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Identity at the EU Border
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> *Since the enlargements of 2004 and 2007, European integration has brought about major changes for the citizens of Central and Eastern Europe, such as a process of rebordering and new obstacles to travel to EU countries. This is the starting point of a research on border identities of the Romanian populations located on the "wrong" side of the EU border in Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine. Based on an analysis of the discourse of "ordinary citizens" collected during field researches in the three countries, the paper looks firstly at the way the border impacts on their perceptions of Europe. The paper determines, secondly, how these populations' commitment to Romanian identity can be understood as an instrumental attachment to the extent that Romanian citizenship allows them to enjoy the benefits of EU citizenship.*

Since the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, the European Union's (EU) integration process has led to major changes for citizens of Central and Eastern Europe. While most EU citizens live in a borderless Europe, non-EU citizens appear sometimes to be locked behind what the media of non-EU countries has called a new "Iron Curtain". As a consequence of the membership of some of the new Member States in the EU's Schengen area, Europe entered a process of "re-bordering" (Albert & Brock, 1996). Therefore, for non-EU citizens, the conditions for border crossings have been made more difficult, border crossings which had previously been easily attainable between neighboring countries. Thus, the accession of countries in the region to the EU has created borders where there was previously fluidity, as between Poland and Belarus and the Russian region of Kaliningrad, or as between Romania and Moldova, Ukraine, and Serbia. Resting upon a particular case study of populations living on what is seen in a very Eurocentric way as the "wrong" side of the EU border in three different countries, the present paper intends to shed light on the influence of this border on the identity of these populations nowadays.

Research on the impact of a border on national identity can be found at the intersection of the literatures on borders and nationalism. As for theories on borders, although research in the area has experienced renewed vigor in recent years, the influence of the border on the construction of identity remains largely overlooked (Newman, 2006). This specific theme has emerged recently and has been scrutinized mainly through individual case studies (Ackleson, 1999; Berdhal, 1999; Paasi, 1999, Klemencic, 2000, Migdal, 2004) or through strong theoretical emphasis on international relations (Albert *et al.,* 2001). As for theories of nationalism and the construction of identity, while the impact of a particular border is shown by Anderson (1983) and Gellner (1983), the perspective generally adopted by scholars is primarily that of the construction of an identity by political and state actors, in a "top-down" relationship (Brass, 1985; Greenfeld, 1992; Breuilly 1993; Hermet, 1996; Thiesse, 2001). Therefore, following the recommendations of these authors including Hobsbawm (1990), the paper follows the line adopted by research coordinated by Wilson and Donnan (1998) and concentrates on "border

identities". The approach is based on "border anthropology" inspired by the work of Barth (1969).

The aim of this paper is to interrogate these "border identities" in the case of the Romanian-speaking inhabitants of border regions and cities in Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine with Romania. Based on an analysis of the discourse of "ordinary citizens" collected during field researches in the three countries, the paper looks firstly at the way the border between the country they live in and Romania impacts on their perceptions of Romania, Europe and the European Union. But the paper concentrates on Romanian populations in these three countries and, consequently, tries to determine, secondly, how these populations' commitment to Romanian identity can be understood as an instrumental attachment to the extent that Romanian citizenship allows them to enjoy the benefits of EU citizenship.

The benefits of having Romanian citizenship are linked to the fact that Romania joined the European Union in 2007. Border crossing between Romania, Serbia, Ukraine and Moldova was made easy after the collapse of communism. Romanian minorities in Ukraine and Serbia as well as Moldovans from the Republic of Moldova could then easily enter Romania, without any visa. However, Romania's accession to the EU meant that Moldovans and Romanians from Serbia and Ukraine faced new restrictions in conducting trade with and travelling to Romania. For example, the free trade area between Romania and Moldova was abolished upon Romania's accession to the EU. In Romania, this led to the introduction of visas for Moldovans for the first time in its history.[1] In the context of such a close border, the objective of the paper has been linked to these populations' commitment to Romanian identity. The existence of the border and the Romanian membership to the EU can be seen as pushing for an instrumentalization of the Romanian citizenship when it is known that Moldovan citizens, but also Ukrainian citizens, can easily acquire it. Indeed, claiming a Romanian national attachment and applying for citizenship can be understood in this situation as an instrumental attachment to the extent that the prominence of their belonging to the Romanian nation, and in parallel, Romanian citizenship, allow them to enjoy the benefits of citizenship in an EU Member-State. This hypothesis aims therefore to test the "strategic efficacy of ethnicity", drawn from Glazer and Moynihan (1975).

The issue is topical as a recent scandal in Romania shows. Irina Tarasiuk, a singer from the Republic of Moldova declared in the summer of 2014 that she had applied to and obtained Romanian citizenship to travel freely in the European Union. Her commitment to Romanian citizenship and identity was purely instrumental, as she explained that she had not attachment whatsoever to Romania. On this basis, discussions were huge in the press about the citizens from Moldova, but also other countries, and their motivation for regaining Romanian citizenship. The scandal arose in the context of long-lasting criticisms of the European Union on the current Romanian citizenship policies and in the context of current debates in Romania about extending the right of ethnic Romanians abroad to benefit from an eased process of gaining Romanian citizenship.

In methodological terms, the research is based on discourse analysis, and more specifically an analysis of the discourse of Romanian-speaking "ordinary citizens" living in border cities and regions in Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine. For the purpose of this paper, semi-structured interviews have been undertaken with members of local civil society, journalists, teachers, and

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[1] Dura, George, "EU membership gives Romania new opportunities in its relations with Moldova", CEPS Commentary/10, January 2007.

members of local government. More importantly, focus groups have been conducted with these "ordinary citizens" to highlight how their identity, citizenship and proximity to the border impact their lives. Interviews and focus-groups were conducted in Cahul in the Republic of Moldova in September 2011 (15 interviews and 5 focus-groups), in Voivodina and Central Serbia in March 2014 (17 interviews and 3 focus-groups) and in Bukovina in May and June 2014 (17 interviews and 4 focus-groups)[2]. In order to avoid overly general questions leading to stereotyped national discourse, the questions have focused on their daily practices of the border, i.e. their experiences of border crossing, their experiences of what is behind the border and their impressions on the places they live. With regards to the main hypothesis of the paper, the first step has been to identify the perceptions of these populations on Europe and the European Union which is right on the other side of the border, and starting from there, to investigate their commitment to Romanian identity.

