz) est due aux liens fonctionnels qui existent entre les deux villes de France et du Pays de Galles et par la volonté de ne pas restreindre la collecte de données et de rendre compte de la plus grande diversité possible d'expériences migratoires : plusieurs migrants rencontrés sur le terrain à Nancy vivaient à Metz, et plusieurs migrants rencontrés sur le terrain de recherche à Swansea vivaient à Cardiff. Dans chaque cas, les migrants vivant à Metz et Cardiff se rendent régulièrement (plusieurs fois par mois) à Nancy et Swansea pour le travail, les études, les loisirs ou pour des raisons religieuses. Des critères fonctionnels et structurels tels que la taille de la ville, sa situation géographique et son influence ont également été pris en compte pour sélectionner les lieux de recherche adéquats.

Selon la définition proposée par Marpsat et Razafindratsima (2010), les migrants des NEM sont une population « invisible » et « difficile à aborder ». C'est une population dont les membres sont relativement peu nombreux (ils ne représentent que 0,4% de la population en France, selon le recensement de l'INSEE de 2016, et moins de 1% de la population dans la plus grande partie du Royaume-Uni, selon l'étude de Stenning *et al.*, 2006). Les migrants des NEM sont difficiles à identifier et à aborder car il existe peu de lieux où il est possible de les rencontrer. Par ailleurs, faire des entretiens avec eux sur des sujets aussi sensibles et intimes que leurs trajectoires migratoires requiert un haut degré de confiance.

Les migrants des NEM, marqués par les souvenirs de la période socialiste, sont également « difficiles à recruter » (Baltar and Brunet, 2012). Une phase d'immersion (impossible pendant le terrain au Pays de Galles qui s'est déroulé pendant le confinement) dans le terrain de recherche en France a été nécessaire pour construire une relation de confiance et créer un sentiment de familiarité avec les enquêtés. Plusieurs personnes interrogées étaient de prime

abord méfiantes et réticentes à participer à l'enquête, à être enregistrées et à partager des informations personnelles sur leur parcours migratoire et leurs pratiques quotidiennes. Le souvenir des interrogations russes, mais aussi des dénonciations et de la surveillance, qui ont marqué la période socialiste, et la vie de plusieurs enquêtés, a contribué à la suspicion et la réticence ressentis par certains enquêtés, notamment en France, où j'ai interrogé davantage de migrants ayant quitté leur pays d'origine avant 1989, parfois même des réfugiés déchus de leur nationalité.

La migration intra-UE étant légale, aucune démarche administrative systématique n'est nécessaire : la visite de lieux administratifs tels que la préfecture, les agences de conseil ou les services d'accueil, d'hébergement ou d'orientation, normalement utiles pour recruter des migrants (Mazzocchetti, 2011), n'étaient pas des lieux pertinents pour rencontrer des enquêtés en provenance des NEM puisqu'ils ont peu (voire pas du tout) recours à ces services.

Contrairement à certaines communautés de migrants, les migrants des NEM sont peu visibles dans l'espace public : il n'existe pas de quartiers dédiés aux Hongrois, Tchèques ou Slovaques comme il existe, par exemple, des quartiers indiens, japonais ou chinois, dans lesquels se concentrent des commerces et des restaurants. Les lieux où l'on peut rencontrer et aborder les migrants des NEM sont donc dispersés et limités, voire inexistants. Il peut s'agir de lieux politiques officiels comme les ambassades et les consulats, de commerces (alimentation, bibliothèque, coiffeur), d'églises, ou encore de centres culturels ou communautaires.

Participer aux événements organisés par les associations culturelles à Nancy a permis d'établir un premier contact, et de permettre aux migrants des NEM de me (re)connaître. Ma présence aux événements culturels et commémoratifs n'est pas passée inaperçue, en raison de mon relatif jeune âge, de mon incapacité à parler la langue du pays d'origine des enquêtés et parce que plupart des membres des associations culturelles de migrants se connaissaient depuis des années. Le fait que mon prénom a des origines slaves a suscité une certaine curiosité et une sympathie à mon égard. Lors de ces événements culturels, j'ai fait de l'observation participante, définie par Bogdan et Taylor (1975) comme une période intense d'interaction sociale entre le chercheur et les enquêtés dans leur propre environnement. Le chercheur s'immerge dans la vie des enquêtés et partage leurs expériences. En rendant

d'emblée transparent mon travail de recherche, ma position s'apparente à celle de « l'observateur-participant », caractérisé par le fait que les activités scientifiques de l'enquêteur sont rendues publiques dès le départ et sont plus ou moins encouragées publiquement par les personnes étudiées (Junker, 1960). Contrairement aux autres catégories d'observation participante définies par Junker (le « participant complet », « l'observateur complet » et le « participant observateur »), ma position de chercheuse était pleinement affichée et assumée, sans avoir un impact trop grand sur mon immersion et sur ma participation aux activités des enquêtés.

Figure 1 : Synthèse de la manière dont les enquêtés ont été recrutés en France
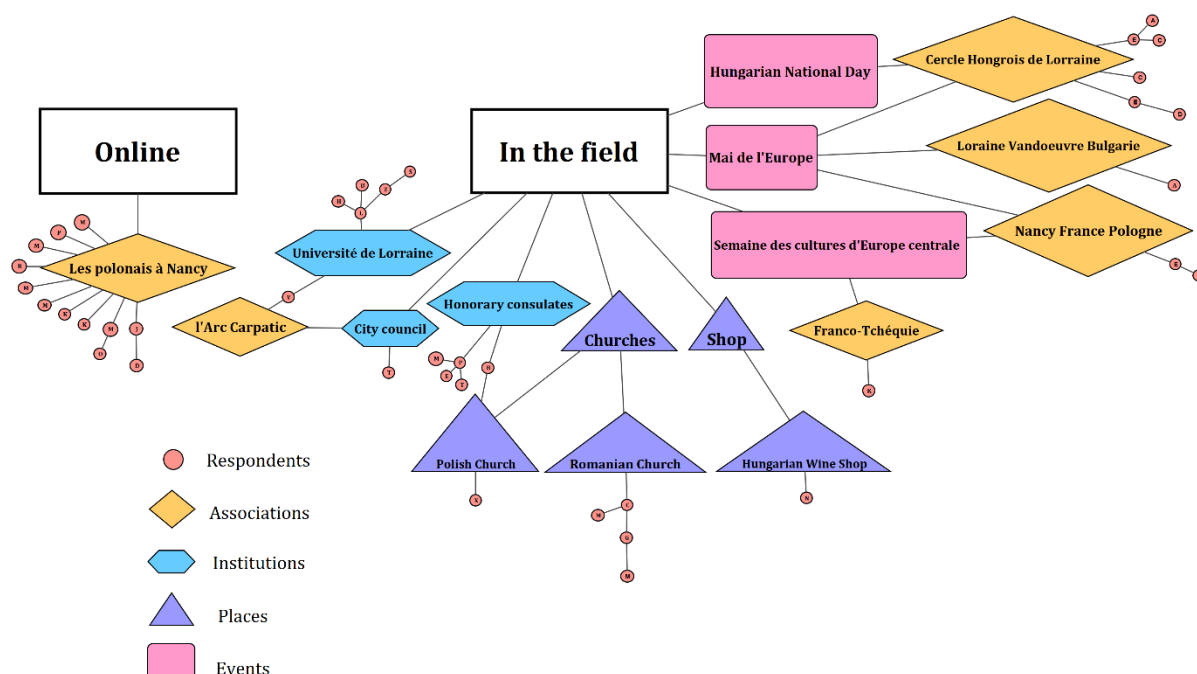
Source: Mila Sanchez, 2021.

Cette figure (voir figure 1) synthétise la manière dont les enquêtés ont été recrutés à Nancy. Elle ne présente que les canaux de contact réussis qui ont conduit à un entretien effectif.

L'entretien, qui consiste en une conversation entre deux personnes (l'enquêté et l'enquêteur), est une méthode très courante en géographie humaine, qui emprunte de nombreux outils de recherche à la sociologie. De nombreuses disciplines l'utilisent, de l'anthropologie aux sciences médicales, en passant par la psychologie et les sciences de l'éducation (Barbot, 2012 ; Imbert, 2010). L'entretien semi-directif est généralement

structuré avec une grille d'entretien constituée de grands thèmes et de questions et permet une plus grande liberté de réponse qu'un entretien directif : les questions sont plus ouvertes et spontanées dans un entretien semi-directif que dans un entretien directif, qui vise plutôt à collecter des réponses directes et concises. Il se distingue également de l'entretien non directif, organisé autour d'une question générale sans utiliser une grille d'entretien. La formulation des questions permet de ne pas restreindre la discussion à une définition normative et préconçue de l'intégration. Cela évite de penser l'intégration à partir de critères et de questions prédéfinis, car les enquêtés sont alors libres d'orienter l'entretien et de faire émerger des éléments auxquels l'enquêteur n'aurait pas pensé. La grille d'entretien utilisée était assez flexible pour pouvoir être adaptée aux parcours migratoires des enquêtés. Les entretiens semi-directifs ont permis d'obtenir des informations détaillées sur les trajectoires migratoires des enquêtés, leur mobilité en Europe, leurs pratiques urbaines, leurs réseaux sociaux et familiaux, et les liens qu'ils entretiennent (ou non) avec leur pays d'origine.

Les entretiens semi-directifs présentent certaines limites. La première difficulté pour l'enquêteur est d'arriver à trouver un équilibre entre la grille d'entretien prédéfinie et la flexibilité des réponses de l'enquêté. Blanchet et Gotman (2007) rappellent que le cadre extérieur, l'heure de la journée, ou encore la situation personnelle et émotionnelle de l'enquêté et du chercheur, sont autant de paramètres qui affectent la collecte des données lors d'un entretien qui se déroule à un instant précis. La personne interrogée peut ne pas révéler certains détails de sa vie ou déformer, consciemment ou inconsciemment, son discours. Bourdieu (1986) dénonce « l'illusion biographique » fondée sur le « postulat du sens de l'existence ». Il en critique le caractère artificiel et rappelle que la causalité temporelle est construite et inévitablement sélective. Cependant, les constructions des individus restent des objets valables pour le chercheur en sciences sociales pour analyser la place d'un individu dans un contexte social.

Les 103 entretiens ont été enregistrés (soit avec un dictaphone, soit via Zoom) afin de conserver l'intégralité des conversations (alors que la prise de notes est nécessairement sélective) et de permettre à la conversation de rester fluide (en n'étant pas ralentie ou interrompue par la prise de notes). Les entretiens ont été systématiquement retranscrits sur ordinateur selon la méthode du verbatim. Ce choix s'explique par la volonté de retranscrire les entretiens le plus fidèlement possible, afin de préserver le « parlé naturel » et les mots utilisés par les enquêtés, dans la mesure où ils sont significatifs pour l'analyse qualitative et

discursive (McLellan *et al.*, 2003). L'étape de la transcription, bien que longue et fastidieuse (165 heures et 54 minutes d'enregistrement ont dû être retranscrites), est une étape essentielle pour le chercheur qui se trouve déjà dans une position interprétative : la retranscription conduit inévitablement à une sélection subjective et involontaire des mots entendus (Gardin, 2007).

Chapitre 4 : les migrations en provenance des NEM et en direction de la France et du Royaume-Uni.

Le chapitre 4 présente le contexte migratoire dans lequel s'inscrit ce travail de recherche et expose les dynamiques sociales et spatiales qui en découlent. Il donne tout d'abord un aperçu des tendances et des dynamiques migratoires des NEM en direction de la France et le Royaume-Uni. Ensuite, ce chapitre explore les raisons pour lesquelles les flux migratoires augmentent et met en évidence les facteurs émotionnels, inconscients et complexes à l'origine des raisons de la migration à un niveau individuel. Enfin, la dernière sous-partie de ce chapitre s'intéresse plus spécifiquement aux temporalités et aux espaces produits par les migrations intra-européennes et met en évidence l'existence d'un espace macro-régional multidimensionnel investi par les représentations et les pratiques de mobilité des individus.

L'Europe est traditionnellement présentée comme un espace façonné par les flux migratoires. C'est une zone ancienne de migration, d'invasions, de colonisations et d'empires, et un espace multiculturel, habité et traversé par de nombreux peuples (Moch, 2003 ; Hobsbawm, 1987). Plusieurs chercheurs ont montré que l'Europe était le résultat d'un melting-pot de populations qui se sont déplacées au cours des siècles aux niveaux locaux, régionaux et internationaux (Checkel et Katzenstein, 2009 ; Favell, 2010). Les flux migratoires continus, constitués par un écheveau de mobilités circulaires, saisonnières et professionnelles, ont contribué à la construction politique de l'Europe et *vice versa* (Hobsbawm, 1983 ; Anderson, 1983).