The choice of a case study on Romanian-speaking populations outside of the EU follows a most similar system design: these people speak the same language but share a different history, a different national identity and a different minority or majority position in the state where they live. Indeed, the Romanians in the Republic of Moldova identify mainly as Moldovans but sometimes also as Romanians; the situation is the opposite in Bukovina in Ukraine where most of the Romanians of Chernovcy and Herta identify as Romanians while fewer of them identify as Moldovans, more like in Southern Bessarabia or in villages close to the border with the Republic of Moldova; in Serbia, the situation is again different as Romanians in the northern autonomous province of Voivodina and in the region of Banat identify as Romanians while Romanians in central Serbia call themselves Vlachs. This different national identity results from a turbulent history and many national reconfigurations: Bucovina and Bessarabia historically belonged to the Principality of Moldavia which was dismembered at the end of the 18th century. While part of the principality formed the present-day Romania in the mid-19th century, Bucovina and Bessarabia have been linked to other national ensembles, the Habsburg Empire for the former and the Empire of the Tsars for the latter. However, each was then part of Greater Romania in the inter-war years. The Romanian state was divided at the end of the Second World War and Bukovina was made part of Soviet Ukraine and Bessarabia part of Soviet Moldova. While these regions have all been incorporated into Romania at some point in their history, the Romanians in Serbia have never been part of such a Romanian state. In Serbia, Romanians have always been a minority. Nevertheless, if we follow Brubaker's theory, we can consider that we are using a similar system design as the Romanians can all enter in the author's triadic (or quadratic) nexus (1996; Smith, 2001). Indeed, since 1945, the Romanians from Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine have faced different "nationalizing" projects and their identity was formed and influenced by the policies of the authorities of the countries in which they have been - Soviet and Yugoslav policies before the fall of communism, Serbian, Ukrainian and Moldovan after that fall. Today, these are Romanian minority in Ukraine and Serbia and a majority in Moldova.

After a few contextual and theoretical elements on the situation of Romanian populations in Serbia, Ukraine and Moldova, the paper will first tackle the way these populations perceive Europe and the European Union and will second look at their commitment to Romanian identity.

1. <u>**Romanians outside Romania**</u>

When Romania was created as a country in 1859[3] and 1877-78[4], roughly 8 million ethnic Romanians were to be found outside the newly created country (Pop, 2009, 48): mainly in the regions of Bucovina, Transylvania and Banat belonging to the Hapsburg Empire and in the region of Bessarabia belonging to the Tsarist Empire. After World War I, Transylvania, Eastern Banat, Northern Bucovina and Bessarabia were joined in what has been known as Greater Romania. Greater Romania between the two world wars was the largest Romanian state and Romania in its current borders emerged after World War II, losing Bessarabia, Northern Bucovina and Herta to the Soviet Union and Southern Dobruja to Bulgaria.

Romanians often see themselves as an island of Latinity inside a Slavic ocean (Pop, 2009, 51) and, according to Romanian authors, some 33 million Romanians would be living nowadays in the world, including the 19 million Romanians living in Romania (Craciun, quoted by Popescu, in Popescu & Ungureanu, 2010, 20). Romanians can be found mainly along the borders of current-day Romania and they form minorities in various countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The exception to it is the Republic of Moldova where the identity of the majority of the population – Moldovan or Romanian – has been long and is still much of a political issue.

In Romania, these Romanians are considered "Romanians abroad" ("Românii de Pretutindeni") and a department of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is dedicated to handle them. The expression "Romanians abroad" include as well Romanians in Serbia, Ukraine and Moldova, where they are autochthonous, as Romanians in Italy, France or Canada where they recently emigrated. Therefore, the term "diaspora" is often used when talking about them, even if most of the Romanians we interviewed in Serbia, Ukraine and Moldova do not consider themselves as members of a "diaspora" (MGUkr, FG4Ukr[5])[6]. If one asks how they define themselves, the majority of them would say they are "Romanian" in Bucovina and Voivodina, "Moldovan" in the Republic of Moldova, in Southern Bessarabia and at the border with Moldova in Bukovina in Ukraine, "Vlachs" in Transcarpathia, Bulgaria or Central Serbia. Nevertheless, despite these different self-declared identities, these populations can be seen as Romanian speaking-populations and they can be analyzed using Rogers Brubaker's triadic nexus (1996) – or quadratic (Smith 2001) - through which the persistence of nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe can be explained by looking at the dynamic relationship between dynamic and permanently evolving entities : the nationalizing state, the national minority and the external homeland, to which international organizations can be added. The nexus has been largely criticized and further explained (see for example Kuzio, 2001; Smith, 2001; Commercio 2010 or Brubaker, 2013) but it still allows giving a general framework for understanding elements linked to nationalism and identity in Central and Eastern Europe. The framework can easily be applied to the Romanians living outside of Romania, even though they do not form a minority

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[3] First time the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia were united to form the Romanian United Principalities, which later became officially known as 'Romania'.
[4] When Romania was declared independent from the Ottoman Empire.
[5] References to interviews focus groups have been made as following : initials of the person of FG and number for Focus-groups, followed by the first three letters of the country in which the interview took place.
[6] Even if some of them use the term when they talk about themselves (Fratila).

in the Republic of Moldova: the identity of Romanians outside of Romania is to be understood as the identity of Romanian-speaking citizens living in three different states, Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine, where they form either a majority or a minority, and in relation with their homeland, Romania which is now a member of the European Union.

While there is much room for commenting on whether Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine are nationalizing states, this is not the scope of this paper which only looks at one side of the nexus relationship: the way Romanian-speaking citizens outside of Romania are committed to Romanian national identity knowing that the country is now a member of the European Union. Nevertheless, as shown in a paper dealing solely with the case of the Moldovan citizens we interviewed in Cahul in September 2011, the particular Moldovan history and the particular nationalizing policies that have been implemented in the country have shaped a particular identity (Danero and Stanculescu, 2013, but also Casu, 2000). Regional identities among Romanians in Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine are strong (MMSer, BSSer. FVUk, LBUkr, FG4Mol). At the same time, feelings of being different from Romanians in Romania are reinforced by the fact that, according to some of the persons we interviewed, Romanians do not know very well Romanians abroad and sometimes even take Chernovcy ("Cernauti" in Romania) for Chisinau (FG2Ukr) or call "Serbs" Romanians from Serbia (MMSer, VPSer, MPSer, TUSer, AUSer) or "Russians" Romanians from Ukraine (FG1Ukr, FG2Ukr, FG4Ukr).

Romanians outside of Romania following Brubaker's nexus
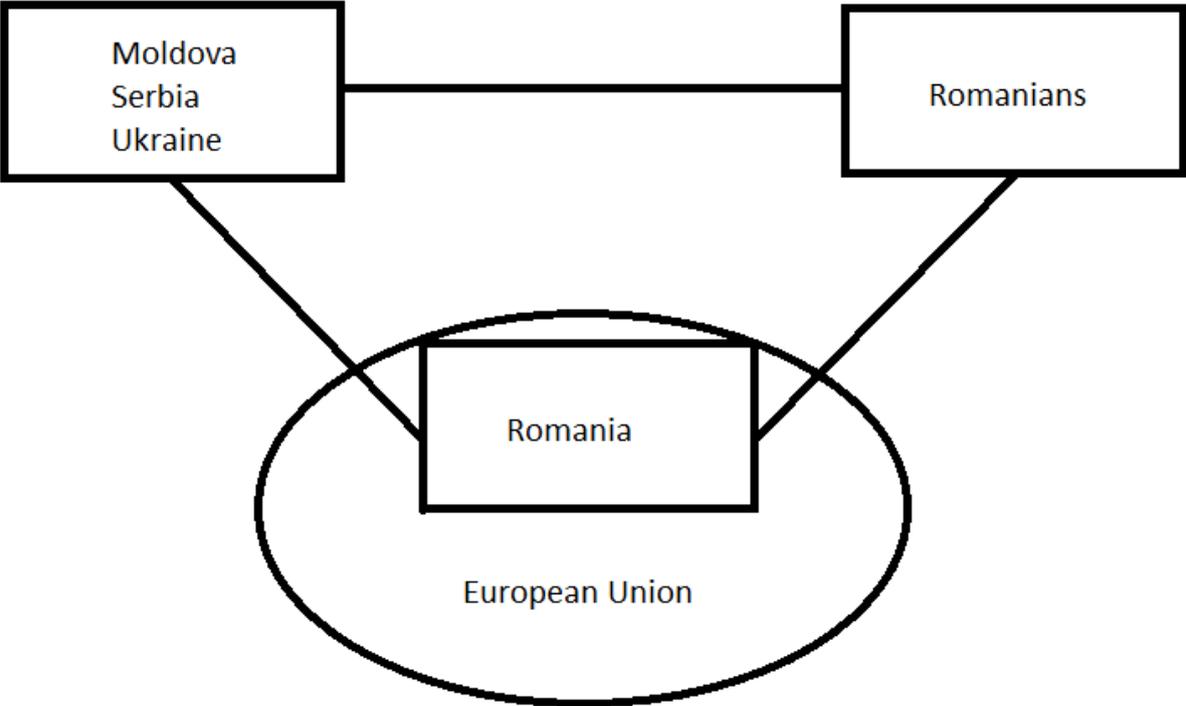
2. **Visions of Europe and the European Union**

The situation of Romanian-speaking populations in the three countries under scrutiny is different[7] but it is assumed that the way the border with Romania and the European Union situated a few kilometers away from where they live can influence the way they construct their identity along similar lines if we follow a theoretical framework inspired by Brubaker's work on the persistence of nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe. In order to answer the paper's main research question on an instrumental commitment to Romanian national identity, the first step consists in studying the visions of Europe and the European Union[8] as seen by the Romanian-speaking populations living on the side of the border which is not in the European Union.

2.1. Negative and mainly positive perceptions of Europe and the European Union

The European Union, which sometimes can be seen from parts of the cities where interviews and focus-groups were taking place, gives rise to different feelings and perceptions. The image is generally positive for those who passed the border and have experienced travelling in the European Union, but some express also some negative comments about it. First of all, the values in Europe are not what some of the Moldovans that were interviewed consider as their values and they regret that these values have come nowadays to Moldova:

What comes from Europe break the soul of people. See, the emphasis is not put anymore on this spiritual, beautiful life, on the understanding between each other. Lots of bad things have come from there, towards us, towards Moldovans. We were a small country, which seemed to be watched, a sky which… now has become… we don't know anymore our neighbors, this did not exist, it was a Moldova in which everybody knew each other. (RZMol)

The same kind of arguments can be heard in Ukraine:

Here, in Bukovina, we have the most beautiful life. Spiritually speaking, we are much richer than Europeans, because Europeans, like Italians, French or Belgians are very old nations, but they lost their traditions. (FDUkr)

Secondly, while rather negative opinions about Europe and the European Union come from people who were treated as slaves while working in Italy, for example (TP), other rather negative opinions about it also come from an observation of the situation of Romania, which is seen as having suffered from its integration into the European Union. Romanians are now disappointed (FG3Mol) and have actually been used by the European Union:

Romania has regressed since it entered the EU. Lots of companies have gone bankrupt. (…) and what has the EU won? Cheap workforce and that's all. And a market. And what has Romania won? Romania lost a lot. (FG3Mol)

But comments about Europe and experiences in Europe are generally positive. The vast majority of the citizens we interviewed see Europe as a hope for Moldova, Serbia, or Ukraine,

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[7] See annexes to this paper for further details on the situation of Romanian-speaking populations in Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine.

[8] During interviews in the three countries, it soon appeared that 'Europe' and the 'European Union' are the same thing for citizens we talked with, particularly in Moldova and Ukraine but also in Serbia.

or even sometimes a "dream", particularly in Moldova and Ukraine where the economic situation is dire (FG5Mol, GUUkr). The European Union would help strengthening the protection of minorities in Serbia (MDSer), Ukraine would learn what democracy means (ABUkr) and Europe means "fresh air" for people who are free (FG1Ukr) and can travel freely (FG2Ukr.), with no obstacles (VTUkr).

For me, Europe is the only solution. To integrate Europe. (…) Europe is not ideal (…) but today, I don't see anything better, anything better organized. (FG2Ukr)

And Europe remains the only solution, even more when comparing with Russia (GUUkr), and even if not everything will be directly made easy for citizens of the three countries:

It will maybe not be easy in the beginning, as we'll have to face harsh reforms and there are lots of rules in the European Union that need to be respected. But in the end, yes. (LCUkr)

But this dream is nevertheless still "quite far" (AMMol) and Europe is sometimes described with emotion:

The first time I've seen the Eiffel Tower from my car, I started crying. (FG5Mol)

But the dream is not always so far, for example like when one compares her situation in Serbia with the situation of her brother living and working in a Western European Union member-state:

He got used in there, he's seen that the conditions of living are better, salaries are better, they can afford much more, to travel, to go in excursions, much more that what we can with our salaries here. (AUSer)

But one needs to mention that Europe does not only mean France or Western Europe. Latvia, a former Soviet Republic, for example, is included in Europe. This is the case in the next excerpt, for which Europe is the place where good manners are at their highest level:

Let's take an example. I was recently in Riga. And I was staying at a hotel in the old center of Riga. A good hotel, but happening to be awake at 5 in the morning, I had a walk for one hour. I saw then some punk guys, with this haircut of theirs, with metal, and you could see that they had been smoking marijuana all night long, that they had been drinking beers. They were 200 meters away from the hotel. Not any one of them has thrown matches on the ground and they have taken them to the garbage bin of the hotel. (SP)

The issue of "cleaner streets" (AUSer) is recurrent and anecdotes about European cleanliness are numerous:

I'll talk about something really good: I had the opportunity to be in Italy, and I had the opportunity to compare culture here and there (…) if someone there eats an ice cream, they can carry the paper for 2-3 kilometers until they find a bin. Here, people would just throw it. (DVUkr)

Or:

I was for example in Spain. There, you walk the streets and you want to throw a paper. But when you see that everything is clean, for one kilometer, you wait. And the one that all of his life has been throwing papers starts thinking that maybe it's not nice to throw papers. This is a culture. (FG3Ukr)

And when "Europeans" do not meet these high standards, some are amazed:

There was a German lady here visiting (…). She smoked a cigarette and then she threw it. Like this, in the street. And I was thinking I should tell her: "But dear, qu'est-ce que c'est, you would do the same in Germany? (FG3Ukr.)

2.2. Living behind closed doors

As some of these examples show, the perception of Europe and the European Union go hand in hand with the perception of the situation of the countries and the places in which people live. The impression sometimes is that they live behind closed doors, as an exchange during one of the focus-groups in Ukraine shows:

- People live better in the European Union.
- Yes, well, we don't go there anyway.