Si l'Europe a d'abord été considérée comme une terre d'émigration, marquée dès la fin du XIXe siècle par des mouvements migratoires sans précédent, notamment vers les Amériques (Hatton et Williamson, 1998), elle est devenue après la Seconde Guerre mondiale une région

d'immigration nette. Aujourd'hui, c'est l'une des principales destinations migratoires du monde (Wihtol de Wenden, 2008 ; Koikkalainen, 2021). L'évolution contemporaine du marché du travail occidental dans le contexte de la mondialisation économique a favorisé l'exploitation d'une main-d'œuvre bon marché composée de travailleurs étrangers en situation de précarité. La récente crise dite « des migrants » de 2015, qui a rendu visible la migration irrégulière, s'est accompagnée de politiques de renforcement des contrôles aux frontières extérieures de l'UE. Toutefois, cette crise doit être relativisée en se fondant sur des données du recensement, qui montrent que la part des personnes nées à l'étranger dans l'UE est plus petite que dans la plupart des pays à haut revenu : en 2020, les 53 millions de personnes nées à l'étranger dans l'UE ne représentent que 12,2 % des 447,3 millions d'habitants et 37,7 % de ces 53 millions sont originaires d'un autre pays de l'UE (Commission européenne, 2020). Même si l'espace européen apparaît relativement dominé par les courtes distances, les migrations intra-européennes sont relativement invisibles dans un contexte médiatique saturé par la « crise migratoire » qui fait régulièrement la une des journaux.

Si l'Europe en tant qu'espace de mobilité existait avant l'instauration de la libre circulation des personnes dans l'UE, la construction institutionnelle de l'espace migratoire européen a encadré et encouragé les migrations intra-européennes, avec plusieurs étapes : le traité de Rome en 1957, suivi de la libre circulation des travailleurs en 1968, et de l'adoption de l'Acte unique européen et des accords de Schengen en 1985 (étendant la liberté de circulation, jusqu'alors réservée aux seuls travailleurs, à tous les ressortissants de l'UE). Ces différentes étapes ont contribué à définir l'Europe comme un espace sans frontières. Cette nouvelle forme de migration intracommunautaire, fondée sur la libre circulation des personnes, implique que les citoyens de l'UE n'ont plus besoin de visas ou de se soucier de leur citoyenneté pour voyager dans l'UE ; souvent, ils n'ont même pas besoin d'avoir une résidence officielle pour vivre et travailler où ils le souhaitent, dans n'importe quel État membre.

Deux grandes tendances caractérisent les flux migratoires intra-européens. La première tendance est l'augmentation de la mobilité au sein de l'espace européen. Les vagues d'élargissement de l'UE ont contribué à l'augmentation des flux migratoires est-ouest en Europe. De 2000 à 2010, l'immigration a augmenté de 50% en moyenne en Europe

occidentale : les données de l'OCDE montrent que 5,8 millions de travailleurs qui ont migré d'est en ouest pendant la même période (Flipo, 2014).

La deuxième tendance est la régionalisation des flux. Par « régionalisation des flux », on entend une augmentation particulièrement plus rapide des migrations entre des pays situés dans la même partie du monde que depuis ou vers le reste du monde (Mareï et Richard, 2018). Certaines études montrent, à partir les recensements nationaux, que les migrations intra-européennes se produisent et s'organisent principalement entre des pays voisins et en direction d'un nombre limité de pays tels que le Royaume Uni, l'Allemagne ou la France (Flipo, 2014). La régionalisation des flux peut se manifester par une présence d'un plus grand nombre de migrants en provenance des NEM que d'autres pays du monde. Selon des données d'Eurostat (2020), 15,4 millions de citoyens de l'UE vivaient dans un autre pays de l'UE que leur pays d'origine en 2020. Au Royaume-Uni, les Polonais constituaient le plus grand groupe de ressortissants étrangers en 2007, juste après l'adhésion du pays à l'UE (Pollard *et al.*, 2008). Toujours au Royaume-Uni, le recensement de 2001 comptabilisait 58 000 personnes nées en Pologne, tandis qu'en 2008, le nombre de personnes nées en Pologne était estimé à 520 000 (Upward, 2008), dépassant ainsi le nombre de personnes nées en Inde, au Pakistan ou au Bangladesh. La libre circulation et l'ouverture des frontières au sein de l'UE, tout en contribuant au développement de la migration dans un espace macro-régional, contrastent avec la politique de consolidation des frontières extérieures de l'UE et le contrôle de la mobilité en provenance des pays tiers.

Trois groupes principaux de migrants des NEM ont été interrogés : les migrants ayant quitté leur pays d'origine après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, ceux ayant migré après 1989 mais avant l'élargissement de l'UE et ceux ayant migré après l'adhésion de leur pays d'origine à l'UE. Les discours des enquêtés diffèrent en fonction de leurs expériences migratoires et de la vague migratoire dans laquelle leur mobilité s'inscrit. Le parcours migratoire joue donc un rôle déterminant dans le discours des enquêtés. Le contexte sociopolitique dans lequel la migration s'est déroulée (c'est-à-dire le contexte de l'énonciation de l'enquête, « d'où » l'enquêté parle) est présenté dans ce chapitre pour replacer l'expérience de l'individu au sein d'un contexte migratoire plus large.

Les migrants ayant quitté leur pays d'origine après la Seconde Guerre mondiale que j'ai interrogés étaient des descendants d'anciens soldats ayant combattu pendant cette guerre et

des réfugiés politiques ayant fui le régime communiste et échappé à l'emprisonnement, à la torture, voire à la mort.

Les discours des migrants ayant quitté leurs pays d'origine après 1989 et avant l'élargissement de l'UE doivent être mis en perspective avec les transformations postcommunistes et l'ouverture progressive des frontières des pays d'Europe de l'Est. Ces discours sont fondés sur une mythification de l'Occident et sur la construction mentale d'un espace européen fixe et fermé, déterminées par des années de restriction migratoires, notamment vers l'Ouest.

Les migrations postérieures à l'élargissement se caractérisent par la liberté de circulation et l'ouverture des frontières. Les migrants des NEM ont été décrits comme des acteurs transnationaux, vivant en même temps ici et là-bas (Moskal, 2011) et considérant le processus migratoire comme une période temporaire ou courte de leur vie (Drinkwater et Garapich, 2015 ; Friberg, 2012 ; Piętka-Nykaza et McGhee, 2017). L'une des principales caractéristiques de la migration postérieure à l'élargissement est sa nature temporaire : Favell (2008) décrit les migrants des NEM comme des « free movers régionaux » qui sont plus susceptibles de s'engager dans une mobilité circulaire et transnationale temporaire que dans une migration permanente et à long terme (Friberg, 2012).

Exemple du discours d'un migrant ayant quitté son pays d'origine après la Seconde Guerre mondiale :

Burrel (2006) a identifié six éléments composant les récits migratoires de l'après-guerre : un long récit portant sur l'itinéraire migratoire (1), la vision de la nation comme le bien le plus précieux (2), une connaissance approfondie de l'histoire du pays d'origine (3), une fréquentation active de l'église et participation aux cérémonies religieuses (4), la reconnaissance de l'importance de la langue maternelle (5) et un sens de la communauté (6).

Si le modèle proposé par Burrel était à l'origine basé sur les récits des migrants polonais, ce modèle permet aussi d'éclairer le récit de Kristof. Bien qu'il soit hongrois, l'analyse du récit de Kristof révèle ces six éléments typiques des récits de la migration d'après-guerre.

(1) Kristof a raconté en détail l'itinéraire qui l'a conduit en France. Lors de l'entretien, il a évoqué en détail son exil à pied vers un camp de réfugiés en Yougoslavie et le convoi qui l'a transporté en France après 5 mois de vie dans le camp. Il a un souvenir très précis du sac et des objets qu'il transportait avec lui pendant son exil.

(2) Kristof se décrit comme très patriote. Il possède un drapeau et une carte de la grande Hongrie. Il évoque avec nostalgie les souvenirs de sa jeunesse et procède à une mythologisation de la Hongrie et de son histoire personnelle en tant que réfugié politique. Pendant des années, il n'a pas été autorisé à retourner en Hongrie, même pour assister aux funérailles de sa mère. C'est d'ailleurs cette impossibilité de retour qui contribue sans doute à la cristallisation du mythe du pays d'origine chez les migrants de cette génération, comme le suggère Burrel. Lors des manifestations commémoratives, c'est Kristof qui propose, à chaque fois, de chanter l'hymne national hongrois.

(3) Kristof a une grande connaissance de l'histoire de la Hongrie et est très intéressé par l'histoire des pays de l'Est en général. Il était en train de lire *l'Histoire des pays de l'Europe de l'Est*, écrit par Henry Bogdan (1989), au moment de l'entretien.

(4) Kristof est très religieux et va à l'église chaque semaine. Pendant des années, il a organisé la venue du prêtre hongrois de Metz à Nancy une fois par mois.

(5) En ce qui concerne la langue, Kristof insiste pour que tous les discours prononcés lors de manifestations commémoratives soient d'abord prononcés en hongrois, puis en français, même si aujourd'hui la langue maternelle de la grande majorité des membres du Cercle hongrois de Lorraine n'est pas le hongrois (la majorité des membres sont soit des descendants de Hongrois, soit des conjoints).

(6) Kristof a fondé le Cercle hongrois de Lorraine et a déclaré à ce propos : « le but de ce cercle est culturel et surtout patriotique : c'est la deuxième patrie. A l'origine, ce groupe permettait aux réfugiés hongrois de se rencontrer et de parler ensemble le hongrois. Puis, il s'est aussi ouvert aux Français, bien sûr, pour leur présenter le folklore et les valeurs des Hongrois ».[320] A travers l'activité de l'association (événements commémoratifs, expositions,

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[320] L'entretien avec Kristof a été réalisé en français le 16/03/2019.

nourriture traditionnelle, film, conférences), Kristof témoigne d'un fort sentiment communautaire et d'attachement à la culture hongroise, notamment à travers la perpétuation de la langue maternelle.

Tous ces éléments montrent que les récits de Kristof sur la Hongrie et son parcours migratoire s'inscrivent dans un récit plus général de l'exil et de la migration. Son expérience migratoire s'inscrit dans une histoire collective dont il faut considérer les tenants et les aboutissants pour comprendre la situation d'énonciation à partir de laquelle Kristof parle, et comment se construisent ses représentations spatiales et son identité.

« Pourquoi des individus migrent-ils ? » et « où choisissent-ils d'aller ? » sont deux questions posées traditionnellement dans la littérature scientifique sur les migrations qui se concentre sur les mécanismes du processus migratoire, notamment les raisons, les causes et plus généralement les facteurs motivant la migration (Carling et Collins, 2017). L'analyse des entretiens semi-directifs et des cartes mentales des migrants des NEM montre que les raisons de migrer sont plus complexes que des motivations purement économiques (Massey *et al*., 2003). Les entretiens semi-directifs révèlent l'importance de mécanismes migratoires sensibles (tels que des désirs, des émotions et des motivations culturelles et sociales). Les migrants, en tant qu'êtres humains complexes, sont mus par des forces à la fois conscientes et inconscientes. La migration est aussi produite par les capacités cognitives des individus, comme les sentiments et les émotions (Boccagni et Baldassar, 2015 ; Svašek, 2010). Les capacités cognitives sont constitutives du projet migratoire (De Gourcy, 2013). La notion de « projet migratoire », apparue dans les années 1970 en France, permet de comprendre le phénomène migratoire non seulement comme un processus déterminé par des contraintes, des facteurs externes et des *stimuli*, mais aussi comme façonné par les sentiments, les pensées et les aspirations migratoires d'un individu. La notion de « désir », souvent utilisée comme synonyme « d'aspirations migratoires » dans la littérature anglophone se distingue des mots « souhaits », « envies » et « préférences », privilégiés dans la recherche française, où le mot « désir », particulièrement théorisé et mobilisé en philosophie et en psychanalyse, est peu (voire pas) utilisé.

Plusieurs enquêté associent la notion de réussite au fait de migrer. Cette idée est résumée par Patrycja, une migrante polonaise vivant au Pays de Galles, lorsqu'elle déclare : « Réussir, ce n'est pas travailler dans la capitale de son pays d'origine mais vivre à l'étranger : finalement,

partir à l'étranger dans une petite ville, c'est mieux que partir dans une grande ville en Pologne. »[321] Dans cette phrase, Patrycja affirme que partir à l'étranger est plus attractif (quelle que soit la taille de la ville de destination) et plus valorisant socialement que de vivre dans une grande ville de son pays d'origine : elle suggère que la mobilité sociale nécessite une mobilité spatiale internationale et présente la mobilité spatiale comme un marqueur de réussite (Faist, 2013). L'expérience de « vivre à l'étranger » est valorisée par de nombreux enquêtés et se construit en fonction du regard des autres : c'est seulement parce que la mobilité spatiale internationale est perçue comme « désirable » par d'autres qu'elle devient synonyme de réussite.

Les réseaux et les relations sociales jouent un rôle important dans les décisions de migrer. Si la liberté de circulation en Europe facilite la possibilité de rencontrer un partenaire d'un autre État membre (Niedomysl *et al.*, 2010), cela reste un phénomène minoritaire. Les couples binationaux européens sont moins fréquents que les couples uni-nationaux et les couples binationaux non-européens (Díez Medrano *et al.*, 2014). Néanmoins, plusieurs études ont souligné que les relations amoureuses sont des composantes importantes des migrations intra-européennes (Van Wissen et Heering, 2014 ; Díez Medrano *et al.*, 2014 ; Haandrikman, 2014). En effet, l'amour est un facteur clé mentionné par de nombreux enquêtés. À Nancy, la majorité des migrants interrogés est en couple avec un Français. C'est l'amour qui explique le plus souvent le déménagement à Nancy, comme l'exprime Hanka, une migrante tchèque vivant à Nancy, lorsqu'elle déclare : « On ne va pas à Nancy par hasard mais par amour ».[322] Nancy n'apparaît donc pas comme une ville attractive en soi, bien au contraire. Plusieurs personnes interrogées à Swansea ont des partenaires gallois, comme Stanislava, originaire de Bulgarie ou encore Ioan et Nicolas, deux migrants roumains, qui ont également choisi de rejoindre leur partenaire galloise à Swansea il y a plus de dix ans.