If we look at Moldova, once the border is passed, the first Romanian town, from Cahul, is Galati. The citizens we interviewed often mention the Romanian city as a gateway firstly to Romania and secondly to Europe. They go to Galati for shopping, for a walk and for the Mc Donald's, and going there is considered "a hobby" (FG4Mol). Comparatively, some of them go more often to Galati than to Chisinau (SCMol). The Romanian city has a strong positive image, which reinforced by the comparison with the last Moldovan town before Galati, Giurgiulesti:

Waow, now it's a total disaster. In Moldova, the situation. Two weeks ago, I went to Galati (…) and what stroke me is that people are quieter, life is more monotonous, there's nothing agitated, there's nothing so nervous… They are more civilized, firstly it's much cleaner, and people during week-ends go to the cliff, to a bar, quiet, like this, in parcs, … At the same, home, in Cahul, as soon as you have passed the border in Giurgiulesti, you have the impression that you landed on a garbage, on dust, people agitated, nervous, all angry, they go like this, angry, I don't know. (MMMol)

And the comparison is often linked to the way the inhabitants of Galati live in comparison with Moldovans:

Let's take Galati, Romania. 20 lei make 80 lei in our money… this is the difference between how we live and how they live (…) Visually… you know, we are 50 km away from Galati, because I am not speaking about something else, you can feel it when go out, when you're there for one day and when you go back home… It's a total difference, visual. (…) Coming back recently from Galati, I can tell you that people there live, but we, about us, me, about myself, for example, I can tell you that in these days, I can't tell you that we are living… we are resisting… we're trying to resist and we are resisting in the conditions in which we are. (FG2Mol)

Galati is then at the image of Romania, in the center of Europe (FG1Mol), a country which is between 10 and 15 years in advance compared to Moldova (EBMol).

Galati and Romania are associated with Europe. The same kind of representations can be heard about the city of Timisoara, the biggest city in Romania on the other side of the Serbian-Romanian border, where you can go just for a walk and for shopping at the mall (AUSer) or for taking a low-cost flight (Sikimic, 2012, 152).

Romania has changed a lot since it joined the EU. When I went first (…), they were not so many cars in Timisoara. They were many more cars here and when I arrived in Timisoara I thought "They don't have cars" and here it is like in Vegas. Now… Lots have cars. They made a lot of progresses. (Ursu)

As the last excerpt show, changes in Romania since the country entered the EU are seen in Serbia through a comparison on what Romania was before 1989, when standards of living were much higher in Yugoslavia. Romania had a very bad image in Serbia during communist times (BSSer) and life in there was very hard according to the people we interviewed in Serbia (MPSer). Yugoslavia for Romanians was like the "West" (FG1Ser) and citizens of Yugoslavia were much richer (NFSer):

I don't know what these people have been eating at the time of Ceausescu. (OMSer)

Therefore, progresses since 2007 are seen as "extraordinary" (ECSer):

In Romania, you see visual changes in first place. And changes of the technology available for border guards… They behave better. I remember that, at the time of Ceausescu, if you didn't give, you wouldn't pass. (…) Romanian border guards were corrupted for eternity, and that went on after Romania got rid of Ceausescu. However, with the EU membership, you feel a more civilized behavior with regards to the people passing the border. (IBSer)

And when one asks about comparing the present-day situation in Romania to the present-day situation in Serbia, Romanians in Serbia feel Romanians in Romania do not particularly live better than them, but much better than before. On the contrary, in Moldova or Ukraine, the situation in Romania is seen as much better and the issue of roads in Romania raises as many comments as the issue of cleanliness Europe:

Here, we do not measure roads in kilometers but in time. The time it takes you to arrive. (FG3Ukr)

Particularly in Moldova and Ukraine, but also in Serbia, when comparing situations in their country and in Romania, the EU border appears to be a source of frustration, humiliation, waiting and stress for some of the inhabitants on the other side. And this is particularly the case since Romania's accession to the EU, when the border was "blocked again" (VTUkr):

As soon as the European Union accepted Romania's accession, the fortification of the border's infrastructure has started. And we entered a period of depression. People hoped before but in 2007 they lost it, they couldn't imagine how it will be like. (GLMol)

Recently, since Romania joined the EU, they are stricter. They want us to show them money. Me and my wife, we're going there to see my son, for one day and back. Then, why should I show them money proving that I can stay in Romania. This is quite annoying. (IBSer)

Along with depression, Romania's accession brought changes into the border area. If before 2007, bribing Romania's border guards was common practice, today things evolved and bribe is not anymore like saying "hello" (SPMol).

Positive developments on the Romanian side are seen as the result of Bucharest's membership to the EU and of all "clear conditions" that they needed to fulfill in order to be a part of the European family. For instance, one of our focus group participants was impressed by one recent Romanian police operation that lead to the arrest of more than 50 border guards accused of corruption:

For me it was a shock that something like this can be organized. Here, if you want to arrest one policeman the procedure is so complicated… Some professionals worked in Romania with very secure information. Here, it would be impossible. (FG5Mol)

The border appears to be a very hard to pass and humiliating one. It is a limit for both social and economic exchanges, as explained in Herta where the number of crossing points has been limited to only one (OMUkr). As one participant to a focus-group in Moldova puts it:

It doesn't matter if you are a student, a peasant either you go for tourism, research, you have the same feeling at the border. They undress you, they control you. They ask you what you are looking for… always with a feeling that they will send me back if they didn't like the stamp in my passport or if its expired and I didn't notice. (FG1Mol)

The border zone is a place with "useless bureaucracy and endless queues" (FG5Mol, VBUkr, SHUkr), a stressful waiting place, "where you have to whisper… shut up and not speak loudly" (FGMol). For some, injustice characterizes this area where rules depend on border guards' will (FG4Mol). In their interaction with the border guards, people have the impression that they "have no argument and are obliged to do what the border staff wants. You don't have anyone to fight with", told us one mid-aged woman (FG5Mol).[9] Furthermore, it is expensive to have a passport (FG2Ukr, LCUkr) and also sometimes difficult to get an invitation (MGUkr). The border thus is seen as an obstacle:

For example, I go and they ask where I am going. "I am going to Timisoara", "why?", "to eat an ice cream!" And they give me a strange look. We should be free to go have an ice cream in Timisoara if we want to. (MMSer)

As we have seen here, Romania, from a Eastern European country with which Romanians are ethnically linked, emerges therefore as a state situated imaginarily in an attractive and desired West (Sikimic, 2012, 149) mostly conceived as Europe and the European Union. The European border is both a source of frustration and humiliation and of hope for the future. The developments citizens on the other side of the border have recently witnessed on the Romanian side and the stagnation of their own border landscape reinforce their feeling of living at the edges of Europe, in its backward periphery and their desire to become a part of what can be

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[9] But not for all, as some of the interviewees have to cross the border several times a week or a month, either for work or for personal reasons (ECSer, TUSer, MMSer, NHUkr).

called a "European mirage" (Danero and Stanculescu, 2013). The border is then seen as an injustice, like when you have to pay for a visa to go to a funeral (FG2Ukr) or simply to go to your homeland:

Sometimes my heart is bleeding, because I am Romanian. (DCUkr)

3. **Being a Romanian citizen**

The border being an obstacle, it needs to be emphasized that generally speaking, not everyone crosses the border (ECSer):

In Romania, like in Europe, you need a Schengen visa, which are difficult to obtain. Usually, are going to Europe those who have a touristic visa, those who are very rich or those who intend to stay there... And we, we are neither one nor the other. So...(OMUkr)

Nevertheless, relying on the positive perception of Europe and the European Union, two ways, beside the normal visa procedure, allow citizens from Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine to cross the border easily. The first one is obtaining a "small trade permit", for Moldova and soon for Ukraine, and the second one is "regaining" Romanian citizenship, for Moldova and for Bukovina.