Migrer au hasard

La plupart des personnes interrogées affirment avoir migré « au hasard », c'est-à-dire qu'elles rejettent l'idée d'un projet migratoire longuement réfléchi et préparé et insistent sur

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[321] L'entretien avec Patrycja a été réalisé en anglais le 13/11/2020.
[322] L'entretien avec Hanka a été réalisé en français le 11/10/2019.

le caractère soudain, fortuit, rapide et inattendu de leur décision de migrer. La France ou le Pays de Galles ne semblent pas être des destinations soigneusement « choisies » pour de nombreux migrants qui évoquent le « hasard » et la « chance » pour expliquer pourquoi ils ont fini par y vivre. Par exemple, Miky a expliqué : « Je n'ai jamais pensé que je me retrouverais ici, c'était juste un pur hasard. Juste par hasard. »[323] Michal a utilisé le mot « accidentel » pour décrire son aménagement au Pays de Galles, soulignant ainsi l'imprévisibilité de la migration et sa soudaineté : « J'ai travaillé un peu à Cracovie, mais j'ai découvert le pays de Galles par hasard en 2005. C'était juste un été et complètement accidentel. »[324] Dans son cas, Michal était venu rendre visite à un ami et travailler avec lui au Pays de Galles pendant l'été. La théorie de l'*homo economicus* est à nouveau mise à mal par ces affirmations dans la mesure où la décision de migrer ne semble pas être rationnelle mais impulsive et complétement fortuite. Les enquêtés apparaissent presque passifs face aux événements dans la mesure où la migration est présentée comme quelque chose qui leur arrive par hasard et dans lequel ils ne sont pas des acteurs actifs : ils ne semblent pas avoir de contrôle sur les événements.

Les pratiques de mobilité et les sentiments d'appartenance des migrants des NEM permettent d'esquisser l'existence d'un espace macro-régional investi émotionnellement, qui peut être défini comme un espace résidentiel macro-régional : plusieurs enquêtés s'installent dans un système de circulations macro-régionales sur le long terme, en divisant leurs activités quotidiennes (vie familiale, travail, études, shopping) entre plusieurs pays ; ils vivent à la fois « ici » et « là-bas ». La diversité des contextes transnationaux, des temporalités migratoires et leurs incertitudes suggèrent que les modèles migratoires des NEM sont imprévisibles, flexibles et fluides. En effet, ils sont façonnés par des facteurs multidimensionnels qui évoluent dans le temps, tels que les représentations individuelles, les expériences, les pratiques et les relations sociales.

Chapitre 5 : Représentations macro-régionales

Dans le chapitre 5, nous analysons des cartes mentales et des entretiens semi-directifs, et nous esquissons les contours de la macro-région européenne telle qu'elle apparaît dans les

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[323] L'entretien avec Miky a été réalisé en anglais le 29/01/2021.
[324] L'entretien avec Michal a été réalisé en anglais le 12/02/2020.

discours et les représentations des enquêtés. Les cartes mentales révèlent les formes et les images associées à l'Europe, tandis que les entretiens donnent des informations sur les contours sémantiques de l'Europe, à travers les mots et les champs lexicaux associés.

Les représentations spatiales sont des constructions mentales d'un espace géographique donné : elles donnent forme et contenu à une entité spatiale postulée dans la réalité (Debarbieux, 2004). Elles sont idiosyncratiques et renvoient à des schémas cognitifs individuels, qui sont influencés par l'éducation, l'expérience, les connaissances, la mémoire et la culture de l'individu (Dortier, 2002). Elles existent également à travers les groupes sociaux et ont une dimension collective (Montello, 2003 ; Moscovici, 2003 ; Poche, 1996 ; Paulet, 2002). Par conséquent, les cartes mentales des migrants et les entretiens semi-directifs révèlent, d'une part, des espaces européens individualisés, dont les formes, les structures et les contenus sont déterminés par les expériences des individus (comme la date de la migration, les pays visités ou habités) ; et d'autre part, des représentations partagées, induites par des expériences et/ou des caractéristiques sociales communes (pays d'origine, âge ou niveau d'éducation). S'intéresser aux représentations spatiales nécessite de prendre en compte la subjectivité des individus dans l'analyse de l'espace. L'étude des représentations de l'espace est un thème très répandu en sciences humaines, notamment en psychologie, mais c'est aussi un thème fondamental en géographie : certains géographes français considèrent que l'étude des représentations est « l'essence même de la géographie » car elle permet d'expliquer « l'action humaine » par l'espace (Paulet, 2002).

L'hypothèse qui sous-tend ce chapitre est que les représentations spatiales déterminent les comportements et les pratiques sociales – y compris les pratiques migratoires – et conditionnent le rapport de l'individu à l'espace (Jodelet, 2003). Dagmara, une migrante polonaise vivant à Nancy, a déclaré que ses représentations spatiales ont été déterminantes dans son désir de migrer. À la question « Pourquoi avez-vous déménagé en France ? », elle a répondu : « J'ai vu la culture française dans les films. Paris est toujours grand et beau. Et en fait, Paris est une ville romantique : c'est vraiment l'image, le stéréotype de la France. Ce n'est pas un mythe. Paris, 'it is not overrated' comme on dit en anglais. C'est le vin, c'est le fromage. J'ai trouvé ça intéressant et j'ai voulu le voir. »[325] Ces propos montrent comment les images et les stéréotypes véhiculés par les films et les médias peuvent influencer les

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[325] L'entretien avec Dagmara a été réalisé en français le 12/10/2019.

représentations de l'espace et, par-là, les mobilités. De ce fait, les représentations spatiales sont des outils particulièrement adaptés pour comprendre la manière dont l'espace macro-régional européen est perçu et pratiqué par les populations.

L'accent mis sur les représentations spatiales rejoint les conclusions du « nouveau régionalisme », selon lesquelles les individus et leurs représentations de l'espace sont des éléments fondamentaux du processus d'intégration (Hettne et Söderbaum, 2000 ; Saurugger, 2020). Cette théorie s'appuie sur une approche socio-constructiviste de l'espace géographique, selon laquelle toute région est une construction sociale, produite par les perceptions sociales qui lui sont attachées (Paasi, 2010). La théorie du nouveau régionalisme sur laquelle cette thèse s'appuie soutient que des représentations spatiales communes et largement partagées par les individus révèlent l'existence d'un processus d'intégration régionale en cours puisqu'elles contribuent à la création d'un espace macro-régional en lui donnant une forme et un contenu (Hettne et Söderbaum, 2000). L'hypothèse qui sous-tend ce chapitre est qu'un espace macro-régional ne peut être intégré que s'il est identifié, ou investi physiquement et/ou émotionnellement par les individus. Dans le prolongement des études qui ont mis en évidence les liens entre l'appropriation de l'espace et la signification des lieux, on peut dire que l'UE est un territoire vide de sens si les habitants des pays membres n'identifient pas ou ne s'approprient pas l'espace communautaire (Hashemnezhad *et al.*, 2013).

Quelle « Europe » les migrants des NEM perçoivent-ils ? Existe-t-il des représentations communes de l'Europe, parmi les migrants des NEM ? Ces représentations révèlent-elles et sont-elles le support de sentiments d'appartenance et d'appropriation de l'espace ? L'étude des représentations mentales de l'Europe des enquêtés permet d'identifier des déterminants inhérents aux pratiques migratoires. S'intéresser aux représentations spatiales des migrants des NEM permet de s'interroger sur la territorialité de l'UE et de mettre en évidence l'existence d'un espace européen sous-jacent à celui qui est construit par les acteurs institutionnels de la communauté européenne, un espace discret, socialement construit, qui est pleinement constitutif de l'intégration régionale européenne. Toutefois, le poids de l'UE dans les représentations révélées par les cartes mentales et les mots associés confirme que les institutions jouent un rôle de premier plan dans la construction et la diffusion des représentations de l'espace (Beauguitte *et al.*, 2012 ; Zanin, 2013).

Le chapitre 5 met en pratique les notions de rhizome et d'assemblage afin de montrer comment elles conduisent à repenser l'intégration macro-régionale. Tout d'abord, les trois principales façons dont l'espace européen est représenté dans les cartes mentales des migrants des NEM soulignent le poids des pratiques de mobilité dans les représentations spatiales. Les cartes mentales montrent que les enquêtés se rapportent à l'espace macro-régional, soit en l'investissant émotionnellement et/ou physiquement, soit en l'idéalisant, soit en le régionalisant. Le chapitre 5 montre comment le processus d'assemblage permet de caractériser l'intégration régionale européenne. Enfin, l'analyse des mots associés met en évidence l'influence des discours institutionnels et idéologiques sur les représentations de l'Europe des migrants des NEM. Ce chapitre dévoile l'image d'une Europe multiple, fluide et mouvante, modelée par un processus d'intégration flou et multidimensionnel.

La première partie de ce chapitre esquisse une typologie des représentations de l'Europe des migrants NEM à partir de l'analyse des cartes mentales. Cette typologie constitue un outil pour comprendre trois types de relations à l'Europe et montre que la macro-région européenne est un espace multiforme et différencié, en fonction des parcours migratoires et des profils sociaux des personnes interrogées. L'agrégation des représentations individuelles et la construction de la typologie permettent d'esquisser une carte générale des représentations dominantes de l'Europe.

Trois réponses (« oui », « non » et « ni oui ni non[326] ») à la question initiale (« À votre avis, les pays (tous ou partie) représentés sur cette carte forment-ils un ensemble ? ») ont été données par les enquêtés (voir figure 1). En prenant en compte ces réponses, les cartes mentales et les entretiens, trois types de rapport à l'Europe sont identifiables : « L'Europe comme espace vécu », « Idéalisation de l'Europe » et « Régionalisation de l'Europe ». Ceux qui ont répondu « oui » à la question initiale perçoivent l'espace macro-régional soit comme un « espace vécu », soit comme un espace idéal ; ceux qui ont répondu « non » à la question initiale idéalisent ou régionalisent l'Europe ; tandis que ceux qui n'ont pas pu répondre catégoriquement à la question initiale, régionalisent l'Europe sur leur carte mentale. L'utilisation de codes graphiques identiques sur les cartes mentales (figurés ponctuels, linéaires et/ou de surface) montre l'existence d'images mentales similaires partagées par plusieurs enquêtés en fonction de leurs rapports à l'Europe. Les migrants, qui perçoivent

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[326] La catégorie de réponse « ni oui ni non » correspond aux enquêtés qui n'ont pas formulé de réponse définitive ou explicite.

l'Europe comme un espace vécu, n'utilisent que des figurés ponctuels, tandis que ceux qui idéalisent ou régionalisent l'Europe utilisent principalement des figurés de surface et linéaires. Ceux qui ont idéalisé l'Europe ont dessiné une seule entité spatiale, tandis que ceux qui ont régionalisé l'Europe ont découpé l'Europe en plusieurs entités spatiales. La typologie est renforcée par l'utilisation de codes graphiques identiques, confirmant qu'il est pertinent de faire dessiner des cartes mentales pour dévoiler des représentations individuelles et en souligner la dimension collective.

Figure 2 : Synthèse de la typologie des représentations de l'Europe des enquêtés
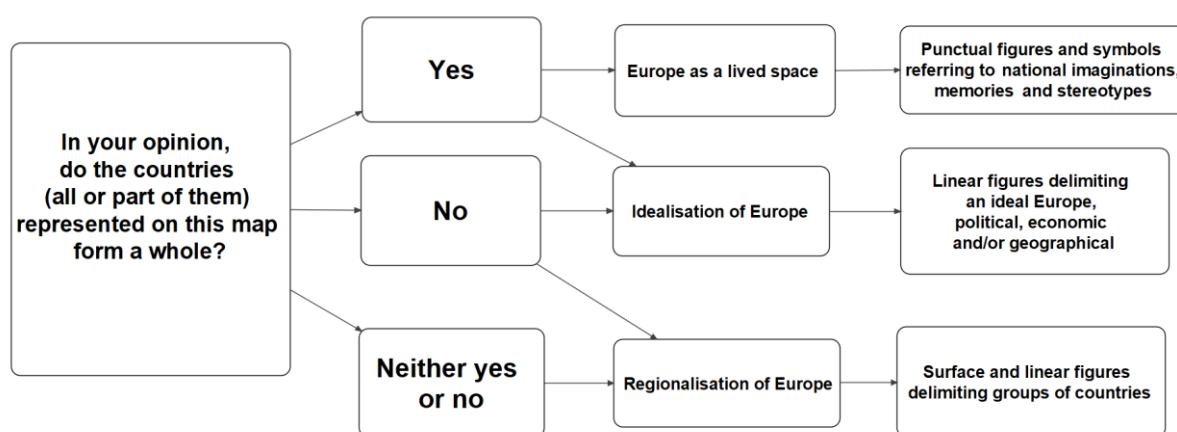
Source : Mila Sanchez (2020.)