Since 2010 the "Small Traffic" permit has allowed Moldovan citizens who live at a maximum distance of 50km behind the border with Romania to travel without any restriction in an area of 50km on the other side of the border. For example, this means that citizens from Cahul cannot go to Bucharest, because it is too far, but they can go to big cities, such as Iasi in the Romanian province of Moldova or Galati on the Danube Delta. The permit is free and has a validity of two to five years. Other than a passport, the documents needed for obtaining it are very few. The reasons that the citizens can invoke for asking for such a permit are rather loose: visiting family (and graves of members of the family), health necessity, participation to a social, economic, scientific, cultural, medical, sports, mass-media or education project, business, judicial issues, or any other "justified" reason. Obtaining such a permit is a right for the citizens of Cahul, as the city is included in the 50km area behind the border. It is even easier for them as Romania has opened in 2010 a Consulate in the city center from where they can make all the application. According to Gentiana Serbu, General Consul of Romania in Cahul, an average of 20% of the applications are not valid in a context in which fewer permits than expected were granted to Moldovan citizens. Indeed, the Consul mentions that even though the conditions are loose, the main obstacle for Moldovans, and mainly from the rural areas, is the price of the needed passport before starting the application[10]. The reasons for obtaining a "Small traffic permit", obviously, are always instrumental, as shown by one of the persons we talked to who told how he pushed is 70-year-old mother to apply for it so she can visit friends during summertime.

The same kind of permit should be soon in application between Ukraine and Romania and has been discussed between the two countries since 2008. The permit is positively perceived by the persons we talked to (Fg2Ukr, FG4Ukr, NMUkr, EMUkr). At the moment, the main issue among people is whether the place they live in will be included or not (LCUkr).

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[10] Interview in September 2011. In 2011, a passport in Moldova was around 60-70 € while the average net income was around 100 € in agriculture and around 400 in finance.

While reasons for applying to the small traffic permit are obviously instrumental, our interviews and focus-groups show that reasons for regaining Romanian citizenship vary from instrumental to more "patriotic" reasons.

The easiest seems to be for Moldovan citizens who, broadly speaking, can apply for Romanian citizenship if they are able to prove that one of their ancestors was a citizen of Greater Romania between the two World Wars. Like the singer through which started the recent scandal in Romania, lots of the citizens interviewed told us openly that they applied for Romanian citizenship for instrumental reasons, as it is seen a "hope":

From here, I would have an impression that we are in closed space, so we don't see anything in the future, just like that. (...) Obtaining Romanian citizenship is like a hope. Meaning, you think that it allows you to find a job, you obtain Romanian citizenship and it opens you new perspectives. But in this country, you stay... I don't see the point, just like that, nothing ever changes. For the worst, yes, for the better, no. (MMMol)

Starting from what is perceived as a dire economic situation in Moldova, the reasons for applying for Romanian citizenship can be therefore to find a better job (FG2Mol, FG3Mol), for better healthcare (FG3Mol) or simply to have access to "better airfare"[11] (FG5Mol). But there are not only economic reasons, as some inhabitants invoke that citizenship allows to visit family and friends (SPMol), to travel around Romania and around Europe FG1Mol, FG4Mol) and to have access to the European Union (SPMol). Also, some of them applied for Romanian citizenship simply because they consider that the small traffic permit does not offer "so many opportunities" (FG4Mol).

In Ukraine, the situation is a bit different as legally, Ukrainian citizens cannot have double citizenship. However, lots of the persons we met confirmed that they have it, even indirectly (DCUkr, VTUkr), or that lots of people in Ukraine have it (NHUkr). Ukrainian citizens know that "it is not allowed, but it is not forbidden" (Fg2Ukr) and explain that Ukrainian authorities are suspected to have many different citizenships (FG2Ukr). Event border guards would be understanding when meeting Ukrainain citizens at the border with Romanian and Ukrainian citizenship (VBUkr). As in Moldova, the main raison for gaining citizenship is linked to the local dire economic situation (EMUkr). As one of the interviewees puts it:

Citizenship gives you the right to elect and be elected. But I have never seen any Romanian from Bukovina giving his candidature for being Romanian president or senator. (NHUkr)

Gaining citizenship allows you to travel freely, when one is "sick of Ukraine" (ABUkr), or to avoid working illegally in Europe:

Lots of citizens say they are Romanian... Lots go for swearing in Romania. This is a joke. They want to enter freely in Europe, they want to be able to work. It is difficult to go to Europe, visas are expensive and, usually, you're only considered a tourist. Therefore, in Europe, you're illegal and you hide. Until they catch you. If they catch you, you're sent back. And here we go again if you don't have a Romanian passport. (VBUkr)

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[11] Romanian airports are indeed linked to more destinations than Chisinau's airport and at better prices. At the same time, low cost companies were available in Romania and not in Moldova at the time of the interviews. The low-cost company Wizzair recently arrived on the Moldovan market.

In Serbia, the situation is different, as citizens of Serbia are not included in this framework of regaining Romanian citizenship as Voivodina and Central Serbia have never been Romanian territories. Therefore, Romanians from Serbia need to follow the regular process of obtaining citizenship, and some of them do it (ECUkr). Following this situation, some do not understand why Moldovans can regain it and not Romanians from Serbia (IBSer) and feel that Romania does not care about them (NCSer):

I'll die and we won't have Romanian citizenship. Hungary gave citizenship to its citizens, Slovakia gave it, Bulgaria gave it, Macedonia gave it, Croatia gave it. Everyone has given it. We are the only who haven't got it from Romania. Our ancestors, 300 years ago, came from Romania and migrated here, we are Romanian, we are parts of the Romanian people." (NCSer)

As this last example shows, the comparison is made in Serbia between Romania and countries like Hungary which have given the right to citizens of former Hungarian territories, like Voivodina, to regain citizenship:

I call my friend, she is from Bosnia. "How are you?", "Good, and your sister?" Her sister has also come here from Bosnia, married with someone from here (…). And the husband is a very proud Serb. "He's in Budapest for the citizenship ceremony." "What citizenship? He's a proud Serb!" She answered: "Indeed, but he has some family in Austria and they have found him a job there. But he cannot have it unless he has a European citizenship." With a Serbian passport, you cannot go anywhere. (…) I say "How is that?" and she answers: "Look, they found him a job in Vienna and they found out afterwards that his ancestors were in Austro-Hungary". (…) He's learnt some words of Hungarian. Just like this. And the next day, he went to Vienna. And then she adds: "You have to know that girls from Voivodina are more expensive than others". Some are coming now to Serbia to marry girls here and apply then for European citizenship. (MPSer)

Again, citizenship from a European Union country is seen as a plus, allowing to go abroad and to see better things (FG2Ser.) and some "do it" "only to leave" (VPSer) as it means having a "better life" (FG2Ser):

I could obtain 15 times – and I probably will – Bulgarian citizenship. But I have to go twice to Sofia and this is quite bothering as it is quite far. (NCSer)

This shows that, for some, if Romania has not given citizenship to Romanians from Voivodina, they can try to obtain Hungarian citizenship, or Bulgarian citizenship like in the last example, because:

Why running after someone who doesn't give you anything? It's the same in life, isn't it? (FG2Ser.)