Les migrants des NEM de la première catégorie ont répondu « oui » à la question initiale (« Selon vous, les pays (tous ou partie) représentés sur cette carte forment-ils un ensemble ? ») et ont nommé l'ensemble qu'ils ont dessiné sur la carte « Europe ». Ils n'ont utilisé que des figurés ponctuels particulièrement significatifs, reflétant un rapport sensible et affectif à l'espace : des cœurs, exprimant un lien affectif fort ; des coches (symbole opposé à la croix), montrant que la production de leurs cartes mentales est fondée sur un processus d'inclusion plutôt que d'exclusion ; et des symboles faisant référence à leur histoire et à leur mémoire individuelle. Le choix des symboles semble avoir été influencé par l'expérience personnelle des enquêtés mais également par l'imagerie nationale (comme les spécialités culinaires ou culturelles et les drapeaux nationaux). Deux symboles principaux sont récurrents et se retrouvent sur plusieurs cartes mentales : les cœurs rouges ou verts et les maisons. En revanche, la majorité des symboles n'ont été utilisés qu'une seule fois, par exemple des billets de banque, des fleurs, une télévision ou une poupée.

Les espaces européens représentés sur les cartes des migrants de la première catégorie sont des espaces investis par les sentiments, l'imaginaire et les pratiques de mobilité des individus, et reflètent un rapport émotionnel à l'espace. L'Europe apparaît comme un espace vécu investi de significations individuelles et constitué de souvenirs, de réseaux sociaux, de connaissances qui s'enracinent dans les expériences et les projets de mobilité des enquêtés. La notion de projet est importante car elle rappelle qu'un « espace vécu » n'est pas un espace figé : au contraire, c'est un espace qui évolue et qui est agencé en fonction des mobilités passées et projetées, des pratiques et des circulations des individus. La fluidité caractérise l'espace vécu, à l'image du rhizome, car c'est un espace imprévisible, qui se transforme perpétuellement et qui résulte d'une combinaison d'éléments hétérogènes et non hiérarchiques. L'agencement d'éléments hétérogènes, et non hiérarchiques, évoque la notion d'assemblage, un processus qui se fait et se défait sans cesse. L'espace, compris comme un assemblage, est unique, individuel, et donc difficile à nommer, classer ou expliquer car il ne ressemble à rien de déjà connu (Kahn et Richard, 2020). Comme un assemblage, c'est la fonction de l'espace vécu (« ce qu'il fait » et non « ce qu'il est ») qui importe : les émotions et les sentiments d'appartenance, d'être « chez-soi », de sécurité qu'il procure contribuent à la compréhension que nous en avons.

Les représentations des migrants de cette catégorie sont influencées par leurs expériences migratoires caractérisées par le contexte de libre circulation postérieur à l'élargissement de l'UE. En effet, la majorité des migrants de cette catégorie a vécu dans plus de deux pays membres et voyage régulièrement dans l'UE pour des raisons professionnelles ou pour les loisirs. La notion d'espace vécu met en évidence l'attachement et le sentiment d'appartenance des migrants des NEM qui vivent l'espace macro-régional de manière individualisée et phénoménologique. L'espace macro-régional apparaît ici façonné par la mobilité des individus qui l'investissent physiquement et émotionnellement : c'est à la fois un espace égocentrique, centré sur l'ego et sur le corps (à travers les sens et l'expérience éprouvée par l'individu), mais aussi un espace social façonné par les interactions sociales, familiales et amicales (Frémont, 1976). L'espace vécu révèle donc un attachement à l'espace qui est plus émotionnel et imaginaire que rationnel.

La deuxième catégorie de la typologie est composée d'enquêtés qui idéalisent l'Europe. Comme les migrants de la première catégorie, la majorité a répondu « oui » à la question initiale. Leurs discours et leurs cartes mentales renvoient à une Europe idéale et

essentialisée, une Europe « allant de soi », fondée sur des imaginaires continentaux (Grataloup, 2009).

Les migrants des NEM de cette catégorie ont dessiné une Europe idéalisée à partir de leurs connaissances géopolitiques et historiques approximatives. L'unité de l'Europe est constitutive des représentations de l'Europe de ces enquêtés qui ont vécu la période communiste et qui ont quitté leur pays d'origine avant la période d'élargissement de l'UE : selon eux, il s'agit d'une nécessité pour maintenir la paix et la sécurité en Europe. Les enquêtés de cette catégorie, qui ont subi de plein fouet le régime communiste et ont souhaité le fuir, se représentent l'Europe comme un espace démocratique idéal. Si, à première vue, la notion d'unité, centrale dans les représentations des migrants des NEM de cette catégorie (percevant l'Europe comme une entité), semble être en contradiction avec la notion de multiplicité, centrale dans la définition du concept de rhizome, elle est en réalité composée d'une multiplicité d'éléments hétérogènes (culturels, géographiques, économiques, politiques) – parfois contradictoires, parfois complémentaires et toujours connectés –, qui ont été mobilisés pour construire la carte. Les frontières fermées (représentées par une ligne de démarcation) ne sont pas à prendre en tant que telles : les entretiens permettent de nuancer l'idée d'un espace clôt, complètement fermé sur lui-même, car les frontières tracées par les enquêtés sont souvent floues, approximatives et fluctuantes. De plus, les représentations idéales de l'Europe ne sont qu'une dimension de l'espace macro-régional et doivent être replacées dans un ensemble plus vaste de représentations : l'exhaustivité étant impossible à atteindre, le processus d'intégration n'est jamais achevé ou complet mais toujours ouvert et composé d'une multiplicité d'éléments.

A l'aide d'un SIG (QGIS), les représentations des migrants de cette catégorie ont été synthétisées en trois figures (voir figures 2, 3 et 4). Les tracés des cartes mentales des enquêtés ont été agrégés pour représenter le niveau moyen d'inclusion de chaque pays dans l'ensemble appelé « Europe ». La première carte (figure 2) est une compilation de toutes les cartes mentales des migrants qui idéalisent l'Europe indépendamment de leur pays d'accueil, tandis que les figures 3 et 4 détaillent les représentations des enquêtés, vivant respectivement en France et au Royaume-Uni pour mettre en évidence les différences de représentations selon le pays de résidence. La première carte (voir figure 2) met en évidence une division sud/nord et un gradient d'inclusion est/ouest : elle révèle une macro-région polarisée vers l'ouest, autour des pays fondateurs de la CEE. Il est intéressant de noter qu'il existe un

gradient inversé (avec une inclusion plus faible au centre) autour du Kosovo, pays à majorité musulmane.

**Figure 2 : Niveau d'inclusion des pays dans l'Europe selon les tracés des enquêtés qui idéalisent l'Europe**
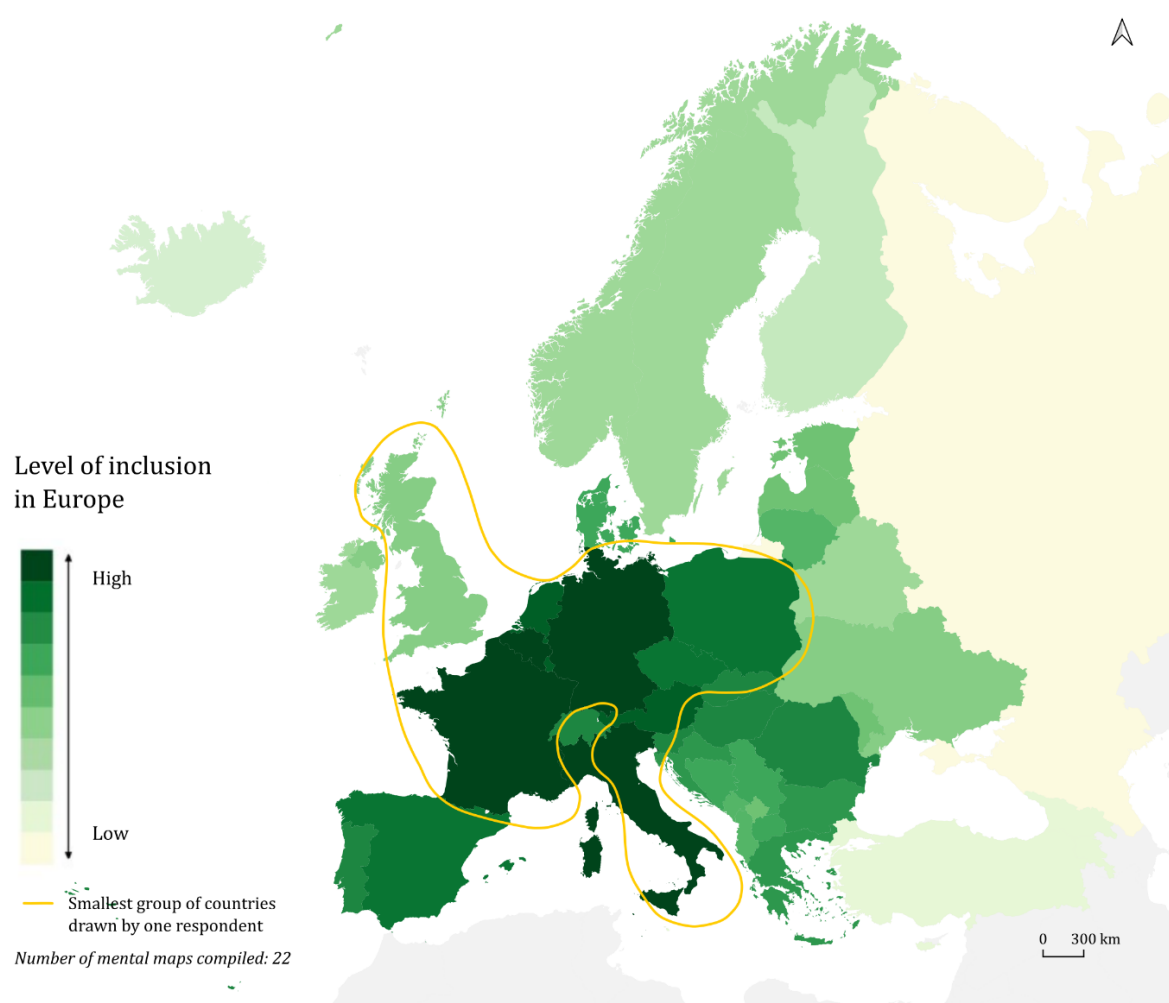
Fond de carte : Natural Earth – Sources : Sanchez, M. (2020) Enquêtes de terrains (2019 à 2021).

Figure 3 : Niveau d'inclusion des pays dans l'Europe selon les tracés des enquêtés qui idéalisent l'Europe et qui habitent en France
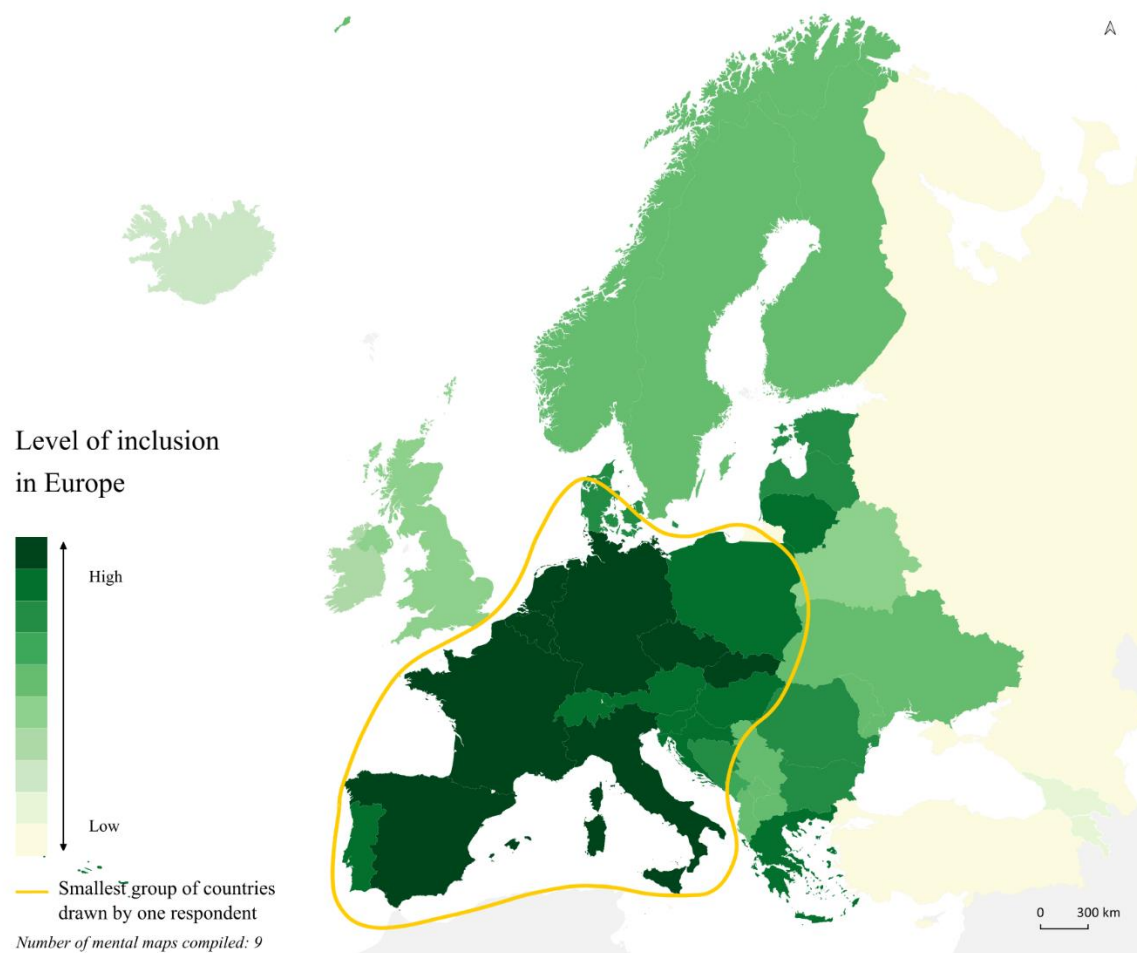
Fond de carte : Natural Earth – Sources : Sanchez, M. (2020) Enquêtes de terrains (2019 à 2021).

Figure 4 : Niveau d'inclusion des pays dans l'Europe selon les tracés des enquêtés qui idéalisent l'Europe et qui habitent au Royaume-Uni
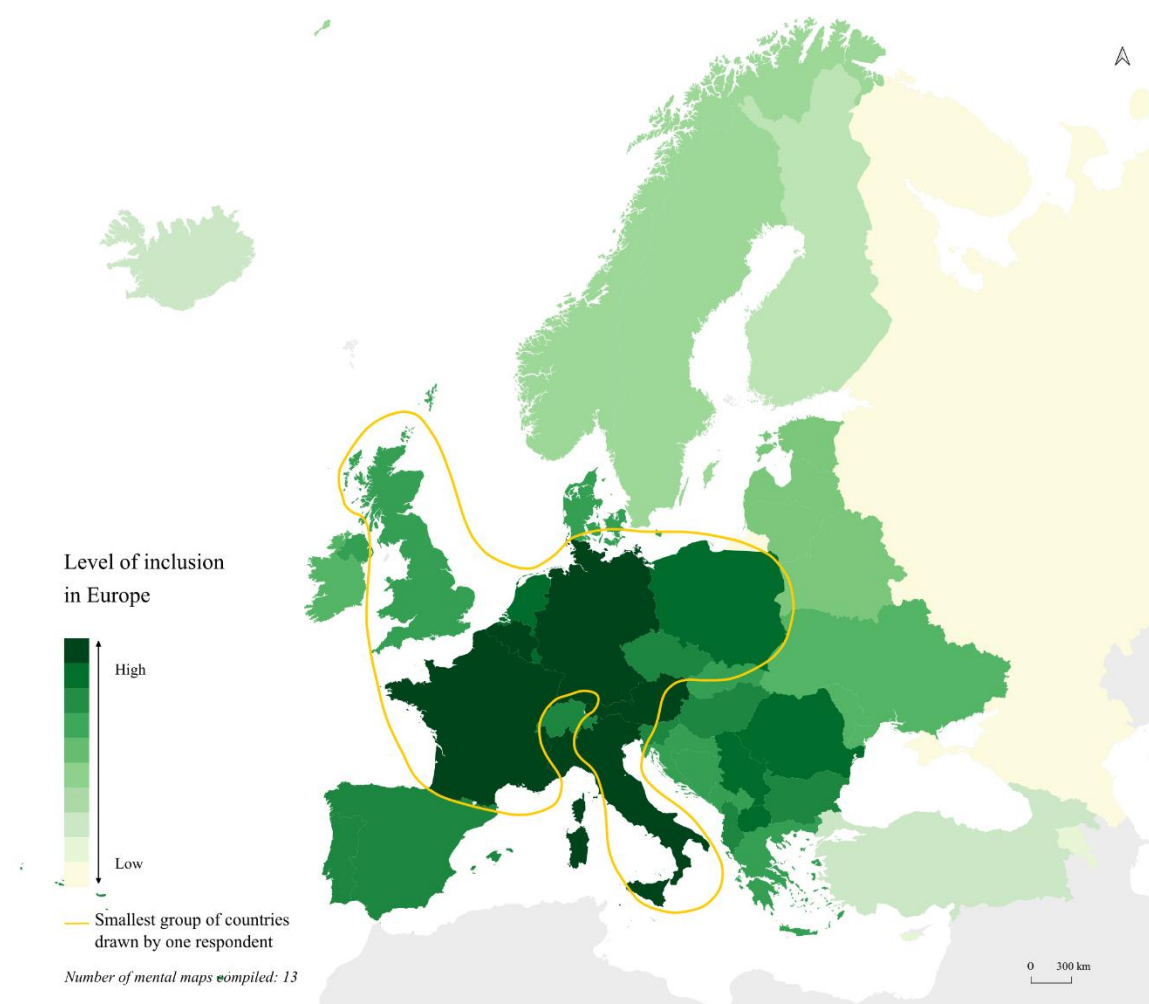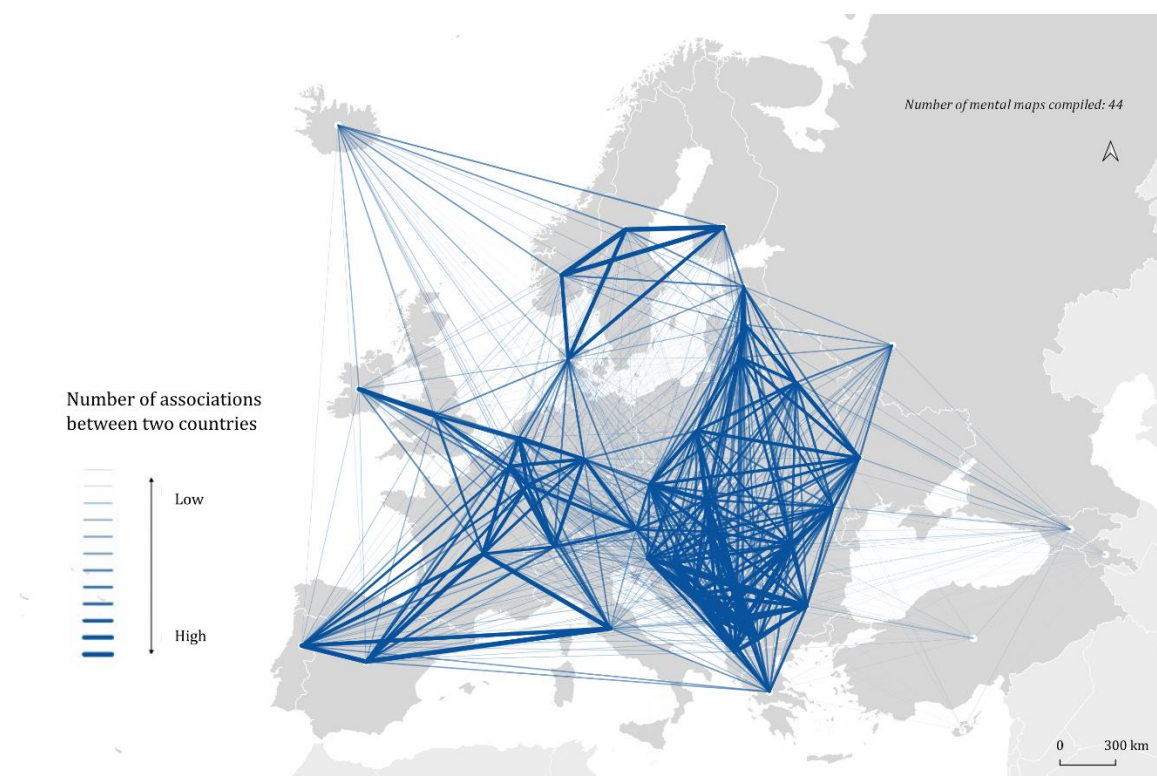

Fond de carte : Natural Earth – Sources : Sanchez, M. (2020) Enquêtes de terrains (2019 à 2021).

Le dernier groupe d'enquêtés a divisé l'Europe en petits groupes de pays. Les migrants de cette catégorie, qui sont les plus nombreux (44 enquêtés), n'ont jamais répondu explicitement « oui » à la question initiale : aucune réponse catégorique n'a été donnée lorsqu'ils n'ont pas dit « non », ce qui peut s'expliquer par la difficulté de l'exercice. Les migrants titulaires d'un doctorat sont surreprésentés dans cette catégorie : en France, ils représentent plus de la moitié des enquêtés de cette catégorie et dix des seize enquêtés titulaires d'un doctorat appartiennent à cette catégorie.

En résumé, les enquêtés de cette catégorie ont utilisé des éléments différents pour régionaliser l'espace macro-régional. Ces éléments incluent des critères économiques, linguistiques, historiques, culturels et religieux, ainsi que des sentiments et des jugements individuels. Au-delà des caractéristiques de multiplicité, d'hétérogénéité et de connexion qui rappellent la notion de rhizome, le principe de « rupture asignifiante » est parfaitement illustré par les cartes mentales des individus de cette catégorie. Dans cette perspective, l'espace macro-régional n'est pas composé d'articulations et de développements prédéfinis : toutes les connexions, combinaisons et superpositions d'espaces sont possibles. La régionalisation de l'espace permet d'aller à l'encontre de la dimension normative de l'intégration : les espaces ne sont pas associés les uns aux autres en fonction de leur degré d'intégration mais en fonction de leurs caractéristiques, de la nature de leurs liens et de leurs interactions multidimensionnelles. Cette approche permet de considérer l'intégration non pas comme un seuil à atteindre, mais comme un processus dynamique à qualifier.

Les représentations des migrants de cette catégorie ont été synthétisées grâce à un système d'information géographique (QGIS) en trois figures (voir figures 5, 6 et 7). Les tracés des cartes mentales ont été agrégés pour représenter le nombre de fois où deux pays ont été associés par les enquêtés dans le même groupe de pays. La première carte (voir figure 5) est une compilation de toutes les cartes mentales des migrants qui ont régionalisé l'Europe indépendamment de leur pays de résidence, tandis que les figures 6 et 7 détaillent les représentations des enquêtés vivant respectivement en France et au Royaume-Uni pour mettre en évidence d'éventuelles différences de représentation en fonction du pays de résidence. Ce sont des cartes de liens : plus les lignes entre deux pays sont épaisses, plus souvent ils ont été associés dans le même groupe de pays sur les cartes mentales. En raison du plus grand nombre de cartes mentales collectées au Royaume-Uni et de la disproportion entre le nombre d'enquêtés ayant régionalisé l'Europe vivant en France (14) et au Royaume-Uni (44), la carte synthétique des représentations de tous les enquêtés est très similaire à celle des enquêtés vivant au Royaume-Uni.

Figure 5 : La régionalisation de l'Europe à partir du nombre d'associations entre deux pays représentées sur les cartes mentales des enquêtés

Fond de carte : Natural Earth – Sources : Sanchez, M. (2020) Enquêtes de terrains (2019 à 2021).