What is the meaning of saying that we are a Romanian minority if we don't have anything? We are Romanian and from Romania we don't get citizenship… (FG2Ser.)

All these examples from the interviews in the three countries show the instrumentality of applying for Romanian citizenship. In Moldova, some show the emphasis on being "sincere", sounding as applying for Romanian citizenship would only be accepted if led by a strong national feeling:

Now, I'll be sincere… regaining citizenship is a solution to visit, to see some European countries, an opportunity… (FG2Mol)

I've regained citizenship. The goal was because I am doing sports, to avoid… to have the opportunity to cross more easily. Honestly, I am telling you: by relying on my old ancestors I've regained it. But as an aim… sports. (FG4Mol)

But not all share these instrumental rationale. For example, in Serbia, when asking if they would apply for Hungarian citizenship, some Romanians answer:

"I would feel strange. I wouldn't know the language and I would be Hungarian? This is strange." (ECSer)

"I wouldn't take Romanian citizenship, never. For me, this is like selling yourself. Why would I take it if my family is not Hungarian? If my country doesn't give me, the Romanian state, then I have Serbian citizenship. (DSSer)

And some explain that they want to apply to Romanian citizenship just because they are and they feel Romanian:

I feel Romanian and I want to have Romanian citizenship. I want to have the citizenship of my motherland. For the moment, I'll stay here. I am at the beginning of my career and I'll stay here. Later on, I don't know. But I want Romanian citizenship, I am Romanian and I want to have it. When I go to the motherland, I want to show that I am Romanian. When I am here, I am also here Romanian, but I respect the country where I am and where I grew up. (TUSer)

Therefore, Romanian citizenship for Romanians abroad is often perceived as something "historically right" (VTUkr):

I have the documents. In 1938, in this village, in this district, the year, the hour, the day in which I was born. And it's written in Romanian. When the USSR came, they freed us, they occupied us, and they changed our citizenship. They took it, brutally, automatically, and wrote "citizen of the Soviet Union". At independence, Ukraine made me a Ukrainian citizen. But did they ask me? No. I remain the same I was born. (ABUkr)

And some, for the same kind of reasons just do not want it:

How could a passport help? I am Romanian, my husband is Romanian, my parents… My children go to a Romanian school. I speak Romanian. Why would I need a Romanian passport? I feel Romanian here. And I don't have a passport. (FG2Ukr.)

Why would I need it? My Romania is here. (…) In my soul, I'll always be Romanian. And we wouldn't need it in a united Europe. (GUUkr)

First conclusions

Looking at Romanian-speaking populations living on the "wrong" side of the European Union border, the research intended to see whether the commitment to Romanian national identity could be explained through Glazer and Moynihan's strategic efficacy of nationalism. Interviews and focus-groups at the border between Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine and Romania show that on

the basis of a general positive image of Europe and the European Union and on the basis of general poor conditions of living in the three countries, Romanian citizenship is perceived as something which can make life better. Reasons for regaining Romanian citizenship are mainly instrumental for citizens of Moldova and Ukraine and the situation of citizens of Serbia applying for Hungarian citizenship even if they are not Hungarian shows the same pattern of explanation. It seems consequently that the Glazer and Moynihan hypothesis plays a huge role in explaining why Romanian-speaking citizens outside of Romania apply for Romanian citizenship.

This conclusion goes in line with criticisms of the European Union towards Romanian citizenship policies and shows that, contrarily to some official Romanian discourse, regaining citizenship holds more to present-day pragmatism than to redressing a historical wrong. As Damian puts it when he analyses the recent scandal in Romania:

Romanians in Romanian have in mind an "interwar" Bessarabia, a Bessarabia of Greater Romania. A Bessarabia full of Romanian patriots devoted to the national ideals. Real Bessarabia is nowadays called the Republic of Moldova and it is populated with people of all sorts. (…) Irina Tarasiuk belongs to real Bessarabia. She's a young woman with an uncertain ethnicity and a national identity which can depend on interests, for whom Romanian citizenship is only a visa to the European Union.[12]

Nevertheless, the strategic efficacy only tells one part of the story. Indeed, "true" attachment to national identity has been often identified during our field research. Therefore, going further into the analysis of the determinants of national identity would be of utmost interest. The research needs thus to investigate the mutual influences between all the terms of Brubaker's nexus.

In Serbia and Ukraine, the persons we talked with all showed loyalty to the state they live in but showed at the same time a strong Romanian identity (MMSer, TUSer, OMUkr, VTUkr), and even if they have never been to Romania (DSSer) or even if sometimes some feel some shame when speaking Romanian in public (MMSer, FG1Ser, FG1Ukr, FG2Ukr, FG3Ukr) :

"We didn't die, we speak Romanian and we are here. And I tell the kids : "You don't have to be ashamed, you have to be ashamed when you do something stupid. When you know several languages, this is pride." (FG2Ukr).

Being Romanian is part of an identity which is strongly influenced by interaction with "non-Romanians", in a proud way in Voivodina and Bukovina where locals emphasize how their regions are models of peaceful multicultural communities, and in a more tensioned way in Moldova. At the same time, regional identities can be found across borders, particularly in Banat, where people in Serbian Western Banat feel a particularly strong connection with people of the Romanian Eastern Banat (MMSer, OPSer) and particularly for those who identify as

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[12] Damian, George, « Cazul Irina Tarasiuk. Basarabia din suflet şi Basarabia reală », *Personal blog*, 5 August 2014, http://www.george-damian.ro/cazul-irina-tarasiuk-basarabia-din-suflet-si-basarabia-reala-5905.html (last accessed August 2014).

Moldovans in Bukovina who feel strong connections with Bessarabia, but also the Romanian region of Moldova.

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Annexes:
Elements about Romanian-speaking populations outside of Romania

Romanians/Moldovans in Moldova

A first set of interviews and focus-groups took place in Cahul in the Republic of Moldova. The border between Romania and Moldova, the Prut River, 5 kilometers away from the city, separates two countries in which the people speak the same language and share parts of the same history. Nevertheless, despite their common belonging to "the Romanian nation" according to Romanian authors (notably Bruchis, 1982), "Romanians" in Cahul and in the neighboring village of Oancea in Romania on the other side of the river, for example, have different citizenship and a different national identity. Indeed, the Romanian-speaking populations of the Republic of Moldova generally identify themselves as Moldovans, mainly in the countryside and among older and less educated citizens, but sometimes as Romanian, mainly in cities and among younger and more educated citizens. Cahul is the capital city of the Cahul district and a city of approximately 40,000 inhabitants, being the third city in the country and the main city of Southern Moldova. Ethnically, the population of Cahul is composed, according to the 2004 census, of 60 % Moldovans, 17.1% Russians, 11% Ukrainians, 6.66% Bulgarians, 3.26% Gagauz, among others. If one compares this repartition with the rest of Moldova, the figures show that Cahul is more "Russian" than average or than Chisinau, Moldova's capital city.[13]

This situation can be explained through history. Indeed, Cahul shares most of Bessarabia's history, being constantly torn between Russia and Romania. Under different rules, Bessarabia and its populations have been the objects of various assimilation policies and nationalizing policies (Brubaker, 1996), transforming, or at least trying to, the Moldovan population

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[13] According to the 2004 census, for the whole Republic of Moldova, Ethnic Moldovans account for roughly 76% of the population. They were more than 67% in Chisinau.

according to their own plans. For example, during Soviet times, a doctrine called "Moldovanism" has been put forward, boasting of the existence of a "Moldovan People". This political doctrine justified the inclusion of the former Greater Romanian province into the USSR. Nevertheless, the existence of a "Moldovan nation" remained "stipulated" (King, 108) even though the USSR implemented a process of standardization alongside a process of differentiation of Moldovans from Romanians (Schrad, 2004). This doctrine has been at peak of Moldovan politics after independence in 1991 and has been particularly emphasized by the Party of the Communists of the Republic of Moldova in power between 2001 and 2009 (March, 2007).