Figure 6 : La régionalisation de l'Europe à partir du nombre d'associations entre deux pays représentées sur les cartes mentales des enquêtés vivant en France
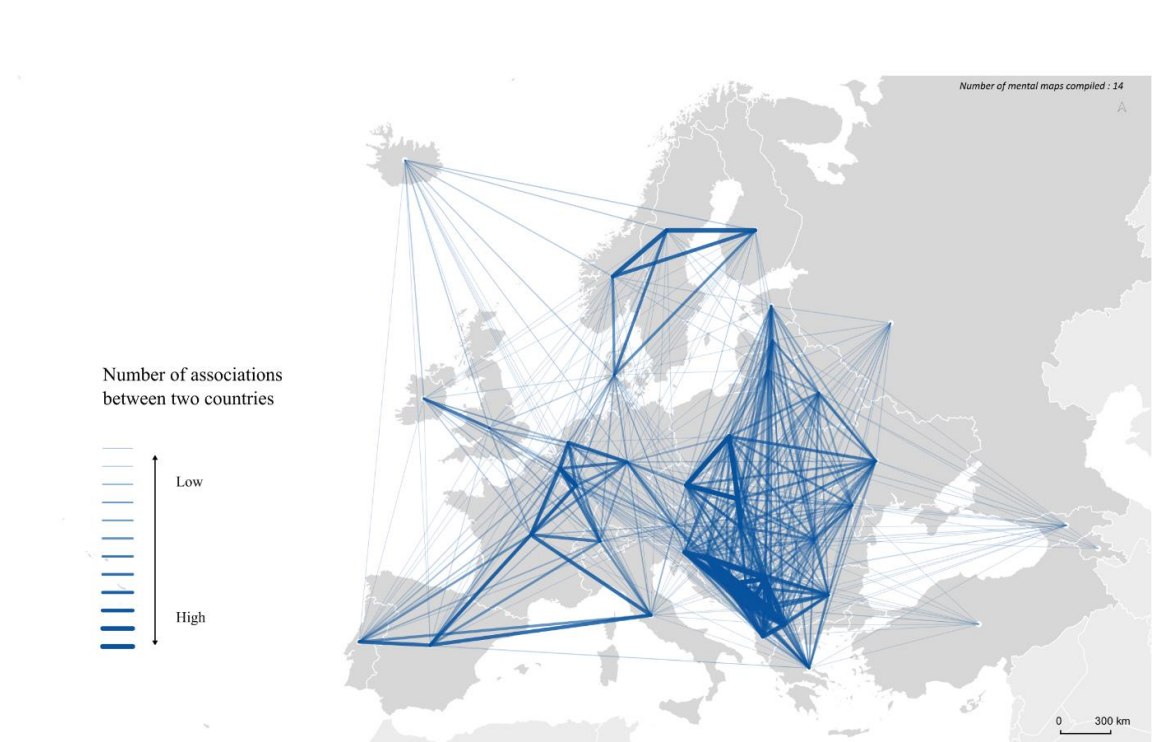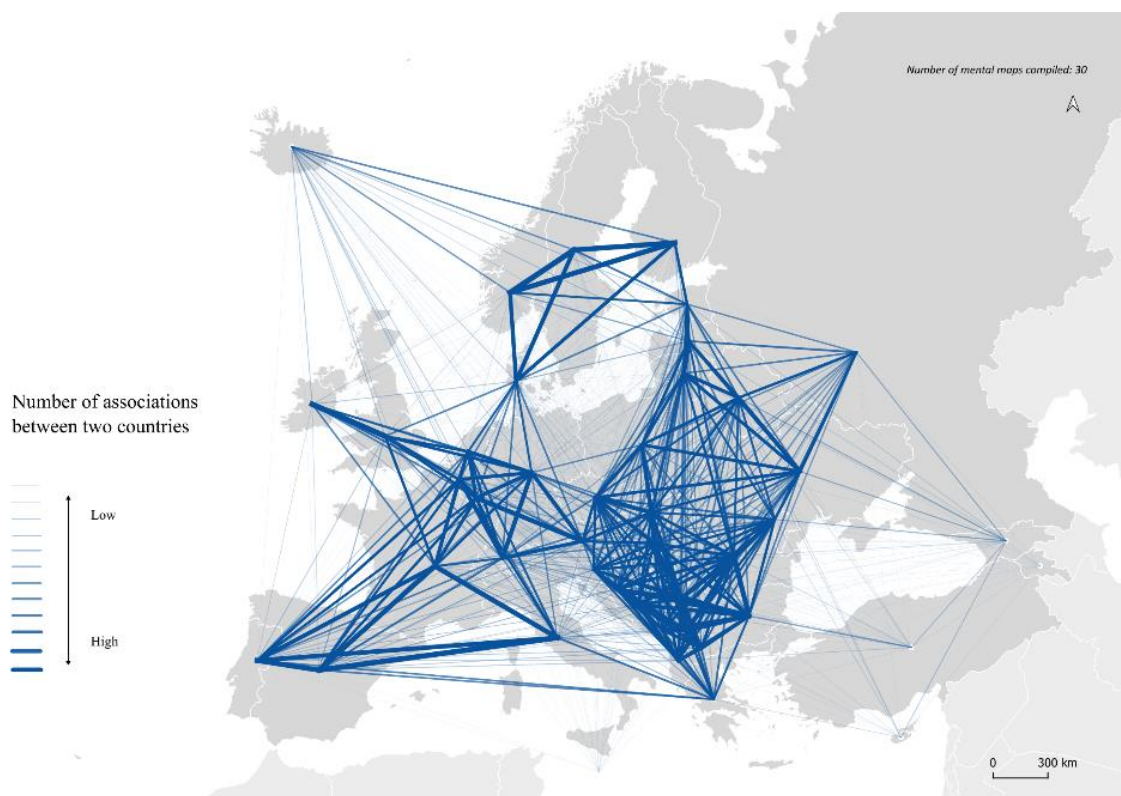

Fond de carte : Natural Earth – Sources : Sanchez, M. (2020) Enquêtes de terrains (2019 à 2021).

Figure 7 : La régionalisation de l'Europe à partir du nombre d'associations entre deux pays représentées sur les cartes mentales des enquêtés vivant au Royaume-Uni

Fond de carte : Natural Earth – Sources : Sanchez, M. (2020) Enquêtes de terrains (2019 à 2021).

La technique des mots associés a été utilisée dans plusieurs recherches pour compléter les cartes mentales et aider à leur interprétation en fournissant des informations sur le contenu de l'espace tracé (Didelon *et al.*, 2011-a, ; 2011-b ; Brennetot *et al.*, 2013 ; Toureille, 2017). Cette technique a pour but de révéler les mots donnés spontanément et les associations d'idées d'un enquêté lorsqu'un mot est prononcé (Collomb et Guérin-Pace, 1998). Les personnes interrogées ont été invitées à décrire l'Europe en un mot : « Si vous deviez qualifier 'l'Europe' en un mot, quel serait-il ? »

L'objectif du chapitre 5 était de :

- Décrire les représentations subjectives de l'Europe à partir de cartes mentales et de mots associés, utilisés pour qualifier l'Europe ;
- De réaliser une typologie de ces représentations ;
- D'identifier, lorsque cela était possible, les déterminants de ces représentations.

L'analyse des cartes mentales et des mots associés révèle que les mobilités, les trajectoires migratoires et la temporalité de la migration des enquêtés (notamment en lien avec l'élargissement et la chute du rideau de fer) influencent leurs sentiments d'appropriation et leur manière d'appréhender l'espace européen. Les trajectoires migratoires, les pratiques de mobilités (réelles et imaginées) des migrants des NEM sont des éléments déterminants de leurs représentations, systématiquement mentionnées dans les entretiens. La culture, les affects, les sentiments, les souvenirs d'événements historiques (comme la guerre froide) sont autant de facteurs émotionnels qui influencent les représentations spatiales au niveau individuel.

L'analyse croisée des entretiens et des cartes mentales révèle l'image d'une Europe multiforme, à la fois traversée et habitée, idéalisée et régionalisée, avec des nuances en fonction du pays de résidence de l'enquêté. L'espace macro-régional est fluide, ses frontières sont floues et il est composé d'une multitude d'espaces interconnectés et imbriqués. Le processus d'intégration régionale apparaît multiforme, voire tissé d'éléments contradictoires : le corpus de cartes mentales révèle à la fois des dynamiques d'intégration à partir d'un noyau central (*i.e.* l'Europe idéalisée) et à partir de grappes de pays (*i.e.* l'Europe régionalisée). L'analyse des mots associés permet de montrer que l'espace macro-régional est une combinaison de sentiments, d'idéaux et d'éléments concrets, multiples et hétérogènes, connectés les uns aux autres. Si le poids institutionnel dans les représentations est indéniable, et est dévoilé à travers le corpus de mots associés, l'espace macro-régional européen n'en est pas moins un espace difficile à caractériser, qui se présente sous de multiples dimensions, et qui résulte précisément de cette multiplicité sans fin. Il est intéressant de noter que l'Union européenne, dont le poids est important dans les représentations, est également construite avec cet assemblage hétérogène et dynamique de représentations sociales et individuelles.

En un sens, le chapitre 5 présente l'intégration régionale par le bas, en observant la construction des représentations multiples, dynamiques et complexes de l'Europe à travers l'échelle individuelle, loin du processus d'intégration « top down » mené par les gouvernements et les institutions. Les représentations semblent toujours être « en devenir », car elles assemblent et réassemblent constamment des éléments, sans début ni fin. Ce processus s'apparente au rhizome.

Chapitre 6 : Sentiments d'appartenance macro-régionale en construction : saisir l'identité européenne ?

Après avoir analysé comment les migrants des NEM se représentent l'espace macro-régional, à travers leurs cartes mentales et les mots associés dans le chapitre 5, le chapitre 6 présente la manière dont les enquêtés se définissent au sein de cet espace, afin de saisir la dimension géographique de leurs identités. Dans ce chapitre, nous utilisons une approche constructiviste. Selon cette perspective, l'espace peut être appréhendé à partir des émotions et des significations que les individus attribuent aux situations dans lesquelles ils se trouvent. D'une certaine manière, décoder et interpréter les significations que les enquêtés attribuent à l'espace conduit à montrer comment l'espace macro-régional est socialement construit. L'objectif est de comprendre quelles relations les enquêtés entretiennent avec l'espace à partir des entretiens semi-directifs, et comment leurs sentiments d'appartenance peuvent conduire à la formation de leurs identités et plus largement à l'émergence d'une identité supranationale et européenne (Duchesne et Frognier, 1995). Il ne s'agit pas de définir l'ensemble des composantes de l'identité européenne, mais de montrer les mécanismes conduisant les migrants des NEM à se considérer comme membres d'une communauté macro-régionale.

Si les discours généraux sur l'identité européenne sont antérieurs à la Seconde Guerre mondiale (Heffernan, 1998), l'idée d'une identité européenne fondée sur des ambitions politiques et culturelles a officiellement émergé de l'union des neuf premiers États membres avec la Déclaration sur l'identité européenne, adoptée lors du Sommet européen de Copenhague en 1973. Cette déclaration montre que l'idée d'une identité européenne est étroitement liée à la construction de l'UE. L'Identité européenne a été étroitement façonnée par l'intégration européenne, en particulier après le Traité de Maastricht en 1991, lorsque l'UE est passée d'un projet d'intégration économique à un projet d'envergure politique et culturelle : le concept de citoyenneté européenne a été introduit comme une forme d'intégration transcendant l'identité nationale (Leith *et al.*, 2019). Bien qu'il n'y ait pas eu d'accord clair pour définir ce qui constituait une identité européenne, le cosmopolitisme et la diversité sont communément devenus les deux principales caractéristiques de l'identité

européenne. Certains chercheurs, inspirés par Deleuze et Guattari (1987), ont qualifié les identités des migrants d'identités nomades pour remettre en question l'idée d'identités nationales unique et fixes et proposer une vision plus hybride et complexe de l'identité telle qu'elle se construit dans le mouvement (Braidotti, 2015 ; Vandenbroeck *et al.*, 2009).

Les sentiments d'appartenance et d'appropriation de l'espace sont des sujets qui ont été particulièrement abordés par les migrants des NEM lors des entretiens : ces thématiques doivent être comprises à travers le prisme de la mobilité et des migrations internationales. L'appropriation de l'espace n'est pas stable : au cours de sa vie, un individu développe des sentiments d'appartenance à plusieurs reprises et dans différents lieux. Pour les migrants internationaux, ce processus d'identification aux lieux est très spécifique car il se construit à travers l'itinérance et l'enracinement dans des lieux et des pays très différents, possédant des caractères culturels, des environnements sociopolitiques et des paysages variés. Les migrations internationales ont été présentées comme des vecteurs de sentiments d'appartenance transnationaux (Fortier, 2000 ; Christiansen et Hedetoft, 2004 ; Conway *et al.*, 2008) augmentant les formes plurielles d'appartenance « ici » (le pays d'accueil) et « là-bas » (le pays d'origine et les lieux dans lesquels un individu a vécu en général). Ainsi, la mobilité accrue modifie les liens que les individus entretiennent avec la ville ou le pays d'origine et diversifie les formes d'appropriation de l'espace (Taylor, 2010). Le prisme de la mobilité permet de souligner la multiplicité des échelles et des attachements à l'espace (Gilmartin, 2008).

En gardant à l'esprit les études qui ont dénoncé la stérilité des débats autour de la notion d'identité européenne, la considérant comme inexistante, le chapitre 6 part du constat que les enquêtés s'identifient comme « européens » et doit permettre de comprendre quelle est leur relation à l'espace macro-régional. De nombreuses études ont souligné l'absence des sentiments d'appartenance des individus et leur manque d'intérêt pour les espaces régionaux fondés sur des traités internationaux économiques tels que le traité de l'UE (Paux Samson, 2016). Ce désintérêt est régulièrement illustré par des sondages d'opinion tels que l'Eurobaromètre (Schwok, 2009). S'il est impossible d'embrasser toutes les modalités de la construction de l'appartenance macro-régionale, le chapitre 6 démontre, *via* une approche empirique, l'existence de ce sentiment d'appartenance, son intensité et ses principales dimensions.

Le sentiment d'appartenance des migrants des NEM à un espace macro-régional contribue-t-il au renforcement de l'intégration européenne et au développement d'une identité européenne, comme l'affirment un tiers des enquêtés ? L'hypothèse sous-jacente au chapitre 6 est que le sentiment d'appartenance à un espace macro-régional est la manifestation d'un processus d'intégration régionale en cours. Il est important de noter la tension entre les sentiments d'appartenance individuels, fondés principalement sur les émotions, et l'identité sociale collective plus rationnelle, qui est toujours une construction intellectuelle, sociale ou politique (Guermond, 2008).

Le chapitre 6 est structuré en deux parties. La première section de ce chapitre analyse la manière dont les enquêtés font référence à leur sentiment d'appartenance, en mobilisant l'échelle nationale ou en la rejetant pour lui préférer une échelle transnationale. Nous montrons que les sentiments d'appartenance des migrants des NEM, ancrés dans un espace transnational, contribuent à la construction d'un espace macro-régional. L'analyse des entretiens des migrants NEM montre que l'échelle nationale n'est plus l'échelle d'identification de référence pour la majorité des enquêtés. Ce résultat est cohérent avec d'autres études qui ont montré que les personnes les plus mobiles ont davantage tendance à s'identifier à « l'Europe » (Barwick, 2021 ; Fligstein, 2009 ; Kuhn, 2015 ; Recchi, 2015). Il est important de préciser que les identités individuelles et collectives revendiquées par les enquêtés ne sont pas des réalités objectives mais sont le résultat de représentations socialement construites à portée idéologique. Les enquêtés ont souvent décrit leur sentiment d'appartenance comme un sentiment qui ne coïncide pas entièrement avec un seul pays. En revanche, pour la plupart des enquêtés, l'échelle nationale est insatisfaisante pour décrire l'attachement à un lieu. L'échelle européenne est souvent mobilisée par les enquêtés pour exprimer leurs sentiments d'appartenance.

La deuxième section de ce chapitre montre que les migrants des NEM sont des acteurs cruciaux de l'intégration régionale lorsqu'ils développent un sentiment d'identification à l'espace macro-régional. Ce chapitre souligne la manière dont les migrants des NEM s'identifient en tant qu'Européens. Il révèle l'absence d'une identification forte et homogène à l'Europe et met en évidence la disparité des rapports à l'espace. L'identification à l'Europe semble être un phénomène complexe, qui se manifeste de plusieurs manières, avec des résultats imprévisibles. Elle n'implique pas nécessairement un soutien à l'UE et une forte identification à l'Europe n'exclut pas les identités nationales. Enfin, l'identification à

l'Europe est souvent basée sur des stéréotypes de personnes et de lieux décrits comme « non-européens ». Les identités des migrants des NEM ne sont pas fixes mais évoluent en fonction du moment et du contexte : il n'existe pas une forme collective et fixe d'identité macro-régionale, mais des formes d'identification transnationales, confirmant que les migrants des NEM sont des acteurs clés de l'intégration régionale lorsqu'ils se représentent comme « européens ». Les formes prises par l'identité macro-régionale, observées au niveau individuel, semblent dépendre des identifications subjectives et de certaines représentations spatiales, qui sont très variables. Les enquêtés ont des relations à l'espace différentes : l'identification des individus à l'espace semble être, comme le rhizome, hybride et multiple, en assemblant des éléments changeants. Certains enquêtés ont exprimé le déracinement qu'ils ressentent ; d'autres ont insisté sur leurs racines européennes ; enfin, certains ont déclaré que leur identité était ancrée dans leurs relations avec autrui (relations familiale et amicales).

Le rôle du temps et de la famille

Les enquêtés ont donné deux raisons principales pour expliquer pourquoi ils se sentent chez eux dans leur pays d'accueil : le temps et les relations sociales telles que les amis et la famille. Le temps exerce une forte influence sur les sentiments d'appartenance des enquêtés : plus ils restent longtemps dans un endroit, plus ils se sentent attachés à cet endroit. Cet argument est utilisé pour justifier le fait de se sentir chez soi quelque part et fonctionne quasiment comme un argument d'autorité incontestable. Margarita, une migrante bulgare vivant à Cardiff, a déclaré : « J'ai l'impression d'avoir deux identités maintenant, parce qu'évidemment, pendant toutes ces années passées ici, j'ai absorbé une grande partie de la culture locale. Mais aussi, vous savez, j'ai vécu 27 ans en Bulgarie, donc cela fait partie de moi, je ne pense pas que cela disparaîtra un jour. »[327] Margarita suggère que les sentiments d'appartenance s'accumulent au fil du temps. Elle a une conception essentialiste de l'identité lorsqu'elle affirme que son identité est structurée par les comportements et la culture. Cependant, cela ne signifie pas qu'elle considère que son identité est stable et fixe : au contraire, elle considère qu'elle évolue avec le temps.

Pour d'autres enquêtés, les liens sociaux, en particulier les liens familiaux, contribuent à

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[327] L'entretien avec Margarita a été réalisé en anglais le 11/02/2021.

enraciner les sentiments d'appartenance à l'espace. Boryana déclare : « Le Royaume-Uni et la Bulgarie font tous deux parties de moi. J'ai le sentiment d'appartenir à la Bulgarie, et j'appartiens aussi à ce pays, d'une certaine manière. Je peux dire sans hésiter que je me sens chez moi pour une raison principale : mon partenaire et mon fils. Grâce à eux, j'ai l'impression que c'est vraiment un endroit où nous avons tous notre place. Personnellement, je pense que la famille permet de se sentir chez soi. C'est quelque chose qui est très important pour moi. »[328] De même, Ida considère que son sentiment d'appartenance est ancré dans les interactions sociales : « Ce n'est pas seulement la ville, mais c'est aussi ma vie ici, c'est aussi mes amis, c'est aussi ma vie sociale, c'est aussi ma vie professionnelle... »[329]

« Pas vraiment de là-bas, pas vraiment d'ici, je suis européenne. »[330] Dans cette phrase, Dimitrinka reconnaît que son sentiment d'appartenance européenne résulte directement de son expérience migratoire, responsable d'instabilité et de déracinement. La migration, comprise comme un processus réel de passage des frontières, comme un mouvement au-delà des limites d'un lieu, sert à transformer le soi. Elle souligne l'inadéquation de l'échelle nationale comme cadre de référence identitaire et suggère la nécessité de penser une échelle d'intégration macro-régionale pour rendre compte de son sentiment d'appartenance. Plus qu'une expérience binationale entre le pays d'origine et le pays d'accueil, elle évoque l'existence d'un espace transnational indéfini comme support de son identité. Dimitrinka mobilise l'échelle européenne car elle « ne se sent plus bulgare et ne se sentira jamais française ». L'identité européenne lui apparaît comme nécessaire pour trouver sa place dans un espace transnational puisque que ni son pays d'origine ni son pays d'accueil ne sont adéquats pour refléter ce qu'elle ressent. Mobiliser à l'échelle européenne est un moyen de trouver sa position et un équilibre entre le fait d'être immigré dans le pays d'accueil et émigré dans le pays d'origine. Il est possible de se demander si se référer à une identité européenne n'est pas une manière de contrebalancer le sentiment de n'être chez soi nulle part.

Le chapitre 6 aborde la question de l'intégration non pas à travers un prisme fonctionnaliste et politique (fondé sur la façon dont les institutions traitent certains problèmes), mais à

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[328] L'entretien avec Boryana a été réalisé en anglais le 17/02/2021.
[329] L'entretien avec Ida a été réalisé en anglais le 02/12/2020.
[330] L'entretien avec Dimitrinka a été réalisé en français le 14/08/2019.

travers la compréhension d'un processus de construction identitaire où se joue et se négocie l'individualité des migrants des NEM. Ce chapitre met en évidence la manière dont l'Europe est ressentie par les personnes interrogées, ainsi que les différentes expériences vécues. Il vise à étudier la multitude des formes que prend l'identité européenne. D'une certaine manière, l'étude du processus d'identification à l'Europe amène à considérer l'intégration macro-régionale comme un entrelacement de plusieurs référentiels culturels et comme un processus qui repose sur la fluidité et la diversité des interactions.

Conclusion générale

1. Objectifs et apports de la thèse

Après avoir montré que le passage du paradigme de l'intégration sociale à celui de l'intégration régionale est essentiel pour comprendre les migrations en provenance des NEM, cette thèse, en se concentrant sur les flux, les temporalités et les espaces produits par les migrants des NEM, a démontré que l'augmentation et la régionalisation des flux migratoires en provenance des nouveaux États membres de l'UE vers les anciens sont des facteurs discrets du processus d'intégration en cours au niveau de l'UE. Ensuite, cette thèse s'est intéressée à la relation entre la manière dont l'espace européen est représenté (à travers les cartes mentales) et les pratiques des migrants des NEM. Cette analyse a mis en évidence les liens entre les représentations mentales de l'Europe, la durée de la migration et le parcours de vie des enquêtés. Cette approche a révélé une Europe multiple aux contours mouvants, déterminé par plusieurs variables, un objet vague mais clairement identifié dans les représentations. Enfin, l'espace macro-régional européen, en contrepoint du modèle national d'intégration, apparaît comme un espace pertinent d'identification et d'appropriation sociale de l'espace pour les migrants des NEM. Les identités européennes et le sentiment d'appartenance à l'Europe résultent des pratiques de mobilité en Europe. En explorant la multiplicité des sentiments d'appartenance et de non-appartenance à l'Europe des migrants des NEM, ma thèse a démontré que la conscience d'être « européen » chez les migrants des NEM est un élément essentiel de l'intégration européenne.

J'avais initialement émis l'hypothèse qu'il y aurait des différences entre les représentations, les pratiques et les sentiments d'appartenance des migrants des NEM vivant dans deux lieux

différents, au Pays de Galles et en Lorraine, notamment parce que les politiques d'intégration de la France et du Royaume-Uni sont souvent présentées comme étant en opposition (voir chapitre 2). Je m'attendrais à ce que les migrants des NEM résidant au Royaume-Uni, directement touchés par le Brexit, perçoivent une rupture entre le Royaume-Uni et le reste de l'Europe. Je m'attendais aussi à ce que le Brexit ait un impact sur les pratiques de mobilité des migrants des NEM vivant au Royaume-Uni, ainsi que sur leur sentiment d'appartenance et sur leur expérience migratoire en général. Cependant, cette hypothèse n'a finalement pas pu être vérifiée par le travail de terrain et la méthodologie utilisée. Je constate que les différences ne sont pas si significatives entre les enquêtés habitant au Pays de Galles, et ceux habitant en Lorraine. Je n'observe pas d'effet de lieu significatif à partir des réponses recueillies, hormis une différence marginale dans les représentations : contrairement à ce que j'avais initialement imaginé, le Royaume-Uni est plus intégré dans les cartes mentales des migrants résidant au Royaume-Uni que dans celles de ceux habitant en France (voir chapitre 5). Le rôle du Brexit doit donc être nuancé, car il ne semble pas avoir eu un impact important pour les enquêtés. Le faible échantillon de migrants NEM interrogés en France ne permet pas de dire si cette différence marginale est significative ou le résultat d'un biais de l'échantillon. L'absence de différences majeures remet en question l'importance d'un effet de lieu dans l'intégration et dans les représentations mais peut aussi s'expliquer par la période transitoire dans laquelle se sont déroulés les entretiens (durant laquelle le Brexit n'a pas eu de conséquences administratives ou politiques majeures sur les migrants des NEM) ou le détachement des individus vis-à-vis de la politique. Mener des entretiens avec des migrants des NEM résidant dans d'autres lieux pourrait être un moyen de confirmer ou d'infirmer l'importance de l'effet de lieu dans les représentations, les pratiques et les sentiments d'appartenance.

1) Qui sont ces « nouveaux » migrants, quelles sont leurs aspirations, et comment contribuent-ils à la construction d'un espace européen de mobilité ?

Cette thèse a pour objectif de dresser un portrait des migrants des NEM vivant en Lorraine et au Pays de Galles. Elle révèle leurs aspirations à migrer et montre que contrairement à la théorie de l'*homo economicus*, selon laquelle les migrants sont motivés par des logiques rationnelles et économiques, les raisons de la migration sont avant constituées de facteurs culturels et émotionnels, tels que les désirs et les relations. Les relations amoureuses sont l'un des principaux facteurs évoqués par les enquêtés pour expliquer leur déménagement à

Nancy ou à Swansea (pour y rejoindre leurs partenaires gallois ou français). Les relations binationales jouent un rôle important dans le processus d'intégration européenne : elles déterminent les trajectoires migratoires au sein de l'UE et influencent les sentiments d'identification à l'Europe (Van Wissen et Heering, 2014 ; Díez Medrano *et al.*, 2014; Haandrikman, 2014). L'analyse des cartes mentales et des mots associés à l'Europe révèle les dimensions culturelles, affectives et imaginaires qui influencent les représentations spatiales et les mobilités des migrants des NEM.

L'hypermobilité des migrants des NEM contribue à la construction de l'Europe comme espace de mobilité. Certains d'entre eux s'installent dans une mobilité durable (Morokvasic, 2004) : ils ne quittent plus un lieu de manière permanente mais voyagent très régulièrement pour de courtes périodes entre l'Est et l'Ouest. Ma thèse met en évidence la spécificité des pratiques de mobilité des migrants au sein de l'espace européen. Plusieurs enquêtés s'installent dans un système de circulations macro-régionales sur le long terme, en divisant leurs activités quotidiennes (vie familiale, travail, études, shopping) entre plusieurs pays. La diversité de ces environnements internationaux conduit à l'existence d'un espace macro-régional investi émotionnellement, qui peut être compris comme un espace résidentiel macro-régional. La proximité perçue entre des lieux de différents pays façonne les identités des migrants des NEM et leurs sentiments d'appartenance à un espace macro-régional. Les migrants des NEM sont des acteurs clés de l'intégration européenne en raison de leur hypermobilité, qui renforce et intensifie les liens régionaux entre les différents lieux de l'UE et contribue à créer des espaces résidentiels macro-régionaux et un sentiment d'appartenance à l'Europe.

2) Comment l'Europe est-elle représentée par les migrants des NEM ?

Cette thèse a analysé la manière dont les migrants des NEM en France et au Pays de Galles pratiquent, (s')identifient (à) et représentent empiriquement l'Europe d'une manière plutôt qu'une autre. Cette thèse a permis de faire émerger une diversité de représentations de l'Europe, et de montrer empiriquement quelles étaient les représentations de l'Europe des migrants des NEM. Les représentations apparaissent comme étant toujours en cours car elles assemblent et réassemblent constamment des éléments, sans début ni fin. Ce processus s'apparente au rhizome (selon la terminologie empruntée à Deleuze et Guattari). Cette thèse a mis en avant l'image d'une Europe multiple, fluide et mouvante, en constante évolution au

cours d'un processus d'intégration flou et multidimensionnel. L'intégration régionale apparaît comme un processus sans fin de fabrication et de refonte de l'espace européen. L'espace macro-régional est composé d'une multitude d'espaces interconnectés et imbriqués et ses frontières sont floues.