In all this, Cahul has the particularity of having been more Russianized than the rest of the country, following a process of colonization from the Russian provinces during Tsarist and Soviet rules. The city belonged to the Principality of Moldavia which was dismantled in the late 18th century and passed under Russian Tsarist rule from 1812 to 1918, with the exception of the period 1856-1878 after the Crimean War when it belonged to the Romanian Principalities. After World War I, Cahul, as the rest of Bessarabia, was included in Greater Romania. But, after World War II, Bessarabia reintegrated the Soviet Union, a Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic was created and Cahul remained a quiet provincial and thermal town. Cahul, as well as all the Moldovan side of the Prut river, was then protected by a barbwire which at the national level has been only withdrawn in 2010. But in Cahul and in Southern Moldova, the barbwire was already withdrawn in 1990 at the time of *perestroika*[14].

Romanians and Romanians/Vlachs in Serbia

A second set of interviews and focus-groups took place in Serbia, in two different areas where Romanian-speaking populations can be found: mainly in Voivodina, the autonomous province in northern Serbia, and particularly in the region of Banat, but also in the Timoc Valley. In the former, interviews and focus-groups were conducted maily in the city of Vrsac in Banat at the border with Romania but also in Novi Sad, the capital of Voivodina, Zrenjanin, Pancevo and Vladimirovat. In the latter, interviews and focus-groups were conducted in the city of Zajecar at the border with Bulgaria.

In Serbia, Romanians are considered has a national minority and account for 0.46% of the population (around 35000 Romanians for around 7 500 000 inhabitants). In Voivodina, including Banat, they account for 25410, for a total of 29332 in the whole Serbia (Rosu, 2013, 9). The Romanian minority is not homogenous and you have confessional, ethnic and territorial divisions. Looking at confessional identity, which is very important to them (Maran, 2011, 65), 81.61% are orthodox, 6.58 are protestants and 0.01 are Jews, according to the 1991 census (Bjeljac 2005, 55, cited by Duric-Milovanovic, 2009, 205). Looking at the ethnic divisions, Boyash, Romani ethnic group speaking Romanian and identifying as Romanians, are not considered by ethnic Romanians as belonging to their nation (BSSer, RISer, MMSer). Looking at territorial divisions, Romanians can mainly be found in Banat in Voivodina while Vlachs can mainly be found in Central Serbia. Romanians in Voivodina have a strong identity and pride, and, as one of the interviewees explained, they believe they are the "best of all Romanians abroad" (MMSer), mainly because historically they have always had the right for education in their own language. But even with the Romanians of Voivodina, differences can be found, dating back from the different regions in Romania they are originally from (Sikimic).

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[14] *Romania Libera*, February 19, 2010.http://www.interlic.md/2010-02-19/dispar-ghimpii-dintre-romania-si-moldova-a-cazut-zidul-berlinului-o-sa-cada-si-sarma-asta-romania-li-14638.html.

Romanians could be found in Voivodina since medieval times. Autochthonous Romanians live in Banat around Vrsac (Maran, 2011, 51) but Romanians mainly arrived in the 18th and 19th century in Western Banat after Banat was included in the Habsburg Empire. They were coming mainly from Eastern Banat but also from other Romanian regions, like Transylvania, Oltenia and Crisana. They settled mainly at the borders of the region, like around the city of Vrsac, in villages such as in Vladimirovat, but also in smaller numbers in cities, like in Vrsac, Pancevo or Zrenjanin (*Becicherecul Mare* in Romanian) (Maran, 2009, 15).

Romanians were included in the Serbian orthodox Mitropolite until 1864 (Maran, 2009, 15). Being part of the Habsburg Empire, Banat was divided after World War I and the Western Banat was integrated to future Yugoslavia while the Eastern Banat was integrated to Greater Romania. In 1933, an agreement was signed between Romania and Yugoslavia for education in Romanian (Maran, 2011, 55). After 1945, Romanians obtained rights of school, culture and information as they were recognized as a national minority. For example, they have had their own newspapers, such as *Libertatea* (Liberty) created in 1945 in Vrsac and then moved to Pancevo in 1962, but also radio and television stations like in Alibunar or Novi Sad (Rosu, 2013, 134-153).

Following the distribution of the Romanian populations in the country, interviews were conducted mainly in Banat, a region inside the autonomous province of Voivodina. The Banat region, belonging to the Habsburg Empire, was divided in three parts after World War I and 65000 Romanians remained in the Serbian Western Banat. The ones that remained were mainly rural populations as intellectuals moved to Romania (Sikimic, 2012, 138). The end of World War I meant that Romanians become a national minority separated from the rest of Romanians by a border (Maran, 2011, 58). Nowadays, there persists a strong "banatean" identity for Romanians in Banat, compared to the rest of Voivodina and Serbia (Maran, 2011, 62).

Vrsac (Vârset in Romanian) is the main economic, administrative, cultural and confessional center in the Banat region and the main center for Romanians in Serbia. Located 15 kilometers away from the border with Romania, Romanians comprised 4.73% of the population of the city at the census of 2002, accounting for 1734 persons out of 36623 (Maran, 2013, 9). According to Vasici in 1859, cited by Maran, Romanians have been living in the city since the Ottoman period (Maran, 2013, 9). Romanian confessional and cultural life was particularly strong in the city in the 19th century. After the division of Banat at the end of World War I, a great number of Romanian families emigrated to Romania, the proportion of Romanians in the city passing from 3.21% in 1910 to 1.73% in 1921 (Maran, 2013, 9 & 12). The city faced economic stagnation after 1918 due to the separation of Banat, while, at the same time, Germans were forced to leave town. Nevertheless, a Romanian cultural association was founded in 1923 and Vrsac became the political center of Romanians in Banat between the two World Wars (Maran, 2013, 13). Starting from the 1960's, economy improved and the city became an important transit point to and from Romania, an important industrial center in general, and a cultural centre for Romanians. (Maran, 2009b, 219-229) Indeed, Romanian institutions in Vrsac are numerous, a high school, since 1934 (Rosu, 2013, 33), a Normal School since 1935 (Lelea, 2009, 174).

Along interviews in Vrsac, interviews were also conducted in Zrenianin, where Romanians account for 633 out of 79773 inhabitants, but where the Romanian Institute of Culture has been founded in 2008 (Maran, 2009b, 229-234); in Pancevo, where Romanians account for 746 out of 77087 but where the Libertatea newspaper has its headquarters, and in the village of Vladimirovat. This village was founded by Romanians in 1808 and counted 4111 inhabitants in 2002 among which 1424 were Romanians (Rosu, 2013, 33-34; Maran, 2009b, 173-180).

Romanians in Serbia can mainly be found in Banat but also further in Voivodina, behind the Tisa River, seen as the limit for Romanianness (Rosu, 2013, 35). Romanian is an official language in the autonomous province (see Borca, 2011, 16-20 and Dragan, 2011, 4-9 for rights in Serbia and Voivodina). In Novi Sad, capital of the Province, called the Serbian Athens and an important Serbian cultural center, Romanians accounted for 755 in 2002 for a total of 191405 inhabitants, among them a majority of Serbs but also Hungarians, Yugoslavs, Montenegrins, etc. Since 1974, there is a Chair of Romanian at the local university and since 1949, a Romanian redaction at the local Radio Novi Sad (and a television station since 1975). Furthermore, the Romanian National Council and the Institute for Manuals are in the city. (Maran, 2009b, 208-211)

Romanians in Serbia are mainly a rural population (Maran, 2009, 15) and, outside the main cities, the preservation of Romanian culture has passed mainly through local priests and teachers (Popovici, 2009, 37). If we look at Romanians in Serbia in general, their main concerns nowadays as a minority is the fact that they are decreasing. The decrease is mainly caused by an aging population in the countryside (Tomici, 2009, 49), by emigration (Tomici, 2009, 51) and by assimilation (Maran, 2009, 20; Maran, 2011, 57-58; Stoit, 2009, 28). The issue of assimilation is accompanied by a 'minority complex' (Maran, 2011, 63).

Interviews were not conducted with Boyash but interviews were conducted with Vlachs in the city of Zajecar in Central Serbia. The identity of Vlachs is a disputed issue at the moment in Serbia and the Vlach minority itself is divided between those claiming their Romanian-ness and those claiming they are different. According to Pop, 'Vlachs' is the name given by the Serbs, the out-group, (to those speaking a Latin language, Romanian) (Pop, 2009, 42). According to the Biljana Sikimic:

They say they are Serbs, the majority of them. It depends whether they are talking to you freely or in the censuses. If they dare talking to you in Serbian, they would say "I am Vlach". If you are speaking with them in Romanian, they would say they are Romanian, when they translate it. They are Vlachs in Serbian. When they officially declare themselves, they are Serbs. They have, how to say, multiple identities.[15]

Again, this identity issue can be explained through history. Vlachs have never been part of Romania and have never been recognized as Romanians at the time of Communist Yugoslavia (MMSer). According to some of our interviewees, the distinction between them and Romanians in Voivodina is artificial and intended to keep Romanians as a divided and weak minority in Serbia (ISSer). Vlachs are a mountainous and isolated people (TUSer), which have long been subjects of assimilation, that some of our interviewees see as a 'sleep' (DSSer). Nevertheless, some parties claim nowadays to defend their interests, and new projects are starting now (MDSer), with the support of the National Council in Voivodina and the personal involvement of some, like the famous local priest Boian Alexandrovici.

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[15] Interview in Belgrade, March 2014.

Romanians and Moldovans in Ukraine

A third set of interviews and focus-groups were conducted in Ukraine, in Bukovina, the most important Romanian-speaking socio-linguistic zone in Ukraine[16]. Romanian-speakers are mainly a rural population (74% for Romanians and 66.6% for Moldovans in 1989 (Popescu, 2010, 55). Interviews were conducted in Bukovina in the city of Chernovcy and in the Herta district. Bukovina was first part of the Principality of Moldavia which was dismembered at the end of the 18th century, in 1775, when Bukovina passed under Habsburg rule. After World War I, Bukovina integrated Greater Romania and the city of Chernovcy developed has a major regional center where Romanians accounted for a bit less than one third of the population. At the end of World War II, northern Bukovina, where the city of Chernovcy is, and the district of Herta, were integrated into the Soviet Union. Nowadays, Chernovcy (Cernauti in Romanian) is the main city of Bukovina and a major Romanian cultural center in Ukraine. According to the census of 2001, Romanians accounted for 10553 and Moldovans for 3829 for a total of 236691 inhabitants. The city counts different cultural associations, like the Mihai Eminescu Society, while the whole region has schools and newspapers in Romanian, like Zorile Bucovinei (Dawn of Bucovina) or Gazeta de Herta (Herta Gazette). The history of Herta, some 28 kilometers away from Chernovcy and at the border with Romania, is a bit different as the city and the district around did not belong to Austria after 1775-1777 but remained in Moldavia. It is only in 1940 and after World War II that the city was formally integrated into the Soviet Union while it had always been part of Romania before.

In the Herta district, the overwhelming majority of the population is Romanian, accounting for some 93% (OMUkr). Nevertheless, in Bukovina, as in the rest of Ukraine, the Romanian-speaking population is divided between Moldovans and Romanians, a distinction which is again seen as "artificial" (Bojescu, in Popescu & Ungureanu, 2010, 11) and political. Romanians would indeed represent the third ethnic group in Ukraine if not divided (Popescu, in Popescu & Ungureanu, 2010, 30). Citizens declaring themselves Moldovans can mainly be found in Southern Bessarabia in the district of Odessa, but also in other parts, like Nikolaev or Herson (Popescu, 2010, 53), or in Bukovina at the border with the Republic of Moldova. In Bukovina, in general, the number or people declaring themselves 'Moldovan' is in decrease (Vranceanu, 2014, 239) and those who consider themselves Moldovans (FDUkr, MGUkr) are seen as less educated people (FG2Ukr). According to some, those declaring themselves "Moldovan" assimilate more easily (Popescu, 2010, 61) in a context of a general "degradation" of education in Romanian in Bukovina (Cernov, 2013, 131). Indeed, there are 435 schools in the region, 347 in Ukrainian, 70 in Romanian and 15 mixt, but the number of Romanian schools decreases every year, being transformed into mixt schools (Cernov, 2013, 131). The biggest problem in schools is the teaching in Romanian of elementary disciplines, like physics, mathematics, etc. Classes are given by professors who studied in Ukraine and in Ukrainian and they have problems with Romanian terminology (Cernov, 2013, 132). Besides, exams of Ukrainian language are the same for Romanians even though they have less hours of Ukrainian and that they live in different linguistic environments (Cernov, 2013, 134).

This issue of assimilation and this distinction originate again in history. Romanians in Ukraine were taught to be Moldovans during the USSR (ABUkr) and they had education in 'Moldovan' at the time. They could make their superior studies in universities in the Moldovan Soviet

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[16] In this country, Romanian can also be found in the region of Transcarpathia in south-western Ukraine. Romanians there are called 'Vlachs' or 'Romanians of the Maramures' or 'of the Carpathians'. They constitute an autochthonous populations conquered by Hungarians in 10-11 century (Pop, 2013, 16).

Socialist Republic. According to some, this distinction is an 'aberration' (LBUkr), but it is also seen as a compromise which helped Romanian language to survive (NHUkr). Nowadays, according to the law and to the Constitution, Romanian can be official language in places inhabited by Romanians. Ukrainian remains nevertheless the state language which has to be known by all citizens. Romanian is an official language only in the Herta district and in some villages (Cernov, 2013, 136-137).