L'analyse croisée des entretiens et des cartes mentales a permis de construire une typologie des représentations de l'Europe et d'identifier, lorsque cela était possible, les déterminants de ces représentations. Elle révèle l'image d'une Europe multiple, que l'on peut classer en trois catégories de représentations : l'Europe comme espace vécu ; l'Europe comme espace idéal ; l'Europe comme espace régionalisé (voir chapitre 5). Au-delà de la diversité des représentations identifiées, ces trois grandes catégories de représentations nous rappellent qu'il existe des représentations partagées de l'Europe, influencées par les caractéristiques sociales, la durée de la migration, les pratiques de mobilité et les parcours de vie. Ces représentations sont constituées d'un assemblage d'éléments hétérogènes. Une grande partie des enquêtés perçoivent l'Europe comme ce qui peut être appelé un rhizome. Cette métaphore, qui permet de penser l'intégration régionale comme un processus continu, souligne que les représentations de l'Europe sont composées de divers objets géographiques, relations et critères hétérogènes. La théorie du rhizome permet de dépasser la notion d'unité, constitutive de la définition traditionnelle de l'intégration et de souligner que le processus d'intégration régionale en Europe n'est en rien irréversible et ne passe pas par une unification idéale des sociétés. Ainsi, la théorie du rhizome aide à réimaginer l'intégration comme potentiellement réversible et incohérente.

L'analyse des cartes mentales et des entretiens a révélé le poids prédominant des pratiques de mobilité et des institutions dans les représentations puisqu'un noyau dur de pays, toujours associés à l'Europe, et correspondant aux pays fondateurs de la CEE, émerge. L'utilisation des cartes mentales est particulièrement pertinente pour mettre en évidence le processus d'agencement sans fin qui caractérise l'intégration régionale européenne et l'analyse des mots associés met en évidence le fait que les migrants des NEM se représentent l'Europe également à travers les discours institutionnels et idéologiques. L'analyse des mots associés à l'Europe permet montrer que l'espace macro-régional est une combinaison de sentiments, d'idéaux et d'éléments concrets multiples et hétérogènes, reliés les uns aux autres. La multiplicité des termes utilisés pour décrire l'Europe par les migrants des NEM, classés en quatre catégories différentes (géopolitique, valeurs universelles, sentiment et représentations

figuratives) pourrait être interprétée comme la manifestation de l'hétérogénéité de « l'Europe » et de l'absence de représentations partagées. Cependant, cette analyse révèle une image convergente de l'Europe, assimilée à des discours mélioratifs et positifs, et le poids de l'Union européenne dans les représentations, puisque plusieurs enquêtés ont cité des mots faisant référence à des valeurs universelles et à des modèles politiques promus par l'UE, tels que la « démocratie », « l'union » et « la diversité ». Si le poids des institutions dans les représentations est indéniable, l'espace macro-régional européen n'en est pas moins un espace difficile à caractériser, qui se présente sous de multiples dimensions, et qui résulte précisément de cette multiplicité sans fin. Il est intéressant de constater que l'Union européenne semble se construire sur cet assemblage hétérogène et dynamique de représentations sociales et individuelles.

3) Les sentiments d'appartenance des migrants des NEM révèlent-ils l'existence d'un espace européen qui sous-tend celui élaboré par les acteurs institutionnels européens ? Peut-on considérer qu'il s'agit d'un espace discret, socialement construit, qui participe pleinement à l'intégration régionale européenne ?

Ce doctorat a mis en évidence les façons dont l'Europe est ressentie, ainsi que les différentes expériences vécues, et il a étudié les différentes formes d'expression de l'identité européenne afin de contribuer aux connaissances sur l'intégration macro-régionale. D'une certaine manière, l'étude des sentiments d'appartenance à l'Europe contribue à définir l'intégration macro-région comme un agencement de plusieurs référents culturels et comme un processus reposant sur la fluidité et la diversité des interactions. Cette approche diffère donc de la définition traditionnelle de l'intégration comme un seuil à atteindre (voir chapitre 2) ou comme un processus d'assimilation qui se déroulerait dans un cadre national. Cette thèse a montré que les sentiments d'appartenance des enquêtés, ancrés dans l'espace transnational, contribuent à la construction d'un espace macro-régional. L'identification à l'Europe apparaît comme un processus hétérogène aux résultats imprévisibles. S'il n'existe pas de forme fixe et collective d'identité macro-régionale, comme le théorise le nouveau régionalisme, le fait que les migrants des NEM s'identifient à l'Europe confirme leur rôle d'acteurs clés dans l'intégration régionale, car ils façonnent et donnent un contenu à une entité géographique abstraite.

En décortiquant les notions de région et d'Europe, cette thèse s'appuie sur des travaux antérieurs qui ont montré que l'Europe était une région contextuelle, une construction sociale, une notion floue qui renvoie à un espace à géométrie variable dont l'UE n'est qu'une seule dimension. L'Europe en tant que macro-région résulte d'un assemblage de discours, de représentations et de pratiques et est porteuse de sentiments identitaires. Cette thèse s'inscrit dans la lignée de plusieurs études qui pensent l'intégration des migrants en dehors des frontières nationales. Ces études refusent de considérer le cadre national comme le cadre de référence dans l'analyse de l'intégration des migrants, arguant qu'il est inadéquat pour aborder la multiplicité des expériences individuelles, leur complexité et toutes les modalités de la migration internationale en général (Oriol, 1980 ; Hily et Rinaudo, 2002). En s'appuyant sur ces études, cette thèse a montré que l'échelle de référence identitaire des migrants des NEM n'était pas seulement nationale, mais européenne car les pratiques, les représentations transnationales et les réseaux sociaux doivent être pris en compte. Le phénomène de dissolution des frontières nationales et la conception de l'espace européen comme « pure distance » ont confirmé que l'espace macro-régional était l'échelle de référence des migrants des NEM. Cette recherche démontre que l'espace macro-régional européen n'est pas un objet fini mais une entité géographique polysémique et polymorphe en construction, un espace flou et dynamique, socialement construit par un large éventail d'acteurs.

2. Défis et discussion

Il est nécessaire de mentionner les limites de cette thèse. Cette thèse reste irréductiblement dépendante et contingente du contexte spatio-temporel dans lequel elle a été produite : les années 2019 à 2022, marquées par le Brexit et la crise sanitaire du Covid-19, ont eu un impact sur la recherche et sur la méthodologie. En particulier, il a été nécessaire d'adapter la méthodologie en conduisant la majorité des entretiens à distance via Zoom et de comprendre que la période de transition post-Brexit a une certaine influence sur les discours des migrants des NEM vivant au Royaume-Uni et sur leurs expériences migratoires, car les migrations sont nécessairement ancrées dans le contexte sociopolitique spécifique dans lequel elles se déploient. L'incertitude et l'instabilité de ce contexte politique et économique sans précédent ont dû être mises en perspective avec les sentiments de temporalité et de « vie en mouvement » (« life on the move ») des enquêtés (Drinkwater *et al*., 2009 ; Ryan, 2018 ; Shubin, 2012). Cependant, l'instabilité due au Brexit et à la crise sanitaire du Covid-19 est

une occasion unique de « saisir » les fluctuations et les dynamiques en cours des représentations : ce contexte représente à ce titre une période privilégiée pour étudier l'intégration européenne.

Ce doctorat est un travail de géographie : les objets, les méthodes, les préoccupations et la bibliographie se réfèrent principalement à cette discipline. Les travaux des économistes, des historiens ou des politologues n'ont pas été suffisamment explorés alors qu'ils ont beaucoup écrit sur le processus d'intégration régionale. Ce travail de recherche, issu d'une « co-tutelle » entre l'université de Swansea et Paris 1, a été tiraillé entre deux approches de la discipline géographique et quatre directeurs de thèse aux parcours académiques variés. Il faut noter que j'ai une formation académique française : il est important d'en tenir compte car cela a influencé les références, l'approche théorique et la méthodologie choisie ainsi que la manière dont la recherche a été menée. J'ai dû trouver un moyen de concilier l'approche scientifique française en géographie, très rigoureuse et axée sur l'empirisme, et l'approche scientifique anglaise, très innovante et axée sur la théorie, qui n'hésite pas à s'appuyer sur des disciplines comme la psychanalyse, dont la scientificité fait débat en France. Cependant, les apports des deux traditions académiques ont permis la mise en place d'approches complémentaires dans mon questionnement et ont permis de trouver des éclairages nouveaux, enrichis et intéressants en puisant dans les éléments les plus pertinents de chaque tradition scientifique. Une « co-tutelle » implique également d'apprendre de nouvelles façons d'écrire, d'enseigner, d'interroger les enquêtés et de mener un terrain de recherche. La différence majeure dans la façon dont le travail de terrain est réalisé au Royaume-Uni et en France consiste en la mise en place du cadre éthique, qui peut constituer un véritable obstacle au travail de terrain, car le processus de validation du cadre éthique peut être lent et fastidieux. J'ai aussi trouvé difficile au début de faire signer aux enquêtés un « formulaire de consentement de participation à l'étude » (ce qui n'est ni obligatoire ni répandu en France) dans la mesure où cela rend plus difficile un échange sincère, intime et spontané, et que cela peut biaiser l'échange, en introduisant une distance entre le chercheur et l'enquêté. Cependant, le cadre éthique invite à réfléchir à son propre statut de chercheur, à sa propre positionnalité, et à penser à l'impact que ses recherches, son comportement et ses questions peuvent avoir sur les autres, en particulier sur un certain type de population comme les migrants (Zapata-Barrero et Yalaz, 2020). Pour cette raison, la mise en place d'un cadre éthique contribue au bon déroulement de l'entretien (en ayant préalablement pensé à toutes

les façons dont un entretien pourrait mal tourner) et permet de progresser en tant que personne et en tant que chercheur dans le travail de terrain (Van Liempt et Bilger, 2009).

L'objectif de cette thèse était d'explorer un seul aspect de l'intégration régionale et un seul ensemble, parmi d'autres, de représentations de l'Europe, contingentes au groupe social étudié (les migrants des NEM) et au contexte de production de la recherche. La multiplicité et la diversité des représentations de l'Europe présentées dans cette thèse vont à l'encontre des visions monolithiques ou simplificatrices des réalités sociales et mettent en évidence le rôle d'un type spécifique d'individus dans le processus d'intégration régionale. Il est important de noter que le processus régional ne se limite pas à cela : toutes ses modalités n'ont pas été étudiées. Cette thèse a cherché à ne révéler qu'une seule facette de l'intégration régionale, afin de contribuer à l'enrichissement et à la compréhension de cette notion sans pour autant chercher à couvrir toutes ses complexités et ses enjeux. L'étude de l'intégration régionale n'est pas réductible à cette approche, tout comme elle ne saurait être complète sans elle.

3. Pistes de recherche

La forme et le contenu de la macro-région européenne sont ambivalents et parfois incertains : l'Europe apparaît comme un objet géographique dynamique, toujours en construction, dont la forme évolue en fonction des acteurs. Les recherches futures pourraient être consacrées à l'étude des représentations et des pratiques d'autres acteurs pour compléter et renforcer le rôle des acteurs de la société civile, y compris des populations moins mobiles. Dans la mesure où la typologie des représentations a mis en évidence le poids de la durée de la migration dans les représentations, il pourrait être intéressant d'étudier les représentations d'un même échantillon d'individus sur le temps long afin de saisir l'évolution de ces représentations, de faire ressortir les points de rupture, et d'autres déterminants individuels de ces représentations qui n'auraient pas été étudiés dans cette étude.

D'autres modes de recueil des représentations de l'Europe pourraient être utilisés : par exemple, en travaillant pendant trois mois pour le projet de recherche européen PERCEPTIONS, j'ai eu recours à l'outil photographique qui s'est révélé pertinent pour collecter les représentations de l'Europe des migrants. Dans le cadre de ce projet, les personnes interrogées ont été invitées à choisir trois photographies de leur choix qui, selon

elles, étaient représentatives de l'Europe. Une approche similaire pourrait permettre de réimaginer l'intégration à partir d'une dimension plus visuelle mais peut-être moins spatiale (par opposition aux cartes mentales). Les travaux réalisés dans ce cadre pourraient même servir de base comparative afin de mettre en évidence les éléments explicatifs déterminants des représentations qui seraient liés au statut migratoire (réfugié, demandeur d'asile, libre circulant).

Nous nous sommes surtout intéressées aux principales variables explicatives des représentations de l'Europe des migrants des NEM et aux répétitions et récurrences des éléments qui composent ces représentations. Tous ces éléments conduisent finalement à se focaliser sur une synthèse des représentations, faisant ressortir les représentations majoritaires, au détriment de la complexité et variété des représentations minoritaires. Une manière d'approfondir ce travail consisterait donc, sur la base d'une analyse systémique, à pousser plus loin l'analyse microscopique de certains sous-ensembles de représentations afin de saisir les représentations minoritaires et alternatives, insuffisamment rencontrées et analysées dans ce premier travail, afin de renforcer la typologie esquissée au chapitre 5. Ce travail s'est concentré sur les représentations de « l'Europe » des migrants des NEM. Il pourrait être relativement pertinent d'interroger d'autres catégories régionales perçues par les migrants des NEM (comme les « Balkans », un espace macro-régional particulièrement cité par les enquêtés) ou encore de considérer des ensembles situés à d'autres échelles géographiques, comme les villes, ou les régions infranationales, qui sont des échelles géographiques déterminantes dans le parcours migratoire, et qui sont également le support de sentiments d'appartenance et d'identification importants. L'apport de cette analyse multi-scalaire à l'étude de l'intégration macro-régionale permettrait de montrer comment les niveaux géographiques intermédiaires contribuent à l'intégration régionale.

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